



## Living in the Light

Ecclesiastes 1:1–10 (NKJV)

*The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher; "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun? One generation passes away, and another generation comes; But the earth abides forever. The sun also rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it arose. The wind goes toward the south and turns around to the north; The wind whirls about continually and comes again on its circuit. All the rivers run into the sea, Yet the sea is not full; To the place from which the rivers come, There they return again. All things are full of labor; Man cannot express it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor the ear filled with hearing. That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which it may be said, "See, this is new"? It has already been in ancient times before us.*

We must not be too hard on the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem for his introduction that is coated in cynicism.

Miriam-Webster's dictionary says that the antonym of a cynic is an **optimist**, an **idealist**, or a **believer**.

Before the "Preacher" finishes this literary work, his readers will understand why he writes with a quill dipped in the dark ink of pessimism.

His intention is to shock his readers with the eye-opening reality that a life lived apart from God is vanity and futility.

The cynic is a person who flatters himself or herself a hard-eyed realist, a down-to-earth, unfazed, practical person of experience—especially in comparison with "the idiots who maintain some kind of fool hope or optimism."

The cynic has been there, done that, and been disappointed. Won't do that again—no way! Won't feel that way again—not on your life!

The cynic pretty much knows it all—if "knowing it all" were confined to this side of the sun. "Under the sun," all is vanity we're told. "Under the sun," all things are wearisome, faded, dull, meaningless, unfulfilling.

This side of the eternal, cynicism definitely has its place, as the cynical preacher of Ecclesiastes knew all too well. Wine, women, and song; power, authority, and accomplishments; wisdom, learning, and knowledge—all mean so very little if we are only to die and fade into forgotten nothingness. What good is anything—from magnificent accomplishment to wretched excess—if it is only to be lost as a withered memory upon death?

Even serious students of the scriptures, possessed of a wealth of experience and knowledge, can fall prey to cynical moods. We know a lot; we've heard so much; we've seen the good, the bad, and the ugly in people. Over time such knowledge and experience can corrode our optimism and stain our world view with cynicism.

When this begins to happen, we must bring ourselves to a place where our world view rises to the Creator, who is beyond the sun, not under it!

Place God in the picture, and cynicism sinks into absurdity. Look beyond the sun into the providential heart of God, and cynicism becomes as out of place as a screen door on a submarine.

The writer of Psalm 42 understood this...

*5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.*

*Psalm 42:5 (NKJV)*

In a God-filled universe cynicism is maladaptive behavior for the Believer. A cynical mindset does little good to help us cope with the realities of life on a broken planet.

Hope responds better to the realities of providence. Faith and courage spring from the awakening sensation of God's prevenient grace that greets us in the morning, having already bettered the day.

Peace and an open, tender heart characterize the person who has been received, recategorized, and released to a noble task and a secure future.

However natural it might seem to be a cynic, that dark path can be overcome by living life in the light of our Saviors love.

*Just some Food For Thought...*

*~ Pastor Frank*

