

## Extreme Makeover

By Pastor Greg  
October 18, 2009

Ecclesiastes 12

Bunkertown COB

Billy Graham had just finished a tour of the Florida East Coast and was taking a limousine to the airport. Having never driven a limo, he asked the chauffeur if he could drive for a while. Well, the chauffeur didn't have much of a choice, so he got in the back of the limo and Billy took the wheel. He turned onto 1-95 and accelerated to about 90 MPH. WHAM! The blue lights of the State Highway Patrol flashed in his rearview mirror. He pulled over and a trooper came to his window.

When the trooper saw who it was, he said, "Just a moment, please, I need to call in." The trooper radioed in and asked for the chief. He said, "I have a REALLY important person pulled over and I need to know what to do." The chief replied, "Who is it, not the Senator again?" The trooper said, "No, even more important." It isn't the Governor, is it?" asked the chief. "No, even more important," replied the trooper. "It isn't the President, is it?" "No," replied the trooper, "even more important." "Well, WHO in the WORLD is it?!" screamed the chief. The trooper responded: "I don't know for sure but I think it might be Jesus, because his chauffeur is Billy Graham!"

This story is funny because most people associate Billy Graham with Jesus. And indeed, all that Dr. Graham has done surrounds Jesus. But the only thing association has ever done is give us a song called *Wendy*. Yet I know many people who feel that association alone is what unites them with God. Just hanging out at church or participating in religious events is good enough. It's as if God will be pleased with them because they wear cross earrings, put religious symbols on their car, or wear Jesus sandals (the new marketing gimmick - What Would Jesus Wear). But you know what; this problem has been around for centuries.

Solomon was a very wise man. Just a quick read through the book of Proverbs will prove that. And yet, knowing those proverbs did not make him right with God. As a matter of fact, God gets pretty angry with Solomon because knowing what was right and wrong, Solomon still disobeyed. So God confronts Solomon, and the result is an extreme makeover.

The Solomon we meet in the proverbs is far different than the Solomon we meet in Ecclesiastes. And yes, I've read the arguments about the difference in the style of Hebrew used here, and I know all about the fact that "Son of David" could mean descendant of David, but it sure seems to me that what the writer says about his self sure matches the description of Solomon. And what I find most interesting is that if indeed it was Solomon, then something incredible happened to change his heart. I believe Solomon, in his old age, stops for a moment after God confronts him in 1 Kings 11, and looks back at his life. And he is convicted by God. Solomon's heart is first broken, and then transformed. And Ecclesiastes is the words of a man who finally realized what God truly desired from a person.

Peppered throughout the book are reminders that God needs to be the sole focus of our lives. Walking with Him is the only thing that is not meaningless (see 2:24-26; 3:11-13; 5:1-2; 9:7-10; 11:9). When you think of Solomon, its how he finished the race that truly matters. Listen to what this man has to say about life. *Read Ecclesiastes 12.* For Solomon, I believe he realized that it was not good enough that he wrote all those proverbs or that he did all those great things for the nation of Israel. I think, in the end, that Solomon realized God was looking for an extreme makeover of the heart; that God would be where He belongs in a person's life.

The problem, unfortunately, only becomes worse. By the time Isaiah comes along, you have a nation full of people that felt God was pleased with them because of where they lived, because of their last name, and because of all the religious things they did. But listen to what God has to say through His prophet Isaiah. *Read Isaiah 58:1-12.* It seems that people will continually be content to act religious, do religious things, and wear religious clothing, yet not allow God to work His extreme makeover in their wicked hearts.

We live in a society that strives to be highly moral. In other word, we try to be good. Although the standard of what is "Good" has been changing, for the most part this nation still embraces a "code of conduct"; things that are right and things that are wrong. Most people still feel that it's wrong to murder. Most people feel it is wrong to cheat and steal. That's why society was outraged at Bernie Madoff who tricked people out of their money. Most people applaud honesty, kindness,

forgiveness, & charity. Although some are trying to get things changed, most acts of fornication are frowned upon. I figure if the average person would take the time to read through Proverbs, for example, they would find it to be quite agreeable. After all, only a fool ignores sound advice and wisdom. However, it's unfortunate for those who strive to be good, because morality will not save them. "Good" will not grant them entrance into Heaven. Following all of the snippets of wisdom found in proverbs will not make them a righteous person, only moral.

The conversation Jesus has with Nicodemus surrounded the same concept. In John chapter three Jesus tells this Pharisee that unless a person allows God to work an extreme makeover of their heart, they remain the same (*read John 3:1-8*).

If there is one thing I have learned in this life it's that a person cannot be "Born Again" until they realize they are dead. Until a person realizes that who they are and what they have done is an offence to God, they will have no desire to change. And that's what I see in God's confrontation with Solomon. God sent those adversaries we read about in 1 Kings 11 in order to speak to the man's heart. "You're wrong Solomon" says God. "You have not been doing the things that please me". I imagine it was painful for Solomon to hear this. But it was necessary so that this man's heart could experience an extreme makeover.

God does this to all of us, not to destroy us, but so that we can stop fooling ourselves in to believing all is well. So we will stop holding on the lies that say, "I'm going to church" or "I own a Bible", or "Mom and Dad are Christian". "Wear Jesus sandals, for crying out loud!" Those are lies Satan will tell you so that you don't truly become a Child of God. He wants you to believe that you are good enough because of what you do.

I wonder; has there ever been a moment in your life when you feel utter remorse for who you are and what you've done? Have you ever felt too ashamed to be in God's presence? If not, you may be living a moral life, doing all the right things and acting all religious. But there's a good chance you are not saved. There's a good chance you're still in need of an extreme makeover.