

## **Life Beyond Shadow Life**

Series: Following Jesus: Identity In Christ

Ecclesiastes 8:12-13 TM (0913)

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Thomas Merton *Every one of us is shadowed by an illusory person: a false self. This is the [person] that I want myself to be but who cannot exist, because God does not know anything about [this person]. ... My false and private self is the one who wants to exist outside the reach of God's will and God's love—outside of reality and outside of life. And such a self cannot help but be an illusion.*

Ecclesiastes 8:12-13 TM *Even though a person sins and gets by with it hundreds of times throughout a long life, I'm still convinced that the good life is reserved for the person who fears God, who lives reverently in his presence, and that the evil person will not experience a "good" life. No matter how many days he lives, they'll all be as flat and colorless as a shadow—because he doesn't fear God.*

### **I. Our relationship with creation must be altered**

#### **a. Things must be kept in their God-ordained place**

Romans 1:25 NIV <sup>25</sup>*They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised.*

#### **b. Our own role in creation must be honored**

Matthew 16:24 TM *Then Jesus went to work on his disciples. "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am.*

### **II. Our relationship with church must be re-ordered by God**

#### **a. The human tendency to abandon what we have messed up**

#### **b. The shadow church**

2 Timothy 3:1, 5 NLT <sup>1</sup>*You should also know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. ... <sup>5</sup>[People] will act as if they are religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. You must stay away from people like that.*

#### **c. God's plan is not abandonment, but restoration**

Ephesians 1:22-23 TM *At the center of [everything], Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.*

### **III. Cooperating with God in moving beyond shadow life**

#### **a. Acknowledge that our true identity is hidden in him**

#### **b. Learn to cultivate the seeds God is planting**

Thomas Merton *Our vocation is not simply to be, but to work together with God in the creation of our own life, our own identity, our own destiny. We are free beings and sons and daughters of God. This means to say that we should not passively exist, but actively participate in his creative freedom, in our own lives, and in the lives of others, by choosing the truth. To put it better, we are even called to share with God the work of creating the truth of our identity.*

Philippians 2:12-13 NIV <sup>12</sup>*Therefore, my dear friends...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*

#### **c. Bow before the only one who really knows me**