

Ecclesiastes 7:5-9

The last time on It's a Good Life, we looked at Ecclesiastes 7:1-4, and we ended by saying in verse 4 that the conclusion, according to that verse 4, is that the heart or the main basis of a person's emotional, real, innermost being... that's the heart. The conclusion is that the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning. In other words, serious thinking there. They're taking this to heart. They're really considering what happens after death, and when they get to the finish line and the heart of the fool is in the house of mirth. In other words, foolishness, according to verse 4. They're not paying attention. They're not listening, that once a person leaves this life, it's too late to make a decision. The decision has already been made by them. They've either chosen Jesus Christ or they've not chosen Him, and that foolish person does not choose Jesus Christ as Savior.

That's what this verse is talking about. That person needs to think of the finish line just as the wise person does and has made a decision for the Lord. But the fool goes ahead and they just live it up and they don't have any consideration for the life to come or the death to come after this life is over with.

The Bible teaches us that those who receive Jesus Christ have eternal life, but those who do not receive Him have eternal death. It's constantly dying for that lost person and actually never ceasing to be, and that's a sad picture, and that's a sad situation for that person today who does not know Jesus Christ, the realization that all that's waiting for them is eternal death.

Let's look on now in verses 5-7 of Ecclesiastes ⁵*It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.* ⁶*For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is*

the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity. ⁷*Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart.*

Notice with me if you would here in verses 4-5 that criticism of the wise is better than the song of fools. Someone has written this about verse 5. It says, "Godly reproof offends the flesh but benefits the spirit. Fool's songs in the house of mirth please the flesh but injure the soul." Someone has written that about verse 5.

I see in connection with this Psalm 141:4-5. It says, ⁴*Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.* ⁵*Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.*

The laughter of a fool is vanity like the popping or the irritating noise made when wood burns to heat a pot. That's what it's talking about there, the crackling, the thorns under a pot making that noise. It's like the laughter of a fool, and that's vanity. And then stress causes a wise man to be confused, in other words, to make bad decisions. We shouldn't let stress overtake us in this life. Also, it makes the wise man to be confused and something easily gained ruins his inner deepest ability to make sound decisions.

The Bible says that we are to work for what we have, and that does not mean to work for salvation. That means that God created man to work in this life, and as we work, just as we've seen in our study in Ecclesiastes, everything comes from God. Not only the things we have but the things that we look forward to.

Everything comes from God, and as we work... someone has said, "I work for everything I get." Well, God has given you the ability to work, and so even working is a gift from God.

God has intended from the Garden of Eden on, even in the beginning before the fall of man, that man should work. This is something that God wants us to do. He doesn't want us to be idle, and we need to be able to thank God daily that He's given us this ability, not only to work but also to praise Him for the things He's giving us because of that work that He's entitled us to and that He's letting us do. So when you have to go out and you have to get up at two or three o'clock in the morning to go to your job, you need to be praising God. I know that's early for praising God, but that's when we need to be praising Him is when we get up to go to work and we find that it is a gift of God that we're even able to go to work, and then to enjoy the things that He gives us because of that work.

Notice verse 8, the first part of that verse. It says, *Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof*. Some things that Solomon writes under the inspiration of the Lord seem hard to understand, but really, once you look at it, it's really not that hard. What that verse is saying is what is started needs to be finished. Let's read it again. *Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof*. It's good to start something, but it's much better after you start that thing to finish it. How many times have we as human beings started something and we go on to something else? What's the old saying? A jack of all trades and master of none. That means that you go on and on and on. You try different things but you never finish one thing. You need to finish what you start.

Not everything started has an end. As we look at this, there is satisfaction in finishing something you started. You kind of step back

and look at it and admire what you've done and you're proud of it. You know the Lord did the same thing in the beginning. He created everything, and it says that there was a time when He just kind of stepped back and He looked at it and He saw everything that was created, He saw that it was good.

We need to take pride in the things that we do, not to be to the point of saying, "Look, I'm better than you are," and so forth, but we need to finish what we start and then step back and say, "You know, I am proud of what has taken place here," and once again, it's all because of the Lord.

Notice the rest of verse 8 now. It says, *and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit*. Verse 9: *Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools*. I believe what's being said here is patience is better than pride, verses 8 and 9, and Proverbs 13:10 talks about this, and we'll look at that in just a moment. But notice, the person who does not allow himself to get overly anxious is better off than a person who lets himself be controlled by his pride. We're talking about being depressed a few minutes ago, and so many people are depressed in this life. We need to turn that over to the Lord and let God take care of that.

In Proverbs 13:10, it says, *Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom*. Don't let that depression rob you of the blessings of God. Be wise and go to the Lord in prayer and don't be so prideful of the things that you've done. And once again, if you start something, you need to finish it, but sometimes you just say, "I can't finish it. I'm just a failure." Well, you're not a failure. You need to get up and keep going, and you need to do what God has given you the ability to do. Let Him lead and guide you through this life. And those verses go on to say don't be in a

hurry to be angry. Don't lose control because fools let their deep-felt emotions control them. We need to step back, and just as we step back and look at the work that's been completed by the help of God, that He's given us the ability to do, we need to step back and we need to be proud of what has taken place, but don't let that control you. We need to continue on and do other things. Once again, Proverbs 13:10 says, *Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.* And Proverbs 14:29: *He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.* Proverbs 16:32: *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*

Don't be in a hurry to be angry. Sometimes we just fly off the handle. Sometimes as we're driving on, we lose control. Someone cuts us off and cuts in front of us and we just go wild and we just get in a hurry to be angry. We need to learn to control that and turn it over to the Lord and let God take care of it. I've heard testimony of people who have said someone has cut them off or they've been held up in traffic, and later on as they drive down the road, there's been a terrible accident. Had they been there a little bit earlier, they might have been involved in that accident.

Sometimes the Lord allows things to come into our lives, I believe, as a protection, to take care of us, to help us through this life, to watch over us. I can think of things that happened in my life, even before I got saved. I believe that God was watching over me even at that point.

You as an unsaved person today, you need to thank God that He's taking care of you. He's giving you the breath that you breathe. He created you and He's the one who needs to be receiving all the honor and glory, and you need to receive Him as your Lord and Savior even

right now by saying, "Lord, come into my heart. I receive you as my Savior."

And you as a saved person today, you need to be giving God all the honor and glory. You need to thank Him for saving you, and you need to grow in His grace and knowledge and you need to get into the Book. You need to get into the Word of God and trust Him to lead and guide you so that you can grow in the grace and knowledge that He wants you to have. You want wisdom? Get in the Book. Get into the Word of God and let God lead you and guide you and direct your paths. And that, the Bible tells us, is what the wise person does, is let God take control of the life.

Let's pray.

Father, thank You today for being so gracious to us. Thank You for allowing us to share Your Word. I pray for that person who does not know You as Savior. May that person receive Jesus Christ as Savior today by saying, "Lord, come into my heart. I'm trusting You to save me so I can see You one day." And Father, for that person who is saved, may You lead, guide, and direct their paths in the way that You would have them to go to help others find Jesus as Savior. Thank You, Father. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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