

Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:7

What a great day it is to be serving the Lord. You know, the Bible tells us in Philippians 4:4, *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.* What a glorious time it is to be serving God and just to be happy. This is the day that the Lord hath made and we are to rejoice in it. It may be raining where you are, but it's still a beautiful day. God has given us this day and we need to rejoice. Rejoice always in the Lord.

Last time, we spoke in Chapter 9 in Ecclesiastes and we're going into Chapter 10 today. In Chapter 9 we studied about life and death and the inevitability of death, but we're alive right now.

Ecclesiastes 9:13-18 is where we want to pick up today, and it says: *¹³This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me: ¹⁴There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: ¹⁵Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. ¹⁶Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. ¹⁷The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools. ¹⁸Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.*

In these verses I see that we are to esteem wisdom, and as we look in verses 13-15 we see the preacher, and that's Solomon, saw how wisdom saved a city. Wisdom was found in a poor man, according to verse 15, and the poor man was soon forgotten, according to that verse. Still, Solomon praises the value of wisdom. He praises it as better than physical

power, according to verse 16. Although a poor man's wisdom is better than strength, his wisdom is often looked at with contempt. It's often despised and his words are not perceived or understood. They're not listened to, according to verse 16. We also read that quiet words of the wise are perceived, and we're going to see more about that in Chapter 10 in just a few moments, but quiet words of the wise are perceived and they're heeded more than the loud words of a person in charge of fools. Wisdom is better than weapons of war, according to verse 18, but one ungodly person... that's one sinner... can tear down a great amount of good that's been accomplished by the wise.

We need to take to heart today those of us who know Christ as Savior. We make mistakes just like anyone else, but we need to learn from our mistakes. We need to let God lead and guide us and give us the words that we need to speak when we're speaking to someone who needs Christ as Lord and Savior.

Now, as we look into Chapter 10, we're going to look at these objectives to compare the harm of folly and the value of wisdom, to see the impact of folly on one's reputation and the government, and also in business. In verses 1-3, we see thoughtless behavior and this is extremely unacceptable; it's folly, according to the preacher here. Verse 1 of Ecclesiastes 10 says, *¹Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.*

That's simply saying that thoughtless behavior mars the finest of reputations. Dead flies, according to this verse, will cause the druggist's apothecary, or his ointment, to

stink. That's the perfume. It stinks. And thoughtless behavior, speaking without thinking, causes the reputation of one who has wisdom and honor to stink. In other words, you need to think before you speak. We need to stop and consider the things we're about to say before we say them. Let God deal with our hearts before we rise up and we say something that we're going to be ashamed that we said, because verse 2 says, *²A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left.* Thoughtless behavior, according to verse 2, is an unsafe guide, and the wise man controls his emotions... that's his heart... but the fool cannot control his emotions. The wise man is right; the fool is wrong.

Verse 3 says this: *³Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him... that's earthly wisdom, by the way... and he saith to every one that he is a fool.* Thoughtless behavior identifies the fool's stupidity. He doesn't have to announce who he is; it's simply by his actions and his words and his thoughts that he brings forth that prove who he is. A fool walks along the way without wisdom. That's the wisdom of God, and in doing so, he shows everyone that he's a fool. We must seek the wisdom of God. Everything done under the sun that's under heaven on this Earth, everything that we do without the wisdom of God is vanity, according to the Scriptures we've been studying throughout the book of Ecclesiastes. It's only what we do through the wisdom of God that's going to amount to anything.

But remember, just as we looked at Chapter 9, we're all going to die, and we're going to leave everything behind, but I believe that Christian today who is living for the Lord... how can we leave something behind that's going to be worthwhile? One of the greatest things that we can leave behind is that person who has come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through

our testimony, through our witnessing to that person, telling that person how to go to Heaven. As we do that and that person gets saved, in essence and in a sense, they're going to carry on our work for us while we're rejoicing with the Lord after this life is over.

So we see that it's what we do now for the Lord that's going to count. It's also what that person does today with Jesus Christ that's going to count. That person who's never trusted Him, there's still hope as long as you have the breath of life, but don't count on tomorrow. The Bible says what is your life that's even a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. We don't have the promise of tomorrow, and that's what we've been studying throughout the book of Ecclesiastes... life and death. Death is inevitable. Every person dies physically, but the good news is you can live eternally. You can have eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I don't mean this body is not going to die, but the real you, the soul, the spirit, will live forever with the Lord once you've trusted Him as your Savior. You leave this life, the breath of life leaves you, and you wake up in the arms of the Lord as a saved person once you've received Him as your Savior, but you must do it now while you still have breath in this body.

In Ecclesiastes 10:4-20 we see that thoughtless behavior... and this is folly... is manifested here. It becomes obvious. In verse 4 it says, *⁴If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.* When you, or the ruler, lose control, and that's what verse 4 is talking about, something happens. And verse 4, do not leave your post. In other words, stand firm and be quiet, listen. Psalm 46:10 says, *Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen. I will be exalted in the earth.*

Sometimes we take offense when somebody says something about our Lord... and I do. I don't like it when someone says something against my Savior, my Lord, my God. But the Bible says that I'm not to lash out against that person who says something unkind, that I am to stand firm. The way that you're to stand firm is on the Word of God. Let God take care of the situation. Don't do something that's going to bring dishonor and disgrace to Him but always answer quietly and without argument, simply putting forth, giving forth the Word of God. Let God do the work. If those who govern, according to the verse in verse 4 there, if those who govern come against you, don't leave where you are. Stand firm. That means the government, somebody who's in charge. Stand firm. Do not lose self-control. Your self-control will calm you and the person who has come against you.

The Bible talks about giving a soft answer, but in James 1:19, it says, *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.* Once again, think before you speak.

Proverbs 14:29: *He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.* And then in Proverbs 15:18, it says, *A wrathful man stirreth up strife; but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.* So think before you speak. Don't be angry. Don't fly off the handle, if you would. Don't do that, but stand firm, and let God take care of the situation.

Now, if you've never trusted Him as Savior, it's a little harder for you, because you really don't have the wisdom of God, and that's what we're talking about here and that's what God is speaking of here. He's speaking that once we're saved, we have access to the wisdom of God. We have access through the Bible; we have access through prayer, through reaching in to

His throne in Heaven and asking Him for guidance in this life and how to handle things. As we look into His Word, He speaks to us through His Word and gives us instruction. That's what we're receiving through the book of Ecclesiastes.

Notice in verses 5-20, and we'll not get through this entire section today, but notice verses 5-20, thoughtless behavior becomes evident. In other words, it's seen. Verses 5-7 say: ⁵*There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler: ⁶Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place. ⁷I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.*

An evil is observed here by the preacher in verses 5-7. A mistake... and this is the error spoken of there... is made by the ruler in verse 5. Thoughtlessness and folly are exalted and the rich are made inferior. Servants are seen treated better than royalty in verse 7. Everything seems to be backwards as we look at those verses, and we'll study there next time starting with verse 8 in Ecclesiastes Chapter 10. Let's pray.

Father, thank You today for the privilege of presenting your Word. Thank You, Lord, for those who are listening. And I pray for that person today who has never trusted You as Savior. May that person receive You right now by saying, "Lord, I know I can't save myself. I know You're the Savior and I'm ready to receive You as my Savior right now."

And for that saved person, may that person bow and say, "God, thank you for saving my soul. Thank You that I have eternal life. Thank You that I can serve You while I'm here." In Jesus' name, Amen.

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