

Wisdom – Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:20

Our passage this week contains a number of observations and maxims, all oriented around the theme of wisdom.

- 1) **To get started, let's talk about our own perceptions wisdom. What are the first things that come to your mind when you think of it? How would describe it to someone asking about it?**

Ecclesiastes 9:13–10:20 (ESV)

9:13 I have also seen this example of wisdom under the sun, and it seemed great to me. 14 There was a little city with few men in it, and a great king came against it and besieged it, building great siegeworks against it. 15 But there was found in it a poor, wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man. 16 But I say that wisdom is better than might, though the poor man's wisdom is despised and his words are not heard. 17 The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools. 18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

10:1 Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give off a stench; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.

2 A wise man's heart inclines him to the right, but a fool's heart to the left.

3 Even when the fool walks on the road, he lacks sense, and he says to everyone that he is a fool.

4 If the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for calmness will lay great offenses to rest.

5 There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, as it were an error proceeding from the ruler: 6 folly is set in many high places, and the rich sit in a low place. 7 I have seen slaves on horses, and princes walking on the ground like slaves.

8 He who digs a pit will fall into it, and a serpent will bite him who breaks through a wall.

9 He who quarries stones is hurt by them, and he who splits logs is endangered by them.

10 If the iron is blunt, and one does not sharpen the edge, he must use more strength, but wisdom helps one to succeed.

11 If the serpent bites before it is charmed, there is no advantage to the charmer.

12 The words of a wise man's mouth win him favor, but the lips of a fool consume him.

13 The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is evil madness.

14 A fool multiplies words, though no man knows what is to be, and who can tell him what will be after him?

15 *The toil of a fool wearies him,
for he does not know the way to the city.*

16 *Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child,
and your princes feast in the morning!*

17 *Happy are you, O land, when your king is the son of the nobility,
and your princes feast at the proper time,
for strength, and not for drunkenness!*

18 *Through sloth the roof sinks in,
and through indolence the house leaks.*

19 *Bread is made for laughter,
and wine gladdens life,
and money answers everything.*

20 *Even in your thoughts, do not curse the king,
nor in your bedroom curse the rich,
for a bird of the air will carry your voice,
or some winged creature tell the matter.*

Let's refine our understanding of wisdom through the scripture we've just read.

- 2) **What does wisdom offer to us? What hope does it hold out?**
- 3) **We all long for what wisdom seems to offer – we want good and to be protected from bad. In what ways do you see yourself looking to your own wisdom to find those blessings?**
- 4) **What is fatal flaw with wisdom? What does this tell us about the hope we should have in our own wisdom?**
- 5) **What is the relationship between wisdom and righteousness?**
- 6) **The context for much of this wisdom is politics – why is that? How does this point us to where we can find a wisdom/righteousness that is enough?**
- 7) **What does it mean for us to be in Adam? In Christ? How are we joined to Christ?**
- 8) **Even as Christians who have are trusting in the work of Christ for our standing before, we struggle to trust him consistently as we walk through life. What are some of the ways that shows up for us?**
- 9) **What does what we've seen affect our life together as a church?**

PRAYER

Let's pray for each other in our struggles to trust and rest fully in Christ.

What other burdens can we help carry?

Is there sin you need to confess?

How have you seen God's care and consolation in your life?