

Ecclesiastes 10:18-11:4
In a World Filled with Fools and Folly,
Beware...Be Wise

“Besides being wise,
the Preacher also **taught the people knowledge,**
weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care.
The Preacher sought to find **words of delight,**
and uprightly he wrote **words of truth.**
The **words of the wise** are like **goads,**
and like **nails firmly fixed** are the collected sayings;
they are **given by one Shepherd.**
My son, **beware of anything beyond these.”** (*Ecclesiastes 12:9-12*)

“The Bible’s Wisdom Literature is part of the means God uses
to **change our standpoint and radically shift our perspective**
as we look at the world.
Left to our own devices, we think about life
from the perspective of **youth, beauty, success, career, and personal happiness.**
Ecclesiastes, however, has been teaching us to think about life
from **the perspective of death.”** (*David Gibson*)

where we’re coming from...

continuing in a large section of **proverbs**
both the dangers of folly
and the benefits and blessings of wisdom
instruction to make us wise

“...Christ Jesus, who **became to us wisdom from God,...”**
(*1 Corinthians 1:30b–31*)

where we're going today...

10:18-20 **Inaction...Bad/Foolish Action**

11:1-4 **Action...Good/Wise Investing**

10:18-20 **the carelessness of foolish in various ways** being foolishly careless

v. 18 folly/carelessness with **one's possessions/responsibilities**

v. 19 folly/carelessness with **God's gifts** (perhaps when 1 has plenty)

v. 20 folly/carelessness w/ one's **attitude and private words**

11:1-4 **the wisdom of sowing/casting/giving**

v. 1 wisdom to **cast** one's bread/resources/gifts life (rather than just bury it)

v. 2-3 wisdom to **give** of oneself and one's gifts from God in many ways

v. 4 wisdom to **sow** (even if conditions don't seem ideal)

What are ways we see/hear these wisdom principles in **Jesus?**
in **the New Testament?**

v. 18 folly/carelessness with one's possessions/responsibilities

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

**"Whoever is slack in his work
is brother to him who destroys."** (*Proverbs 18:9*)

v. 19 folly/carelessness with God's gifts (and why they are given)

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

"The failure of the slothful life is seen here:
bread...wine...money is **the limit of its horizon.**" (*Michael Eaton*)

"Sorrow is better than laughter,
for by sadness of face the heart is made glad...
As the crackling of thorns under a pot,
so is the laughter of the fools;
this also **is vanity.**" (*Ecclesiastes 7:3,6*)

money answers everything

"Someone who has money lacks nothing that this world can give.
It supplies **a thousand advantages—**
not only the necessities
but the conveniences, indulgences, and embellishments of life." (*Charles Bridges*)

"The point is not that every man has his price
but that **every gift has its use—**
and silver, in the form of money, is **the most versatile of all.**" (*Derek Kidner*)

v. 20 folly/carelessness with one's attitude and private words

**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.**

"**Be subject for the Lord's sake to** every human institution,
whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors
as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.
For this is the will of God....
Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood.
Fear God. **Honor the emperor.**" (*1 Peter 2:13-17*)

"...be sure your sin will find you out." (*Numbers 32:23b*)

11:1-4 wisdom...initiative...action...investing...stewarding...variety

“...**you do not know**...” (Ecc 11:2b,5a,6b) + 8:17 + 9:1 + 9:11c-12

The *reality* is: We **do not** and **cannot know**
and **cannot predict**
and maybe most frustrating of all: **cannot fully control**
the future (or our future) to the extent we want.

Humans, as ‘great’ as we like to think we are,
are **forced in their finiteness** to live their lives with **great uncertainties**.

v. 1 wisdom to **cast**, not just keep

1 Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.

“Life is a venture of faith” (*Michael Eaton*)

v. 2-3 wisdom to **give** (in many ways)

2 Give a portion to seven, or even to eight,
for you know not what disaster may happen on earth.

“**give**, and it **will be given to you**.
Good measure, pressed down,
shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.
For with **the measure you use**,
it will be **measured back to you**.” (*Luke 6:38*)

3 If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves on the earth,
and if a tree falls to the south or to the north,
in the place where the tree falls, there it will lie.

v. 4 wisdom to **sow**, despite so much that's unknown

**4 He who observes the wind will not sow,
and he who regards the clouds will not reap.**

Thinking about what the Preacher has said...

Thinking about the proverbs/principles
the wise Preacher/Shepherd has written here
for our good...for our wisdom

Cast/give/sow **widely**.

Cast/give/sow **in faith**.

Cast/give/sow **'trustingly'**.

Cast/give/sow **faithfully**.

**"Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly,
and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.
Each one must give as he has decided in his heart,
not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**

**And God is able to make all grace abound to you,
so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times,
you may abound in every good work....**

**He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food
will supply and multiply your seed for sowing
and increase the harvest of your righteousness.**

**You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way,
which through us will produce thanksgiving to God." (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)**

“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked,
for **whatever one sows, that will he also reap.**
For the one who **sows to his own flesh** will from the flesh **reap corruption**,
but the one who **sows to the Spirit** will from the Spirit **reap eternal life.**
And **let us not grow weary of doing good**,
for **in due season we will reap**,
if we do not give up.” (Galatians 6:7-9)

Jesus' Parable of the Talents

Matthew 25:14-30

“Well done, good and faithful servant.
You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much.
Enter into the joy of your master.”

“Master, I knew you to be a hard man,
reaping where you did not sow,
and gathering where you scattered no seed.”

“Cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness...”

Questions and Insights to Meditate on in our lives....

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

*How diligent or slothful are you with the gifts God has given you to
enjoy and to steward?*

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

*How wisely & rightly are you both enjoying & stewarding God's gifts
of food/drink/money?*

*Any ways you are relying more on money as “the answer to
everything” than you are on God?*

**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.**

How honorably or dishonorably do you think of and speak of the authorities God has put in place over you?

**1 Cast your bread upon the waters,
for you will find it after many days.**

How faithfully are you casting (not burying) what God has given you in order to gain/profit?

**2 Give a portion to seven, or even to eight,
for you know not what disaster may happen on earth.
3 If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves on the earth,
and if a tree falls to the south or to the north,
in the place where the tree falls, there it will lie.**

How much, how generously are you giving what God has entrusted to you to steward even though disaster may strike any day?

**4 He who observes the wind will not sow,
and he who regards the clouds will not reap.**

With how much faith and courage and wisdom are you sowing your life/gifts/talents/time/treasures?