

Do Not Waste This Crisis  
Ecclesiastes 10  
Pastor Jeremy Cagle, November 21, 2021

Well, before we get started in our sermon this morning, I just want to say a special greetings to you from Grace Community Church in Los Angeles. Several of us were on a zoom call yesterday, we had a prayer time in my house. And we also set up a zoom thing online for anyone who couldn't make it. And one of those who joined us was George Crawford from Grace advance. Several of you remember George, he preached for us over the summer, and they've ministered to us many times. They actually helped to plant the church here. They heard about the tragedy this week, and they reached out to see how we're doing and you're on their hearts and minds. I just want to tell you that. In times like this, it can feel like you're alone can be really discouraging, but you're not alone. You have friends all over the world. I've been talking to several of the pastors in the area and we're praying for one another as well. The church Grace Church on 99 out in Squamish, they're doing fine, there was no flooding in that city. But our sister church Prairie Chapel got hit pretty hard. We are praying for them. We're in this together, we're not alone. And I hope that encourages you. During this season, they have had quite a year at Grace Community, some of you are familiar with the court case with John MacArthur. And they won that court case over the meeting, in defiance of the governing authorities there. And they've been very encouraged. But even in light of that encouragement, they still want you to know that they're thinking about you. And so please keep that in mind. And with that said, if you would just open your Bibles with me this morning, to the book of Ecclesiastes. That's the book we're in today. So if you would, please, open your Bibles to the book of Ecclesiastes. And as you're doing that, if you are new to us today, we're halfway through a series on this book of Ecclesiastes, it would not have made a lot of sense if we did it a couple of years ago. This is a book that would not have seemed very relevant if we preached on it back in 2018, or something like that, because of the theme of it. If you look in the very first chapter, in the very first words, this is the theme of the book of Ecclesiastes. Solomon just painted across the sky in large letters so you don't miss it. It says, "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. 'Vanity of vanities,' says the Preacher, 'Vanity of vanities all is vanity.'" Now I can stop the reading there. And I don't even have to go any further in the book to say how many of you have felt like that this week? How many would say that this seems all so vain. Because you build a house and it gets flooded. You build a barn and make a livelihood for yourself and it gets washed away. You go to bed, it's fine. You go to sleep, nothing is wrong. You wake up the next day and you don't see it again. And just to say a few words about this, as you all are very well aware there was a rainstorm, and I'm saying this also for those who are online; some people are going to watch this sermon from other places, but there was a rainstorm last week that brought an unprecedented amount of water on to the Sumas Prairie. That's the stretch of land between Chilliwack and Abbotsford. We've all driven through it before you have to pass through it on the way to Vancouver. It's 90 square kilometers. It's the size of Burnaby BC or thereabouts, and it supplies 50% of the dairy for this province. It's considered to be the breadbasket of British Columbia. It's a major source of economic and financial stability for this region. But with the large amount of rainfall came an unprecedented swelling of the Sumas River there and the Nooksack River in northern Washington to the point that it overwhelmed the pumps in the prairie and it flooded the plains which is pretty significant. One of those pumps is able to handle something like 250,000 gallons of water per hour. The massive machines with the storm brought so much pressure into the river that it overwhelmed it. In fact, the mayor of Abbotsford said that it was hard to put into words what had just happened because the damage was incalculable. He said it reached catastrophic proportions and led to the destruction on the level that hasn't been seen here in a long time. Hundreds had to leave the area on Monday and Tuesday from there because the rains kept coming and eventually 75,000 homes lost power. More than 100,000 lost it in northern Washington. 7000

people were evacuated from the area from here all the way up to Merit. One person was dead two people were missing. 275 are trapped in between the landslides on Highway seven and had to be airlifted by helicopter. 24 highways were closed, dozens of schools were shut down. Millions upon millions upon millions of dollars were lost in livestock and poultry and pork, and berry farms and houses and barns and equipment and road damage. The army was called in to help deal with the situation, a state of emergency was declared by the province. And I might add, we just got out of one state of emergency now we're going into another one. Which makes you wonder why? It makes you wonder what's the point of all this? Why try so hard when everything can be taken away in the blink of an eye? If I understand the situation correctly, some of these people had flood insurance but others didn't. They lost everything. Which makes you look to God and say, Why would you do something like this? Why would you strike us this way God? And I want to tell you that if you're wondering about that sort of thing this morning, it's okay. Because Solomon did the same thing in this book. If you're wrestling with these bigger questions of life as to why this and why that and the vanity of it all, that's what this book is about. It is very relevant today. And it meets us where we are.

He says this in chapter 10. If you want to turn a few passages over this is our passage for today. And this is how he begins to answer that for this morning. And I just want to warn you this may not seem to relate to what we're going through when you first read it. But it does and I'm going to explain that to you should just be patient while we get through it. But if you look in chapter 10 This is one of the ways he addresses the problem of vanity. He says,

“Dead flies make a perfumer’s oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor. A wise man's heart directs him toward the right, but the foolish man's heart direction toward the left. Even when the fool walks along the road, his sense is lacking and he demonstrates to everyone that he is a fool. If the ruler’s temper rises against you, do not abandon your position, because composure allays great offenses.

There is an evil I have seen under the sun, like an error which goes forth from the ruler -- folly is set in many exalted places while rich men sit in humble places. I have seen slaves riding on horses and princes walking like slaves on the land.

He who digs a pit may fall into it, and a serpent may bite him who breaks through a wall. He who quarries stones may be hurt by them, and he who splits logs may be endangered by them. If the axe is dull and he does not sharpen its edge, then he must exert more strength. Wisdom has the advantage of giving success. If the serpent bites before being charmed, there is no profit for the charmer. Words from the mouth of a wise man are gracious while the lips of a fool consume him; the beginning of his talking is folly and the end of it is wicked madness. Yet the fool multiplies words. No man knows what will happen, and who can tell what will come after him? The toil of a fool so wearies him that he does not even know how to go to a city.”

We'll stop the reading there. Now, I don't have to tell you, as you read that this may be one of the most difficult chapters to read in all the Bible. Because a lot of these images are very foreign to us. We don't really talk this way in our modern vernacular. And in fact, I probably wouldn't have chosen a passage like this for a day like today, but it was on our schedule, and I wanted to keep it because it is helpful, because the main idea is found in verse one. If you look in verse one, this is the theme of the passage. Solomon writes and he says, “Dead flies make a

perfumer's oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor." And the key word there is the word fool. It's the Hebrew word *cakal*. It's mentioned nine times in this chapter to refer to someone who lacks judgment. They just don't have any sense. And here's why they don't have any sense. This is why it relates because they see tragedies like this occur, and then they go on as if nothing ever happened. They see catastrophes like this flood take place before their eyes, and then they just go home and they say that sad but what's on TV. It can also refer to someone who's open minded, so that everything goes in and everything goes out of their head. Their mind is like an open door. Nothing sticks. They have no filter. We all hear about the virtues of being open minded today but to a Jew, it's not virtuous. If you told them he that you are open minded a Jew would tell you to shut it because it's foolish. If you don't, verse one says this: it will make you stink in the eyes of God. It'll make you smell like dead flies and a bottle of perfume. And verse two says it'll get you all mixed up inside as well so you go one way when you're supposed to go another, you can't tell which way or what to do. Verse three says, as a result of this, it'll make you walk in a strange way. Because you go through life in a fog. We've all know people that are like that. And Solomon's point here in this whole chapter is that that's no way to live your life. Because I don't have to tell you this was a big deal. This past week one was a major event in the life of this Province. And the worst thing you could do is pretend like it was not because it was and you need to see it that way.

And I mentioned that, because this is a real problem for us today. And that is that we have such a hard time slowing down and thinking about anything nowadays, knowing we have a hard time letting anything sink in for a moment, because we're all so busy. We're all in such a hurry that it's hard to cram anything else into the schedule. Now, several years ago, the National Post did a survey in which they discovered that only 20% of Canadians pray every day, two out of 10. And they cited a bunch of reasons for that. But the biggest one is that we're all in such a hurry doing something else that we don't have any time for God anymore. We have time to look at Facebook, we have time to watch TV, we have time to talk to our friends, we don't have time to talk to God because it's just go, go, go, go all the time. Just run, run, run. No, I got I got out on the road the other day to get gas. And I thought the road would be empty because of all the chaos. What did I see? 1000s of people going here, there and everywhere, like nothing took place. Because that's how we operate. Here we have one speed and it's fast. Because for most of us, this is what life is like we run to work and we run to the store, then we run to the bank. And when that's over, we run to the park, run to the laundry. and run to Tim Hortons for a quick bite to eat. And it's got to be quick because you can't take your time, shove it in your face, run to the church, run to our friend's house run to the neighbors. And when that's over, we pick up the kids take them to soccer and they get to run some more. And what Solomon is saying here in this chapter is that if you're not careful, that sort of thing can destroy your life, because it can make you a fool. It can ruin everything. Because you can go through this entire life like you have no purpose, no eternity, nothing to live for. Open minded, comes in, goes out, comes in goes out, comes in, goes out. The friends, please hear me out. I'm not saying it's wrong to be busy, because it's not. And I'm not saying it's wrong to work hard because you need to work hard. It pleases God when you do that. But I'm saying you need to stop every once in a while and ask the question, why? What am I doing this for? Why am I in such a hurry all the time? Because that's what a wise man does. The day is coming when I will die, And how is this getting me ready for that? Let me say it this way friends, if you're not going to say that in a time like this when you're ever going to say it; If you're not going to think about eternity now, when will you ever think about it? A flood spared Chilliwack. But that doesn't mean you'll be spared the next disaster. None of those things are guaranteed.

CS Lewis once said that Christianity asserts that every individual human being is going to live forever. And this is a very important doctrine because there are good many things which would not bother me so much if I knew I would live forever. In fact, if I thought I would only live for 70 years that would be a different story because it

would change my priorities. But that's not the way it is because my soul will go on forever in a place called heaven or a place called hell. And the thought of that needs to impact the things I do right now here on this earth. You're not just going to be here for a while where you eat and drink and go to bed and get up tomorrow and repeat the cycle all over again. It's going to be much greater than that.

And the thought of it should grab your attention now. And I really think this is one of the strategies of the devil to get us to forget this. I think one of the greatest tools Satan has right now is a tool of distraction. He loves to keep you busy doing other things. So you never think about God. He's not trying to change the way you think about God as much as he's trying to stop you from thinking, period. And you can't let them do that. And this is something the Bible says over and over again. But let me just read a few passages; you're familiar with these, I'm sure. But in Luke 12, Jesus tells a parable of a rich man who was very productive. And he said to himself, "What am I going to do? Since I have no place to store my crops? I know what I'll do, I'll build bigger barns and larger ones, and then I'll store my goods. And I'll eat and drink and be merry." But God said to him, "you fool." [There's the word you fool]. This very night, your soul is required of you and now who will own what you have made?" Why does God say that harsh thing? Because the guy stored up his grain. He said that because that's all he did. That's all he cared about. It was just grain, grain, grain for him money, money, money. And God said, "You're a fool if you live that way." Apostle James says in James chapter four, he says, "Come now you who say today or tomorrow, we will go to such and such a city and spend a year there and engage in business, yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor." And you catch that word, vapor. It's over like that so you need to be sure to live it for the Lord, which leads to this passage for this morning.

If you're taking notes in Ecclesiastes 10, we're going to look at three types of foolishness to avoid when it comes to a crisis. I really wrestled with what to call the sermon this morning. But I kind of landed on the title, Don't Waste This Crisis, because you can waste time like this. This type of thing doesn't happen every day. And if you're not careful, you can forget all about it. And that's foolish. So we're going to talk about three types of foolishness that Solomon tells you to avoid. You know, it's been so interesting to watch. Some of these things happen here in British Columbia, because if you think about it, we've had so many crises lately, haven't we? It's just been one after the other. If you remember after the Coronavirus, how did people respond to that? Well, they started paying attention to spiritual things for a while they were asking deeper questions. As a pastor, I was kind of like, oh, boy, I like this, you know. And then they stopped because they got used to it. And then the church is closed. And they did it again, because it shook everybody up. They started saying, "How can I be saved?" And "What's the church all about?" And "Why is it so important?" And the churches opened up and they forgot. Then the civil unrest happened out in Alberta when the pastors got arrested. Some of you remember that and that shook people up, and then it went back to normal, then the Coronavirus came back and now the floods are here. Now, it makes you wonder what does God have to do to get our attention around here?

How far does He have to go? Does He have to keep giving crisis after crisis? Does He have to take everything away before we pay attention to Him? Friends, you don't want to tempt God like that. The Bible says "Now is the day of salvation." Today is a day of His favor, and you need to pay attention today and so we're going to talk about that with three types of foolishness to avoid and the first one is the foolishness of pride. We're all guilty of all these in the list by the way, just to let you know. I have hope for you at the end of the passage, but I want to talk about the problem before we get to the hope. But the first type of foolishness to avoid in a time of crisis is the foolishness of pride, which refers to the foolishness of thinking that you're too good for this or thinking that it's

not going to affect you because you're rich or successful or that type of thing. If you look in the first verses here, Solomon writes in verse one he says,

Dead flies make a perfumer's oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor. A wise man's heart directs them toward the right, but the foolish man's heart directs them toward the left. Even when the fool walks along the road, his sense is lacking and he demonstrates to everyone that he's a fool. If the ruler's temper rises against you, do not abandon your position, because composure alleys great offenses. There is an evil I've seen under the sun, like an error which goes forth from the ruler -- folly is set in many exalted places while rich men said in humble places. I have seen slaves riding on horses and princes walking like slaves on the land.

Now, as you read that you can tell that the theme of this passage is foolishness because it just kind of leaps off the page as you as you as you read that. It's mentioned several times, because verse three says, "Even when the fool walks along the road, his sense is lacking. And he demonstrates to everyone that he's a fool." That means you can see a fool by the way he walks, just by his demeanor. He doesn't have to have a sign on his head that says, "I'm a fool." It's not necessary. Everybody knows it. That's the idea here, written all over his face. And to give you an example, this verse four says if the rulers temper rises against you, do not abandon your position. That seems strange when you first read it. But what Solomon is saying there is that this is where you see foolishness displayed the most. You see it in rulers who are people of high authority because the power goes to their head. We've all heard the expression that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. That's what he's saying. And to explain that some more, verse six actually says this: "Folly is set in many exalted places." If you notice when he says that, he doesn't say "wisdom" is in exalted places, he says "folly" is there, or stupidity is there. And he's not referring to every leader because Solomon was a leader himself. But in a lot of them, he says, not just in a few, he says, but in many exalted places, that means you see it all the time. So if you go to Canada, you see it here, you go to the US, you see it there, you go to Mexico, it's there, while verse six says rich men sit in humble places. The word "rich" here is the Hebrew word *ashiyar*, which means "rich and wealth". But the way it's used here means rich in intelligence. And Solomon says that what he means is foolish men get to rule and reign, while smart men don't. Dumb men get to lead nations and countries and empires, while the bright people get to sweep the floors. And as a result, it makes them proud.

Now, if you're wondering what that has to do with our situation today, let me just mention a couple things here. A couple ways to apply this to your life. One is this. This means that if you're in a high place in society, you shouldn't be too excited about it. Because it doesn't mean that you deserve it. It doesn't mean you're wise, it doesn't mean you're great. And it doesn't mean that you're going to escape a serious time like this. That's one way to apply this passage. In fact, to drive this home, we just went through a horrible tragedy here in British Columbia, where so many people lost everything they had, and a lot of them were rich. This is one of the wealthiest areas in BC, a lot of income was there. A lot of that farmland was very fertile, and it all vanished in an instant. In fact, several news companies posted articles this past week telling people to stop swimming in the water to take pictures because it was full of dead animals. The water was toxic, it was overrun with remains of the wealth that was destroyed from these farms. It had dead cows and dead pigs and dead chickens in it. That was worth lots of money. And what I'm just trying to get you to understand here is you don't need to be proud of that kind of thing. You don't need to put your livelihood or your life on that. Because it could disappear anytime. You need to brag on something else. Like the Lord. You know, I've heard it said this way, if you're rich, don't crow. And if you're poor, don't croak. Don't put too much stock in your money because it could be taken away.

This brings us to another application of what he says here, just another way to apply this to your lives. And that is that if you're in a low place, you shouldn't be discouraged by that either because it doesn't mean that you're a fool. Wise men get in low places as well. That's what he's saying here. Smart men often find themselves at the bottom of the ladder. If you notice, as you read the passage here that it's the poor man that is the hero in the text in the humble man comes out on top because verse six says that rich men sit in humble places, which means you can still be rich. If you're poor, you can still succeed even if you don't have a lot of money because verse seven says, "I have seen slaves riding on horses, and princes walking like slaves on the land." And what makes them princes? Well, they have things that money can't buy. What makes them so important? Well, they have wealth in the untangible things like their wife and their kids and their friends and their family.

I will never forget a time a friend of mine told me he was an evangelist to the politicians in Illinois. And he said, "You know what Jeremy? All the poor people I know in this capital that sweep the floors and clean the bathrooms have a good relationship with their family. And all the senators and congressmen and Supreme Court justices I know come to work in a limousine and they don't have a relationship with their family anymore. What Solomon is asking here for you in a time like this is which one do you want to be? Do you want to be the rich man or the poor man? Do you want to be the one who is successful at work, or the one who is successful in life because you don't always get both. They don't always come together. This is something that we really saw this past week. But we saw this community really step up to help each other in the intangible things. We saw people out on boats, helping bring cattle in. We saw folks stacking sandbags, several people took strangers into their home. In fact, we saw pictures on Facebook of fishing boats out on the farm coming in with four or five cows riding in them. It was pretty interesting because the cows looked like they were going to the beach. They were as happy as they could be. But that's the kind of thing Solomon is talking about here. You need to prioritize things like that. That's what matters in life. Not the money.

In one of his books, JC Ryle said this, he said, "Wealth is no sign of God's pleasure. And poverty is no sign of God's displeasure, for God shows His favor in other ways. Many men of the Bible were poor and they were all men of good character that you would want to imitate. Elijah was poor. John the Baptist was poor. So are many of the prophets and the apostles. And most importantly of all," Ryle says, "Jesus Christ was poor. So if you're poor, you're in good company. Because it means you're already walking in His footsteps." And he's right. You know, in his book on the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbon tells a story about a rich man named Bonderman, who said that at the end of his life, he could only count 14 days of happiness. That's it. Entire life passed by is about to die. He said, I can only remember two weeks of happiness, because he spent all his life chasing money. Friends is a good reminder that you don't want to live for things like that today. You want to put your treasure in other places, and it brings it to another type of foolishness to avoid when it comes to a crisis.

The first one is a foolishness of pride. The second one is the foolishness of distraction. The foolishness of pride makes you think that you're greater than you are. He refers to the silliness of thinking that these problems don't apply to you because you're rich. That's not true. These problems come for everybody. Tragedy strikes us all. It brings to another type of foolishness to avoid in a crisis and this is one that's probably even greater than that one, because we all wrestle with this. And that is the foolishness of distraction, which means the foolishness of being so busy all the time; of being so go-go every day. If you look in verse eight, Solomon writes about it this way. He says, "He who digs a pit may fall into it, and a serpent may bite him who breaks through a wall. He who quarries stones may be hurt by them, and he who splits logs may be endangered by them. If the axe is dull, and he does not

sharpen its edge, then he must exert more strength. Wisdom has the advantage of giving success. If the serpent bites before being charmed, there is no profit for the charmer.”

What is he talking about there? Well, he's talking about another type of foolishness. And that is the foolishness of distraction. This is a guy who was very, very distracted. And let me show you why. If you notice in verse eight, it says that he sees a man who digs a pit and he falls into it. Why did he fall into it? Because he wasn't paying attention to where he's going. So one reason I know you'd fall into a pit...you might know of another reason... you'd fall into a pit because you weren't looking ahead and then it says he sees the same guy getting bit by a serpent as he broke through a wall. This isn't a problem here in Canada, but in Israel, they were located in a desert. And anytime you built a house, it was part of the normal routine to look around for snakes. You look in the corners, you will look in the dark places, you look under the cellar. This guy didn't do that either so he got bit. The rest of the passage says he dug up some stones and he was hurt by them because they fell in on him. He uses an axe and it's not sharp, so it does no good. All for the same reason...because the guy was too distracted. He was in such a hurry that he couldn't think about those things first, because it was just pedal to the metal for this guy. 100 miles an hour. Go-go-go.

One commentator said the common denominator for this foolish worker seems to be presumption. He was overconfident and ended up either hurting himself or making his job harder, which never would have happened if he would have slowed down in order to do the right thing the first time.

Now, what's the principle here? Well, the principle is you don't want to go through life like this. You don't want to be going so fast that you can slow down to pay attention to the simple things, which is a mistake that so many people make. They want to get married, so they go get married, right? They want to start a family, they go start a family without even considering the fact that they don't really like that person very much. It's just a passing thing. It's just a lust. Or they want to buy a car, so they buy a car; they want to buy a boat, so they buy a boat; want to buy a house, they go get that without ever considering the fact that can't afford it. I talked to a financial advisor some time ago, he said you'll never believe the conversations I have people come in here and ask for a loan when they have seven or eight creditors breathing down their neck, as if my computer won't tell me that. Solomon says that's foolish.

This leads us to some other applications for this passage. For one, this means you shouldn't go through life on autopilot all the time. You shouldn't go through life just living on your impulses, living on your feelings. Because if you notice in the passage here, this guy fell and he was bitten and he was hurt. He tripped and he stumbled and he was endangered. His life was just a wreck because he didn't stop and smell the roses. He never took time to figure out what he was doing. Which is a very silly thing to do. And we just tie that into the physical realm. But let's talk about the spiritual realm for a minute. I mean, spiritually speaking, not physically, but I just mean when it comes to the things of God, how many people plan for a disaster like this to occur? How many people were prepared internally to lose everything they had in the flood? I mean, nobody right? Solomon says you should. Because you will lose everything you have one day. One day God is going to judge it. You need to be ready for that. Because it's a stupid thing to forget about it.

I did some research on it this week and I found that this is not the first time the Sumas Prairie has flooded just east of here. Some of you are aware of this. But it's happened twice before. It happened in 1948, right after World War Two, and it happened in 1990 as well. And it might interest you to know that in both of those times, the people

rebuilt everything. They managed to fix the damage and pick up the pieces again. But afterwards, they all still died, didn't they? After they put everything back together again, most of the people's people still had to leave it behind. Because that's the way it works. You live and then you die. You go through life, pick up the pieces and then you pass away and whether you die now or die later, it doesn't matter, you still die. And whether you go today or you go in 30 years or 40 years or 50 years when you're in a retirement home, it doesn't change the fact that you still go. Solomon says you have to learn to take that lesson seriously. Today, you need to be thinking about where your life is going.

Which brings us to another application. This is one we've already talked about and that is that you shouldn't go through life in a hurry. You shouldn't go through it saying "I can't wait to do this or that I can't wait to get rich, I can't wait until I have that house or that car or that wife or that husband." Because if you notice, this man did the same thing as well. He digs a pit and he falls into it. Because he's busy. He quarries stones only to have him fall on him because he's too preoccupied. And Solomon says you shouldn't do that. You need to think about today, the moments that you have. You know, this is something the Bible tells us to do as well. But Proverbs 27, verse one says, "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth." And the idea there is that you need to live for today, because tomorrow is not guaranteed. It's not been promised to you. So you need to live for the time that you have. Psalm 20, verse seven, says, "Some boast in chariots, in some boast in horses, but we will boast in the name of the Lord our God." Why is that? Well, that's because horses fail you. They come and go. Chariots do the same thing. Cars do that. But God never does. Jeremiah nine, verse 23, says, "Let not a wise man brag about his wisdom, nor a mighty man boast about his might, nor a rich man boast in his riches," because all that stuff will pass away, you need to boast in the Lord.

In my studies this week, I came across an interesting survey that 60 Minutes did several years ago, which said that the happiest nation in the world is Denmark. You know why? Because there's not much going on. In Denmark, no offense to anybody here who is from there.... I know, we have a very diverse congregation. So please don't come up to me and tell me how wonderful Denmark is... That's my point. It's wonderful, even though it's small. Canada was 15th. In the list, the US was the 14th. I won't make any comment on that. But the people of Denmark are so happy because you know, if they were healthy, and they had a good job, and that's enough for them. And friends, I'm here to tell you that as Christians, it needs to be the same way for you. If you have Christ, and you have salvation that needs to be enough for you. You don't need anything else. It's been said that Jesus is all you have. And Jesus is all you need, right. And that's what you have. Which brings us to one more thing to talk about this morning.

Just one more type of foolishness to avoid in a time of crisis, just to review these other ones that the first one is the foolishness of pride. And the second one is the foolishness of distraction, which is a struggle for all of us today. You know, as I talked to some of you in the congregation, you tell me that your life is kind of like playing a game of Whack a Mole, where a mole pops up and you hit it, and then another one pops up, and you hit it, and I talk to you guys, how was your week? Well, there was the Mole and then there was the Mole, right? The point of the passage is that you don't want that to keep you from thinking about God. Put some of the moles aside for a minute. Think about more important things.

It brings us to another type of foolishness to avoid in the passage, and that is the foolishness of the tongue. The final type of foolishness to avoid when it comes to a crisis is the foolishness of the tongue, which refers to the foolishness of saying whatever you want and having no restraint over it in a time like this. And if you look in



verse 12, he says this, he says, “Words from the mouth of a wise man are gracious, while the lips of a fool consume him; the beginning of his talking is folly and the end of it is wicked madness. Yet the fool multiplies words. No man knows what will happen, and who can tell him what will come after him?” We'll stop the reading there. But this is the final example of foolishness in our list here. And just to explain it to you, in verse 12, when it says that the lips of a fool consume him, this is where the foolishness comes out. This is where you see it displayed: in his lips. And the word, “consumed” here is the Hebrew word *Bala*, which means to swallow something out or engulf it to the point that it's destroyed. Solomon says a fool's mouth does that to him, not his actions, but his mouth, not his behavior or his clothes or his car, but the things that he says because it's just talk, talk, talk for him all the time. That's the idea here. He just flaps his gums until they burns everything down around him. I have tried to counsel people that just kept talking and I thought, stop, stop, stop! You're about to destroy everything and they won't stop. That's this guy. He just blows up and hurts everybody.

The way this is worded here, verse 13, says that his words are wicked madness. And that means when he talks, no one understands him because he's mad. The guy's crazy because of his sin. He's lost all sense of reality. Verse 14 says that his words are multiplied as well, because when he talks, he can't stop. He's like the guy who says, Well, I just started sentence and I'll figure out what I'm going to say later on. Don't do that; bad idea. It also says, “No one knows what will happen. And who can tell him what will come after him?” That sounds kind of mysterious. But what that means is that this guy is so foolish and so sinful, and so dumb, he thinks he knows the future. He knows what will happen. He's kind of like the person that says, you know, I know everything about the flood because I read something on Facebook. You know, I have a degree in hydro electrical engineering, because I read one article. And if you notice how Solomon puts this, here, he paints a picture of a man who looks pretty normal on the outside. He looks just like a wise man because he compares him to a wise man in verse 12, because he dresses like a wise man, carries himself like a wise man, lives in a wise man's neighborhood, drives the wise man's car, until he opens his mouth, and then he destroys everything. He begins to talk and that's where the problem happens.

Which is really important to remember in a time like this, because if we're not careful, we can be foolish this way as well, right? Because there's a tendency to complain in times like this. There can be a real desire to get down and run our mouths and say, Why is life so hard for us? Why is it so difficult? Because we just got over the Coronavirus and now this. We just got through COVID-19. And now God is dumping this on us. Or there can also be a tendency with our mouth to get anxious and gossip. We've all done this. We meet with someone and say, did you hear about this and this and this and this? And did you know about that? And that and that and that and talk like we're an expert. But the point Solomon's making here is that all these things come out of our mouth that begins with our tongue. If you're wondering how the foolishness of pride and distraction is displayed, well, this is how it's displayed. In the way we talk. Another way to say that is it doesn't begin with your circumstances. It begins with you. The foolishness doesn't begin with the situation you're in, because other people are in the same situation. They're responding to it differently.

You're doing it because of what's in your heart. All these things go back to the soul. You can't say the flood made me do it. Know it's our fault. We sinned because of our own hearts. And the good news is that God has an answer for that. And that's the cross. It's been said that a sharp tongue is a sign of a small brain and a wicked heart. And it's a sure way to get your teeth knocked out. And it's right because if your tongue is sharp, there's a way to trace it back, you trace it back into your heart. First 12 says your words need to be gracious, that means I need to be good and gentle and kind. And this whole passage says you need to be wise which means fitting and said at the right

time in the right season in the right way. You need to have discretion with what you talk about, that type of thing. But it all goes back to your relationship with God. Listen, friends, if you have God living inside of you, then you have God coming out of you in your mouth. If you have him on the mind, in the brain, in the soul, He will spill out of that. And the things you talk about. You know, I don't know if you guys have felt this way this week. But I've actually been really encouraged by this tragedy not that it happened, but to see people's response to it. I mean, you hear so many bad things about mankind today, but it was really encouraging to see people help each other out this week. I mean, people in this community really stepped up. It's an honor to live here. But even so it doesn't cure the problem of human nature because the problem is sin. Because while people still do wonderful things like this, they can still do terrible things with their mouth. While they help each other out with their hands, they can often tear them down with their words. But the good news is God has come to save that the book of James says no man can tame the tongue is a restless evil full of curse and pain are cursing and poison. But God knows how to tame it.

In fact, if all this stuff in this passage here seems hard to you, or seems convicting, I want to encourage you that you can honor God with your mouth. And you can honor God by putting your pride away, and you can honor God with putting away distractions. Because of what Christ has done on the cross. I've heard it said, When Jesus saves a man, he saves all of him, including his tongue. And when He changes a man, He doesn't stop, He changes everyone. And that's what our hope is in today.

The Bible tells us that the Son of God came as one of us. He lived a perfect life, a sinless life, died on a cross, rose from the grave to pay the full price of our sins, not part of them, but all of them. And He did it in order to call the sinner home and to save the fool. So if you read this passage, and you say, that's me, I'm like that that's that that's a description of my life. Well, that's what we came to say. If you don't think you have any sin, He didn't come to save you; He came only came to save sinners. And that should be an encouragement for you today. You know, no matter how many steps you've taken away from God, it's only one step back, no matter how many times you sinned and failed him in this area, it only takes one prayer to make it right. And that is a prayer of repentance. So would you pray that prayer today? You know, in fact, when you look at the Bible, this is what you see, it was written by men who were sinners just like you. Just like me, they failed in the tongue. We take Peter, for example, when Peter was called the apostle with the foot shaped mouth. He was so bad at one time Jesus told him Get behind Me, Satan. I don't know how you can get any worse than that. For the Son of God to call you Satan is pretty bad, you must have done something really awful. Later on in his life, he denied Jesus three times betraying Him to a slave girl of all people and the Lord saved him. He turned his life around, made him talk in a different way. He can do the same thing for you. The Lord did that for the apostle Paul, Paul persecuted the church, he gave orders to kill it. The Lord saved him. God saved this guy, Solomon, who used to bow down to idols and worship them in high places. And God used him to say all this, but he can do the same thing for us today.

You know, the story is told at the time the preacher Joseph Scriven wrote to him what a friend we have in Jesus after his fiancée died. He'd actually moved to Canada from Ireland to start a new life and get married, when she drowned all of a sudden and totally unexpected, which caused him to write that song. And a friend of his asked him, "Why did you write it then of all times?" And he said, because if ever I needed a friend, it's now. And that's what I have in Christ." Friends, I tell you that story because maybe some of you are saying that today. I mean, after a week like this, you're saying, I need a friend. I need someone to give me comfort. And if you're saying that I want to tell you, you've come to the right place, you've come to the right Savior, you've come to the right God.

Because that's what you have in Jesus. Ask Him to save you if He hasn't and He will be your friend. Let me pray that you would and that Christ would be honored in it. Enclose in a word of prayer.

Heavenly Father, we come to you this morning, just humbled and in many ways, maybe overwhelmed a little bit. At a passage like this, for one thing, it's hard to get our minds around all that Solomon is saying here, but also, Lord, we're humbled because who has not failed in these things? Who has not been foolish in many ways? We waste so many things today. And yet, Father, you are such a kind and gracious God that You would forgive the fool. Lord, this is a week of all weeks. It's a time when we really do need to sort of try to put time on pause for a moment. And just think about the direction of our lives. Lord, I pray for those who were here today who have heard these words. I don't know where everyone's at on this. But I'm sure this week shook us all up in a different way. Father, my prayer, I guess to you, Lord, is that it would shake us toward the things of eternity. We don't want to stay in the same place. We don't want to be apathetic towards You. Your son has come; You've given everything and as a result of that, we have to respond. And I pray that that would happen this morning, what I pray for those who are lost among us today as we come to the Lord's table. Now, it's always a reminder to the lost of what they're missing. They don't have a Savior, they don't have a friend, they don't have a comforter. They're going through life alone. And I pray that you would draw them to Christ. And I pray for those who are saved that they would be spurred on to love and good deeds. They would see all the need around them and try to meet it. I know many of them have this week. They've done extraordinary things. Lord, I pray you would encourage us to excel still more. In all these things. Father, I guess our prayer before anything else is for Your glory. We don't want this community to walk away from this and not think about You. You're the one who brings the rain. You're the one who brings the flood, and you're the one that holds the floodwaters back. All this is from You. We just put our hands on our mouth like Job says and say that we have nothing to say, other than that Your will be done. We pray this today in Christ's name and for His glory. Amen.