

Ecclesiastes 7:19-29 Wise Wisdom

So many wonderful lessons Solomon has taught us. Most importantly he has taught us that life without God is **meaningless**. It's vanity, chasing bubbles. Life without God **"NOTHING MATTERS"**. On the contrary life with God has purpose... it has meaning. When we have God in our lives **"EVERYTHING MATTERS."**

Many people live **"The Golden Mean"** as taught by ancient Greek and Roman philosophers. Moderation, don't let this Jesus stuff go to your head. Jesus says because you are neither hot nor cold I will vomit you out of my mouth... Jesus in moderation is not a Biblical teaching. **JESUS IS EITHER LORD OF ALL OR NOT LORD AT ALL.**

Ecclesiastes 7:13 Consider the work of God; For who can make straight what He has made crooked?

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW THINGS TO REMAIN CROOKED WHEN WE PRAY SO FERVENTLY THAT HE WOULD MAKE THEM STRAIGHT?



God knows the crooked things test our faith... this produces patience and then we become complete, lacking nothing.

Suffering is part of our preparation for eternity.



Crooked things remind us this earth is not our home. We will suffer tribulation on this earth.

Crooked things can convict us of our sin... correct us in our sins... can keep us from spiritual complacency.

It is not our job to try and figure out why things have been made crooked. **God knows why!** When something in life seems crooked, we are usually very quick to tell Him how to straighten it out. *Maybe God sent the crooked things to straighten us out!*

SOLOMON SAID. "CONSIDER THE WORK OF GOD" IN THE END HE WILL MAKE ALL THAT IS CROOKED STRAIGHT! Pray!

Ecclesiastes 7:19-29 Wisdom strengthens the wise More than ten rulers of the city.



A wise person has the strength of the well-governed city. Wisdom governs thought; so the wise person knows how to think about things in a God-centered way. Wisdom governs the will; so the wise person knows what choices to make in life. Wisdom governs speech so the wise person knows what to say and what not to say. Wisdom governs action; so the wise person knows what to do in any and every situation. Take hold of wisdom, and it will make you strong.

20 For *there is* not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.

Solomon's observation is correct. Paul picks up this same theme in Romans when he says there is none righteous, no not one (Romans 3:10).

WE all were born in the same sinking boat... All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory... the wages of sin are death! "GREAT SINNERS" IN NEED OF "GREAT FORGIVENESS" FROM A "GREAT SAVIOR".

21 Also do not take to heart everything people say, Lest you hear your servant cursing you. Even if we do not have servants to curse us, sooner or later we are bound to overhear somebody saying something about us that may be unkind or untrue.

"If all men knew what each said of the other," Pascal darkly observed, "there would not be four friends in the world."

In his book *Lectures to My Students*, Charles Spurgeon gave a chapter to this verse, which he titled "The Blind Eye and the Deaf Ear." In that chapter he gave wise advice to pastors and Christian workers that they should sometimes (if not often) simply overlook unkind and thoughtless things others say and do. We would not want to be judged by our worst moments; we should not judge others by theirs." I'M DON'T DO WELL WITH THIS.

One wise man responded to criticism by saying, "He didn't insult me at all; in fact, he was talking about another man: the man he thought I was."

To help put this council into perspective, Solomon gently reminds us that our own words are not always charitable either:

22 For many times, also, your own heart has known That even you have cursed others. Solomon says, “Just as you have talked about others, you can be sure others are talking about you”—not a comforting thought, but true. **Unruly mucus membrane... 65% percent water, 17% protein, 20% fat! And often times 100% out of control.**

Slander, gossip and flattery Doesn't have to be a lie to be gossip...

If we are wise, we will make sure that our own words pass a few simple tests before we dare to speak. Would I say this if that person could hear me say it. Am I saying this for the glory of God and for the love of my brother or sister, or am I only saying it to vent my own frustration? **Is it true? Is it harmless? Is it necessary? Am I part of the problem or solution? If not... cállate la boca. Shut up your mouth!**

Gossip and Flattery... Gossip is saying behind a person's back what you would never say to their face; flattery is saying to someone's face what you would never say behind their back.

Proverbs 18:21 The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. **THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU SPEAK ONCE...**

23 All this I have proved by wisdom. I said, "I will be wise/;



Hughes points out... As the preacher describes his quest for knowledge, he is not just talking about the many things that he investigated in chapter 7- The value of a good name, the way adversity brings more wisdom than prosperity, how to accept what God has made crooked, and so forth. His words actually apply to everything that he has investigated since the beginning of Ecclesiastes, when he said, "I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven" Ecclesiastes 1:13

But it *was* far from me. At this point it almost seems as if the whole book of Ecclesiastes may end in failure. The more we know, the more we should realize how little we know, and that whatever wisdom we gain comes as a gift from God.

24 As for that which is far off and exceedingly deep, Who can find it out? **25** I applied my heart to know, To search and seek out wisdom and the reason *of things*, To know the wickedness of folly, Even of foolishness *and* madness.

Even Solomon with all his God-given wisdom could not understand all that exists, how God manages it, and what purposes He has in mind. He searched for the “reason [scheme] of things” but found no final answers to all his questions.



Persian proverb... He who knows, and knows not that he knows, is asleep; wake him. He who knows not, and knows that he knows not, is a student; teach him. He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not, is a fool; shun him. He who knows, and knows that he knows, is wise; follow him.

Yet what he discovered was the darkest mystery and the deepest problem of all-- the depravity of the human heart. In one way or another, the troubles of life always come back to the problem of sin.

26 And I find more bitter than death The woman whose heart *is* **snare**s and **net**s, Whose hands *are* **fetter**s. He who pleases God shall escape from her, But the sinner shall be trapped by her. **Was Solomon one who pleased God in escaping from this trap, or was he the sinner trapped by her?**


We know from **1 Kings 11:4**: *For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God.* Surely, Solomon himself was caught in these **snare**s and **net**s and **fetter**s.

WILL YOU MAKE IT WITHOUT BEING TRAPPED? IF WILL NOT BE BY ACCIDENT IF YOU DO. PREDETERMINE TO MAKE... PURPOSE TO!

Let us take a look at two guys who pleased God and escaped from her...

1st Joseph... Genesis 39 verse 6... Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. ⁷ And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." **CHARACTER IS FORGED IN THE SMALL MOMENTS OF LIFE AND REVEALED IN THE BIG ONES.** But there is no temptation that has overtaken us except what is common

among men (1 Corinthians 10:13). **In the Hebrew her demand is two words, Joseph responds with a 35 word impassioned speech.** ⁸ But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what *is* with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. ⁹ *There is* no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you *are* his wife. **How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"** *I will not break the trust of your husband! Most importantly he would not sin against God. King David knew this as well, Psalm 51:4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight.*



(Spurgeon) Obedience is much easier when we know who God is. "When I regarded God as a tyrant, I thought sin a trifle; but when I knew him to be my father, then I mourned that I could ever have kicked against him. When I thought that God was hard, I found it easy to sin; but when I found God so kind, so good, so overflowing with compassion, I smote upon my breast to think that I could ever have rebelled against one who loved me so, and sought my good."

All this because Joseph knew God was with him. Not only that God was with him but that God is good. Do you live as though God is with you? Are you a Christian atheist? Live your life as though God doesn't exist?

Joseph said to sleep with her was a **"great wickedness and sin against God"**. **It would seem His refusal made her want him even more! continuing in God's holy word, verse 10** So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her *or* to be with her. **TEMPTATION BEATS DOWN THE DOOR BUT Joseph was careful to never be alone with his temptation.** Joseph didn't say to Potiphar's wife, "Let's share a cup of coffee and I'll show you why you shouldn't be so seductive," or, "I can see you have an unhappy marriage. Let's just talk things over." No, Joseph avoided her from that point on.

Joseph wisely even avoided being alone around Potiphar's wife **(or to be with her)**. **"HE NEVER LET HIS HAND GET NEAR THE COOKIE JAR"**

Men, LISTEN CAREFULLY! Mrs. Potiphar is calling for you to **"lie with her"** She calls to you from the computer screen, **she screams to you from the**

T.V. She calls from the beaches, the sports events... She has destruction in her eyes. She will never give up until she has ruined you.

Spending more time with co-workers than with spouse, sharing secrets with co-workers and friends, taking lunches with the opposite sex... no no no, becoming defensive when questioned about your attitude toward a **NEW** friend, indulging in fantasy thinking about members of the opposite sex, having a wandering eye, or discarding this list as stupid and irreverent... **Solomon says, "snares and nets, Whose hands are fetters.** He who pleases God shall escape from her, But the sinner shall be trapped by her.

LET'S TAKE A QUICK LOOK AT DANIEL... Nebuchadnezzar had a prescribed diet for his future servants that included items God's law considered unclean. For 3 years they were to eat the king's cuisine and study the king's curriculum. **Would Daniel begin to stink after 3 years of attending PU (Pagan University)?** He spoke like a Babylonian, dressed like a Babylonian, learned Babylonian protocol, occupied a Babylonian post, answered to a Babylonian name –**but Daniel never became a Babylonian at heart.**

DANIEL LIVED IN BABYLON. BUT BABYLON NEVER LIVED IN DANIEL.
"Dare to be a Daniel" Yes, his name, address, clothing, language, culture had all changed. But the one thing that did not change was Daniel's commitment to God! Verse 8 of Daniel chapter 1 reveals the key, "But Daniel *purposed in his heart* that he would not defile himself /

James 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

We don't naturally resist evil, we embrace it... "The fear of the Lord is the hatred of evil... you don't just get it you must nurture it, **train it, embrace it** and **fight for it**... this is purposing in your heart... predetermined denial of sin. This is the work of renewing the mind... and not conforming to the world...



Daniel purposed in his heart... we need to purpose to guard our hearts... guard our lips... guard our eyes and guard our steps...

Daniel had a resolve! He predetermined, He purposed in his heart. An unshakeable purpose... literally he "set upon his heart" not to defile himself. It was a firebrand on his soul...

The peace of a man whose lines are drawn, whose course is set. Peace comes with resolve... would Daniel survive the frontal assault of Babylonian temptation if he had entered with a vague set of principles? Not a chance!

You see dear Church there is a vast difference between holding a *belief* and entering into a *conviction*. One is a matter of *intellect*, the other is a matter of the *will*. One says, "I am *convinced*." The other says, "I am *committed*."

Fail to plan and plan to fail... that's what a purposed heart does... rehearses in the mind success and resistance to evil

If you wait to make commitments and convictions in the heat of battle you've waited too long. Predetermined obedience!!!

Honesty, integrity, character... the world can take a lot from us but it can't take these... we have to give them away... **CHARACTER**... what you are when no one is watching but God...

Dare to be a Daniel, Dare to be a Joseph... They lived among pagan people, worked in pagan institutions, schooled in pagan philosophy, surrounded by pagan practice – yet they remained fiercely loyal to God.

27 Here is what I have found, / says the Preacher, "Adding one thing to the other to find out the reason, **28** Which my soul still seeks but I cannot find: One man among a thousand I have found, But a woman among all these I have not found. **This speaks more about Solomon's choice of female companionship than it does about the relative wisdom of men and women.**

I went down the brothel and met many women... not one of them was noble and of good character.

Solomon concluded that the whole human race was bound by sin and one man in a thousand was wise—and not one woman! Even the one good man that he found in 1000 was still a sinner. (The number 1,000 is significant in the light of 1 Kgs 11:3.) 700 wives + 300 concubines!

We must not think that Solomon rated women as less intelligent than men, because this is not the case. He spoke highly of women in Proverbs (12:4; 14:1; 18:22; 19:14; and 31:10ff), Ecclesiastes (9:9), and certainly in the Song of Solomon. Iniquity is an equal opportunity employer.

Wright notes... He found that a harem did not provide the appropriate companionship for man. How much better he would have been with one good wife, such as he speaks of in Ecclesiastes 9:9 and Proverbs 31!

29 Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes. **Eaton in his commentary makes this biblical observation.** "We take Solomon's statement "God made man upright" not to refer to each individual, but to as man was originally made, to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. "He was created neither sinful, nor neutral, but *upright*, a word used of the state of the heart which is disposed to faithfulness or obedience."

The indictment against all of humanity... Sin is the great equalizer. Every man, every woman, and every child is a sinner!

Solomon takes us to this end in chapter 7... but thank you Jesus it does not end here. As Pascal once said, "Knowing our own wretchedness without knowing God makes for despair."

That's why we celebrate communion... body broken, blood shed... forgiveness given!

GOD FORMED US, SIN DEFORMED US, CHRIST TRANSFORMED US!