

August 16th – When Being Quiet Is Best

“Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words.”
(Prov. 23:9)

You’ve heard the serenity prayer – “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” That’s a beautiful, powerful prayer, but maybe there’s one more phrase that needs to be added – “and help me to know when to keep my mouth closed.” It seems that all of us struggle with knowing when to shut our mouths sometimes and consequently we end up saying things we wish we could take back.

Today’s verse reminds us that it’s entirely possible for you to be right about something, and still need to be quiet. Solomon said, “Do not speak in the hearing of a fool.” That is, don’t enter into a conversation with someone who chooses to remain ignorant. Why? Because “he will despise the wisdom of your words.” Rather than being persuaded by your wisdom, a fool will actually hate your wisdom and make a mockery of you. Not everyone wants to hear what you’ve got to say.

For that reason, it’s best that we keep our convictions to ourselves when we’re convinced that they’re going to fall on deaf ears. Jesus said something similar – “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces” (Matt. 7:6). It’s absurd to place jewels in a pig pin, and sometimes it’s just as absurd to share the truth with those who refuse to hear it. God help us all to know when to speak up and when to shut up.