



TITLE: Wisdom Smells Good on You

ICE BREAKER: What is your favorite smell in the whole wide world? And why? Does it bring a memory to mind?

BIG IDEA: Life is unpredictable, foolishness leads to ruin, wisdom is still the best life!

MAIN SCRIPTURE:

Ecclesiastes 10:1-20

- As dead flies give perfume a bad smell,
so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.
- ² The heart of the wise inclines to the right,
but the heart of the fool to the left.
- ³ Even as fools walk along the road,
they lack sense
and show everyone how stupid they are.
- ⁴ If a ruler's anger rises against you,
do not leave your post;
calmness can lay great offenses to rest.
- ⁵ There is an evil I have seen under the sun,
the sort of error that arises from a ruler:
- ⁶ Fools are put in many high positions,
while the rich occupy the low ones.
- ⁷ I have seen slaves on horseback,
while princes go on foot like slaves.
- ⁸ Whoever digs a pit may fall into it;
whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake.
- ⁹ Whoever quarries stones may be injured by them;
whoever splits logs may be endangered by them.
- ¹⁰ If the ax is dull
and its edge unsharpened,
more strength is needed,
but skill will bring success.
- ¹¹ If a snake bites before it is charmed,
the charmer receives no fee.

- 12 Words from the mouth of the wise are gracious,
but fools are consumed by their own lips.
- 13 At the beginning their words are folly;
at the end they are wicked madness—
- 14 and fools multiply words.
No one knows what is coming—
who can tell someone else what will happen after them?
- 15 The toil of fools wearies them;
they do not know the way to town.
- 16 Woe to the land whose king was a servant^[a]
and whose princes feast in the morning.
- 17 Blessed is the land whose king is of noble birth
and whose princes eat at a proper time—
for strength and not for drunkenness.
- 18 Through laziness, the rafters sag;
because of idle hands, the house leaks.
- 19 A feast is made for laughter,
wine makes life merry,
and money is the answer for everything.
- 20 Do not revile the king even in your thoughts,
or curse the rich in your bedroom,
because a bird in the sky may carry your words,
and a bird on the wing may report what you say.

OPENING THOUGHTS: While these verses seem to be speaking about random matters, there is a common theme running through these verses dealing with the relationship between rulers and their subjects. Certainly Solomon was qualified to speak on this subject as the great and wise king of Israel. He starts out comparing wisdom and folly but then makes the more specific application to the realm of civil government. However, we can take these principles and apply them to the realms of leadership, the home, the church, and the workplace. This string of wisdom sayings will emphasize our need for wisdom and its benefits.

MAIN POINTS:

1. FOLLY BRINGS A STENCH, BUT WISDOM MAKES IT FRAGRANT (vv.1-3)
2. LIFE IS FILLED WITH FOOLISH LEADERS, SO TREAD WISELY (vv.4-7)
3. WISDOM IS BETTER THAN FOLLY, BUT PRECARIOUS (vv.8-15)
4. WE MUST LIVE WISELY IN A FOOLISH WORLD (vv.16-20)
5. LIVE UNDER THE SON SO YOU CAN ACCESS THE TREASURES OF THE WISDOM OF JESUS (Colossians 2:3)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Finally Solomon stops speaking about the meaninglessness of life! Now he is teaching us about wisdom in a foolish world. Which nugget of wisdom most struck you?
2. Break your group up into the following sections and spend time finding the big idea behind the following chunks of Scripture: v1-3, 4-7, 8-11, 12-15, 16-20. After about 5-7 minutes, have someone from each group share with everyone your findings.
3. According to this chapter, what are the perils of foolishness/folly?
4. According to this chapter, what are the perils of foolishness/folly?
5. What do you think about this statement from pastor Joel's sermon? Life is unpredictable, foolishness leads to ruin, wisdom is still the best life! But your own wisdom won't cut it. And not even the wisdom of Solomon cut it. We need to learn to LIVE UNDER THE SON SO YOU CAN ACCESS THE TREASURES OF THE WISDOM OF JESUS. What are some ways you can "live under the Son" so you may gain more wisdom?

CHALLENGE: Come to terms with the fact that life is unpredictable and even if you live wisely, accidents and misfortune happen. However, this should not cause you to despair and abandon wisdom, wisdom is still a better life! Especially if you discover the riches of the wisdom of God that are hidden in the Son, Jesus Christ!

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord, in this foolish world, teach me not to despair! In my pursuit of wisdom, teach me to lean not on my own understanding but in every way to acknowledge you in all my ways and seek after the wisdom that is hidden in Jesus Christ.