

Pieces of Wisdom to Live by Before Meeting God

Are you prepared to meet God right now?

Ecclesiastes 9.13–11.8

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • February 20, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2022

Scripture Reader and Reading: Dominic Meyer – Ecclesiastes 9.11–12

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – No Suggestions

Prelude:

I. One event happens to all people.

A. If you are wicked, this event will happen to you.

B. If you are righteous, this same event will even happen to you.

1. Ecclesiastes 9 and Hebrews 9 identify that event as *death*.

2. The Book of Ecclesiastes and Hebrews 9 reveal what happens next:

27 ...it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...

– Hebrews 9. 27

II. Now from Ecclesiastes 9.13–11.6 Solomon dispenses

A. many bits of wisdom

B. before he reaches his grand finale.

III. How can I live successfully until I meet the one event common to all people?

Persuasion:

I. Ecclesiastes 9.13–18 • The Poor Man's Wisdom

13 This wisdom I have also seen under the sun, and it seemed great to me: 14 There was a little city with few men in it; and a great king came against it, besieged it, and built great snares around it. 15 Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that same poor man. 16 Then I said:

**“Wisdom is better than strength.
Nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised,
And his words are not heard.**

**17 Words of the wise, spoken quietly, should be heard
Rather than the shout of a ruler of fools.**

**18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war;
But one sinner destroys much good."**

A. Great is wisdom, though

1. not appreciated and
2. not honored.
 - a) Proof of that is when a great king attacked a small city, but
 - b) a poor wise man delivered the city and
 - (1) no one remembered him.
 - (2) Hence, they did not honor the man who saved them.
 - (a) However, not all accounts are settled here.
 - (b) There is a final Judgment coming, and
 - i) poor wise men and women
 - ii) whom the world did not recognize,
 - (1) shall received recognition from the great God of heaven.
 - (2) And how great do you think God's reward shall be?

B. From that scenario,

1. Solomon made some conclusions.
 - a) While wisdom is better than strength,
 - b) it is despised.
2. Nevertheless, we should listen to the words of the wise
 - a) although spoken quietly
 - b) rather than the shouting of a ruler of fools.
 - (1) The wise shall bless with insights that we did not know existed.
 - (2) Others may not remember the wise, but you can.
 - (a) Just because others do not remember the wise,
 - (b) you and I should that we might live by their advice.

3. Wisdom is even better than weapons of war, but
 - a) one sinner can destroy many good things.
 - b) Which shall we pursue?
 - (1) Sin?
 - (2) Wisdom?

**7 Wisdom is the principal thing;
Therefore get wisdom.
And in all your getting, get understanding.**

– Proverbs 4.7

II. Ecclesiastes 10.1–3 • Wisdom Versus Folly

- 1 Dead flies putrefy the perfumer's ointment,
And cause it to give off a foul odor;
So does a little folly to one respected for wisdom and honor.**
- 2 A wise man's heart is at his right hand,
But a fool's heart at his left.**
- 3 Even when a fool walks along the way,
He lacks wisdom,
And he shows everyone that he is a fool.**

A. This illustrates how one sinner destroys much good.

1. Would you buy perfume with dead flies in it?
2. So mix a little folly
 - a) in a wise man's life and
 - b) he will turn people off.

B. A wise man's heart

1. is his strength,
2. even if he is poor.

C. A fool's heart

1. is his weakness,

2. even if he is rich.
 - a) When the fool goes about his business,
 - b) he shows his foolishness,
 - (1) although he cannot see it himself.
 - (2) But you can. So learn from his error.

III. Ecclesiastes 10.4–7 • The Exaltation of Folly

**4 If the spirit of the ruler rises against you,
Do not leave your post;
For conciliation pacifies great offenses.**

**5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun,
As an error proceeding from the ruler:**

**6 Folly is set in great dignity,
While the rich sit in a lowly place.**

**7 I have seen servants on horses,
While princes walk on the ground like servants.**

- A. In spite of what Solomon said about wisdom since 9.13,
1. people still do not get it, and
 2. they act foolishly and exalt folly.
- B. That is true of rulers,
1. such as when they become angry.
 2. Therefore, do not be tempted to resign in protest.
 - a) Have the spirit of conciliation, for
 - b) it pacifies great offenses of rulers.
- C. Great changes can happen...unexpectedly.
1. A ruler might set a foolish in a place of great dignity.
 2. The ruler might simultaneously put the rich in a lowly place.
 - a) Therefore, you might see servants on horses,
 - b) while a prince walks on the ground as though a servant.

D. Remember

1. Mordecai and Haman
2. Joseph and his brothers
3. The Lord Jesus (Phi 2)

IV. Ecclesiastes 10.8–15 • Wisdom Brings Success

**8 He who digs a pit will fall into it,
And whoever breaks through a wall will be bitten by a serpent.**

**9 He who quarries stones may be hurt by them,
And he who splits wood may be endangered by it.**

**10 If the ax is dull,
And one does not sharpen the edge,
Then he must use more strength;
But wisdom brings success.**

**11 A serpent may bite when it is not charmed;
The babbler is no different.**

**12 The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious,
But the lips of a fool shall swallow him up;**

**13 The words of his mouth begin with foolishness,
And the end of his talk is raving madness.**

**14 A fool also multiplies words.
No man knows what is to be;
Who can tell him what will be after him?**

**15 The labor of fools wearies them,
For they do not even know how to go the city!**

A. The wise know what brings success.

1. First (vv. 8–9), they are aware of dangers.
2. Second (v. 10), knowing of the dangers they know how to use their tools.
3. Third (v. 11), they know how to charm the babbling fool.

B. Rather than talking,

1. the wise get things done,
2. for they know not what comes later.

C. At verse 11, Solomon spoke of the fool as a babbler.

1. The wise have learned how to deal with such people by charming them.
2. Then in verses 12–15, Solomon pictured the foolish babbler some more:
 - a) The wise may speak gracious words (v. 12), but
 - (1) the fool has no regard for such words.
 - (2) He does not respond in kind, but
 - (a) swallows up the wise
 - (b) with no regard for him.
 - b) Verse 13 undoubtedly pictures someone you have known,
 - (1) someone who speaks foolishly right from the start and
 - (2) he ends up just ranting and raving.
 - c) As Solomon said in verse 14,
 - (1) the fool multiplies words, because
 - (2) he just likes to ramble on,
 - (a) talking about what is to be,
 - (b) as though they know everything.
 - i) The fool will be an ignorant know-it-all.
 - ii) He cannot know the future, but
 - (1) you cannot tell him that, because
 - (2) he knows-it-all.
 - d) Verse 15 reveals that fools are not really into working,
 - (1) making it easy to identify who is a fool.
 - (2) Going to the city for work
 - (a) should be easy, but
 - (b) not for them because they don't want to work.

V. Ecclesiastes 10.16–20 • Wise Leaders

16 Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child,

- 17** **And your princes feast in the morning!**
Blessed are you, O land, when your king is the son of nobles,
And your princes feast at the proper time—
For strength and not for drunkenness!
- 18** **Because of laziness the building decays,**
And through idleness of hands the house leaks.
- 19** **A feast is made for laughter,**
And wine makes merry;
But money answers everything.
- 20** **Do not curse the king,**
even in your thought;
Do not curse the rich,
even in your bedroom;
For a bird of the air
may carry your voice,
And a bird in flight
may tell the matter.

A. Foolish leaders

1. have no experience and
2. feast when they should be working.

B. Wise leaders

1. have had training and know
 - a) to feast at the proper time and
 - b) to do so for health.

C. Lazy leaders show who they are by lack of evidence of work (v. 18).

D. As verse 19 reveals,

1. foolish and lazy leaders believe
2. that pouring more money into a problem will fix things.
 - a) They do not know to sharpen their ax.
 - b) They humble other leaders and
 - (1) exalt folly just to show their power or

(2) to make people think that they are better than others.

E. However, as verse 20 teaches,

1. do not see the bad leaders as freedom

2. to curse them.

a) Do not speak the curse.

b) Do not even think the curse.

(1) What you say will get out.

(2) What you think will come out.

3. Then you will have to pay the price.

VI. Ecclesiastes 11.1–6 • Prepare For Tomorrow

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

**2 Give a serving to seven, and also to eight,
For you do not know what evil will be on the earth.**

**3 If the clouds are full of rain,
They empty themselves upon the earth;
And if a tree falls to the south or the north,
In the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie.**

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

**5 As you do not know what is the way of the wind,
Or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child,
So you do not know the works of God who makes everything.**

**6 In the morning sow your seed,
And in the evening do not withhold your hand;
For you do not know which will prosper,
Either this or that,
Or whether both alike will be good.**

A. Send away and it will return to you.

1. It might be a long time before it does, but

2. even as casting your bread on the waters disappears,

a) so you may think that what you gave disappeared, yet,

- b) it will come back to you,
 - (1) perhaps many days later.
 - (2) Jesus said it like this:

38 “Give, and it *will* be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

– Luke 6.38

B. Therefore, give to seven.

- 1. Does that seem like enough?
- 2. Give to one more.
 - a) You do not know what will happen later.
 - b) By investing in people,
 - (1) you will find help later.
 - (2) This is what the man did in the parable of unjust steward:

1 He also said to His disciples: “There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. 2 So he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.’ 3 Then the steward said within himself, ‘What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4 I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.’ 5 So he called every one of his master’s debtors to him, and said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ 6 And he said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ So he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ 7 Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ So he said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ And he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’ 8 So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. 9 And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by

unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.”

– Luke 16.1–9

C. Clouds drop rain and trees fall down.

1. However, you have to do something with them.
2. Otherwise, the rain goes down the rivers and the wood rots.
 - a) Learn to apply those truths to daily living.
 - b) Don't let opportunities go by without doing something about them.

D. Even as we cannot figure out

1. the way of the wind or
2. how a baby grows in the womb,
 - a) so we do not know what God is doing and
 - b) what he shall make of tomorrow for us.

E. Therefore, sow in the morning and sow in the evening, finding

1. whatever good works to do, or
 2. whatever investment in people to make,
 - a) for if you only invest in one person or one thing,
 - b) he or it may fail, but if you sow
 - (1) all the good you can,
 - (2) by all the means you can,
 - (3) in all the ways you can,
 - (4) through all the people you can,
 - (5) in all the places you can,
 - (6) at all the times you can,
- (a) then you will reap from sources

(b) that you never knew existed.

Exhortation:

I. From 9.1–12,

- A. Solomon taught us
- B. that we should make the most of life,
 - 1. enjoying every part of it that we can,
 - 2. remembering that our lives are in the hand of God.

II. In 9.13–11.6,

- A. Solomon just showed us
- B. how to make the most of life.
 - 1. If you have lived contrary to biblical wisdom,
 - 2. repent now and
 - a) follow the wisdom of the Holy Spirit
 - b) as revealed through Solomon.