

BLAMING GOD FOR OUR FOLLY

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: Proverbs 19:1-15.

It may sound strange to say it, but we are a great threat to ourselves and to the wellbeing of other people. You might think that we would have our own self-interest at heart and would do everything we could to make sure things went as well as possible for us. But the opposite is true. While we might have been concerned over the last year about our effect on other people's health, we do harm to other people and to ourselves in all kinds of ways. This happens because we pervert our ways and folly is bound up in our hearts. In the Bible, the fool is someone who has no thought of God.

1. Our own worst enemy.

We talk in terms of pollution leaving a carbon footprint. We also leave behind a moral and spiritual footprint of a negative kind. There are people we have in our past whom we have upset, let down, and disappointed. We have left behind us a trail of ignorant words and actions. At times we have acted willfully against conscience. By being impetuous and presumptuous, we end up carrying many regrets, losses and sadnesses, buried hopes and dreams. Plans are brought to ruin.

Yet, despite these things being the result of our actions, people often rage or fret against God. They think it is all His fault and lay the blame at His door. Sometimes when we seek to speak to people about the Lord, they might reply angrily and complain that they feel let down by Him, that He did not help them when they expected that He would or should. At least these people concede that God might indeed exist, that He might be good and that He might have power, but they do not get beyond blaming Him for things that have gone wrong in their lives.

People forget that at no time has the Lord promised to anyone a life of ease. God is not under obligation or debt to us to ensure that everything in life turns out fine for us. But by blaming God and feeling justified in this, we are showing how much we need help. We are distracted by blaming Him and this stops us looking at ourselves and finding the reasons for our moral failures in ourselves. God, in fact, owes us wrath for all the damage we have done to His honour and to His interests. Our folly dishonours Him and insults Him. It is as if we are cursing His law and choosing to think according to our own reasoning, not His. The result inside of ourselves is not a happy one, but we are subject to depression and despair. We think we know what is best for ourselves but actually produce negative results in our own souls.

2. The help we need.

Our fretting against the Lord can become addictive. We end up being consumed by it. We have to repent of these attitudes, or we will find no blessing from Him. We have to be firm with ourselves and tell ourselves that these ragings against God must cease and that we must take responsibility for who we are before God. This is a big admission that we have to make, requiring us to take full ownership of our sin.

It comes as a surprise to some that the Lord they fret against is a God of great long-suffering and patience. He is full of mercy and kindness. He bears with us as we rage against Him and does not move to destroy us instantly. Instead, He calls us away from ourselves and invites us to step into a new life and a new way. He commands us to forsake that which is actually destroying us and appeals to our reason that we should choose life instead. Our repentance is an act of self-repudiation where we jettison the old 'me' with our foolish thoughts about the Lord, about the Bible. We acknowledge our own part in the destruction of what the Lord deems valuable.

When we are more reasonable, then we can appreciate something that is outstandingly different, namely the forgiveness of God shown to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Judge in the highest court tells us to rage no more and to cease from our efforts to act in what we think is our self-interest, but which is actually destroying us. We have to hear from Him that we are forgiven, and we are able to conclude this when we consider His Son dying on the cross. We see how He was broken, destroyed, and absolutely engulfed in the judgment of God.

We can accept or reject the help which we are offered. But if we reject it, there is no Plan B. The Lord Jesus holds out to us the highway to peace within. Our inner fretting can be healed, and we can go out and now be different people, no longer causing damage and harm. We can undo the damage we have done or, if we cannot undo it, we can better come to terms with it. We are able to learn to forgive, to let go, to fall out of love with the world, and to cease to make idols. Instead, rebellion and suspicion give way to trust and obedience. We desire to be Christ-like and to tell others about Him.