

A Little More Foolishness
Ecclesiastes 10:12-20
Reading: Psalm 1

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Let's sample what the *wisdom literature* of the Bible (Prov, Job, Eccl) say about *fools & their folly*:

Psalm 14:1 – *The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds. Denying God is always tied to sin! It's seldom a purely intellectual argument. → No God, no accountability; no accountability, no self-constraint.*

Proverbs 14:8 – *The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way, but the folly of fools is deceit. Fools traffic in deceit.*

Proverbs 10:23 – *Doing wickedness is like sport to a fool. 15:21* – *Folly is joy to him who lacks sense. Wickedness is the fool's favorite pastime. Evil is fun!*
→

Proverbs 14:9 – *Fools mock at sin. They make light of wrong. (E.g. →Fools put coarse bumper stickers on the back bumper of their car. Nice black F150...dumb! Told you last week, you can spot a fool a mile away...)*

Proverbs 19:3 - *The foolishness of man subverts his way, and his heart rages against the LORD . The fool hates God & godliness.*

You ever thought who suffers the most from the *folly of a fool*? **The fool...**

Let's open God's Word together to Eccl 10 :1-20.

God wants to *instruct* you in *wisdom* by *warning* you against *foolishness*!

Five windows on the ways of a fool:

1. **When the fool walks (1-3). (last Sunday)**
2. **When the fool rules (4-7).**
3. **When the fool works (8-11).**
4. **When the fool speaks (12-15) (this evening)**
5. **When the fool parties (16-20).**

Remember that Solomon begins by immediately illustrating his big idea (v.1): even a little foolishness is way too much!

...pray...

We'll start by briefly *reviewing* each of those first 3 pts:

1. **When the fool *walks* (1-3).** A **dab** of *foolishness* can spoil a **bucket** of *wisdom*. That truth in **v.1** *sets the tone* for this entire chapter!
 - a. A fool's heart is like a *wrong-headed GPS* that points him in the exact opposite direction from wisdom (*right vs. left*). As he goes...
 - b. ...a fool **talks** too *loud*, **acts** *arrogantly*, **flirts** *shamelessly*, **ignores** the *rights & needs* of others, ... **rebels** against *spiritual truth* (*The fool tells himself there is no God.*).
 - c. You can *spot a fool* a mile away!

2. **When the fool *rules* (4-7).** King Solomon says a lot about *bad leadership* in this chapter (*more* this evening in **vv.12-20**). A *bad leader* is *bad news* – *evil & error*!
 - a. Something is *just wrong* when a slave sits it in the *saddle* & a fool sits on the *throne*!

3. **When the fool *goes to work* (8-11).** **Five** ordinary *workplace scenarios* where fools get themselves in *trouble*!
 - a. → *Digging pits, breaking down walls, quarrying stone, splitting logs, chopping wood, ... charming snakes!* 😊
 - b. The *big idea* here is that most of the trouble a fool falls into is *so avoidable*! Here is Solomon's principle: *Fools just don't seem to see danger coming!*

And wise King Solomon has *still more* to teach us about *fools & their folly*...

When the fool speaks (12-15).

1. **Read vv. 12-14.a.** *Words!* One writer points out that any time the Bible addresses *wisdom*, soon or later it confronts your *speech*. That's because your *words* shout out the content of your *heart*! Jesus made that clear: "*For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.*"
 - a. Solomon starts his point with a **contrast** between *wisdom* & *folly* (cf **vv. 1&2**).
 - b. A *wise man's* speech is *gracious*. His words *instruct* & *encourage*.
 - c. A *fool's* lips are *destructive*. Not just *destructive* – ***self-destructive!*** At the *end of the day*, no one suffers more from the *fools careless ways* & *careless words* than the *poor fool* himself.

2. And as he goes, you can *trace* (*hear!*) the *downward spiral* of his foolish *speech*; from *beginning* to *end*...
 - a. His *first words* (insults, arguments, boasts) are *folly*.
 - b. The *more* he speaks, the *worse* it gets! **Like an avalanche of sinful speech, picking up speed & strength & destruction as it goes.**
 - c. From *folly* to *insanity*; not simply *insanity* – ***wicked madness***. (Don't miss that in the Bible *foolishness* & *sinfulness* go *hand in hand*. This is a *moral* & *theological issue*.)
 - d. You would think this guy would see the *brick wall* coming & *put a sock in it*...but *no way*. Don't forget (last week) a fool *just doesn't seem to see danger coming!* So instead of *talking less*, he ***multiplies his words***.
 - i. And no-one else can get a word in *edgewise*.
 - ii. **Think about it:** have you ever tried to *reason* w/ a *fool*?

3. *Everyone* knows that *no one* knows the *future*. (Except **God!** ☺) Solomon says that *all the time* (3:22; 6:12; 7:14; 8:7). Now Solomon says it *again*, in about the *same way* (**rd 14b**). But what does *that* have to do w/ our *chatter-box fool*?
- a. **Boasting**. The *fool prognosticates* on *what's coming down*. The *fool multiplies his words* as he **boasts** on what **he's gonna do**.
 - b. But Ahab's warning to Ben-Hadad of Aram is still a *good one* for *boasters in any age*: “*Let not him who **girds on** his armor boast like him who **takes it off!***” (1 Kings 20:11)
4. Solomon *caps it off* with this: **v.15**. Sooner or later the *fool* runs out of *steam*. The **toil** of a fool is all the *wrong-headed & ineffective & boastful* things that he *days & does*.
- a. So at the *end of the day* he is **worn out** w/ his own *folly*.
 - b. Yet he isn't able to do the *simplest & most obvious* things to help himself. And it has nothing to do w/ his **IQ!** Again, *folly* is a *moral & theological problem*, not an *intellectual deficiency*.
 - c. I have a *friend* who once told me he was *cured of drinking* when he **14** years old! He had *lived on the same street* for **10** years. One night he went off to a *neighborhood friend's* & proceeded to *drink himself silly* w/ a bunch of his *teenage buddies*. Then he stepped out in the *dark* onto the *street* & couldn't, *for the life of him*, **find his way home!** That's what *foolish living* will get you!
 - d. That what Solomon is saying at the close of **v.15**: *A fool boasts, but he doesn't know enough to come in out of the rain!*

Words are important! *They tell you a lot about a guy or gal. So just be careful before you go multiplying your speech...*

When the fool *parties* – esp when that *fool* is your *king!* (read 16-20).

1. The idea of *rulers & rule* has already figured in **ch.10**, and now *resurfaces* at the end of Solomon's *sidebar on foolishness*. Again, Solomon employs a *contrast* of *folly & wisdom*; a *woe* (16) & a *blessing* (17).
 - a. *Woe to you, O land...* **2 intertwined issues invite woe.**
 - a. **1st issue: an immature king.** Solomon is not *checking IDs* here, he's worried about *maturity* (not *age*). Remember Solomon's son, Rehoboam – *forty & foolish!* The *immature* are *ineffective* (**vv.8-11**) & *impetuous* (**vv.12-15**).
 - b. **2nd issue: an irresponsible, partying cabinet.** The honest working man *gets up* early, *gobbles down* his Grapenuts, & *gets on* with his day. The *foolish prince* sleeps & has *breakfast in bed*. Life is just a *party*.
 - b. *Blessed are you, O land...*
 - a. **Your king is truly noble.** Not simply by *birth*, but in *heart & in deed*.
 - b. **Your leaders & counselors** simply eat so they can continue in their *duty*; → their **focus** is *performance & not pleasure*.
 - c. Solomon's *woe* seems almost *prophetic*. There would come a day when Israel would be judged as God removed the *noble* from the *throne* & put *capricious & immature leaders* in their place. **Isa 3:1-5**.
 - a. **Vv.1-3.** The **noble & the necessary** God removes! (*List from 2&3*)
 - b. **V.4 . Boys & children** (*word pictures*) rule in their place.
 - c. Let us remember, beloved (**Pr 14:34**): ***Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.***

2. **Read v.18.** ANE houses had *flat roofs* that required periodic treatments w/ *lime compositions* to *waterproof* them & keep them up. A *lazy* homeowner means a *deteriorating* home. (A lot like **v.3**, you can spot it a *mile away*!)
 - a. Yet this *proverb* is likely Solomon's *word-picture* to warn his reader of the *woes* of a *indolent & inattentive* king.
 - b. A *noble ruler* keeps his *civil house* in order. **Woe** to the *land* where he *won't*...

3. So *where* is your king? What is his *answer* when the *roof falls in*? **Rd. 19.**
 - a. Still *partying*! Let the *good times* roll!
 - b. The fool thinks a *good time* is a higher priority than *duty*.
 - c. But *don't worry – be happy*! You can **fix** any *problem* if you *pour enough money* on it. **V.19:** (lit.) - *and money answers all.*
 - “Why bother? I’ll just buy another one! Who needs to the change the oil – it’s almost time for a trade-in, anyway!”
 - d. That’s *folly* at **home** & *calamity* in the **throne room**!

4. **Rd.20.** “**Furthermore**” – so this *caution* stands in light of what we’ve just considered. In a chap. *focused on foolishness & foolish leaders*, Solomon concludes w/ a *wise word of warning*: **just watch how you respond.**
 - a. Remember **v.12-14?** **Foolish words** will get you in trouble. Especially when you direct them against your *king*!
 - b. The principle of *honoring* the king is found thru-out your Bible.
 - i. **Ex 22:28** – *You shall not curse God, nor curse a ruler of your people.*
 - ii. **1 Tim 2:1-2** – *Pray for kings & all who are in authority.* (Nero!)

5. No *secret sin* is ever *safely hidden*. *Darkness & walls & “Do not disturb!”* won't do it! Solomon paints a picture of a *scavenging bird*. Ever heard that expression, “*a little bird told me?*”
- a. *Hopping* around your bedroom, looking for *scraps & crumbs* of *gossip & complaint*.
 - b. The moment he *spies* it, he *grabs* it. The moment he *grabs* it, *off* he *flies* w/ the *morsel* in his *mouth*.
 - c. ***Out your window, & straight to the foolish & vindictive king!***
 - d. The *last thing you want*, is a *powerful fool* for an *enemy*. Be *careful* w/ *your words*...

Woe to you, O land, whose leaders are as foolish as children!

*The life of the fool should be warning for the wise. That was Solomon's point!
Here's what he told us...*

1. *Fools are headed in the wrong direction, & you can spot them a mile away.*
2. *I know it's just wrong, but sometimes foolish people run the show.*
3. *Boss or working man, the fool never seems to see danger coming.*
4. *Words! A fool's words are a boastful & destructive avalanche.*
5. *Woe or blessing – which will it be? The last thing a nation needs is a childish king & a self-gratifying leadership.*

I've said a couple of times this evening that *foolishness* & *folly* aren't **IQ** issues, they are *moral* & *theological* problems.

You can compare the terms to the **NT** ideas of *sinners* & *sin*.

Foolishness/folly (OT) → *sin*

Fool (OT) = isn't necessarily *dumb*, he's a godless *sinner* (remember what the *fool* says in his *heart*?)

Of course, every Christian stumbles into *foolish snares*, but is there any hope for the *unregenerate fool*!?! **Yes!**

Jesus is the *hope* of the *foolish*!

God sent His perfect & wise Son into the world out of love for *foolish mankind* - headed in the absolute wrong direction & set to perish.

Jesus was *crucified* on the cross, paying for our *folly* in our *place* (→ *substitutionary payment*).

Then God *raised Jesus* from dead on the **3rd** day to prove to you that Christ's *payment* is *all* God wants, & He can *raise you* from the *dead*, too!

And now the *choice is yours!* Continue to walk in your *sin* & *folly*, & be *judged* by the King of the Universe when you die. Or *turn* & *trust* Jesus the Savior, & *follow* Him as Lord of all. It's the *smart move*. I **beg you...**

Don't make a fool's choice! ...pray...