

# Contrasting Foolishness with Worship

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Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[ 0 : 00 ] we're in Ecclesiastes together. I know why we're light today. You want me to tell you why? Because last week I warned you to buckle up and bring a lunch because it had been a few weeks since I was able to preach.

And we are so grateful to Greg for stepping in as one of your pastors and filling what is also his pulpit here at Grace Church. Greg, thank you so much, brother, for your faithfulness.

It was a wonderful, wonderful privilege. And more to come, God willing. More to come, God willing. We'll see. But we're in Ecclesiastes chapter 10 and my intention for today is to complete this chapter.

So I do have much to share with you. It's always... It's always probably a... a good bit of stuff that I deliver to you that I hope that you'll chew on through the week.

Most of you take notes or at least go back and listen to the sermon again. I know that it's too much for you to process in one sitting and that's okay. I just trust that God will give you what you need and He'll latch on to what you need.

[ 1 : 15 ] And that will be what God uses in your life through the week. So don't feel bad if you feel like, wow, that's a lot of stuff. I can't remember all that.

Now remember what you can. God will make it clear to you what part of it is what He's wanting to do in your heart. The title of my message for Ecclesiastes 10 is a part two kind of thing.

It's Contrasting Foolishness with Worship. Now what I have in mind with that title is a countering. It might be even better to say countering foolishness with godly worship.

How do I deal with foolishness in life? Not just my foolishness, but the foolishness that other people do toward me. They act foolishly toward me.

Well, what we want to do is counter that foolishness that we deal with in life daily with godly worship. We want to answer foolishness with godly worship.

[ 2 : 20 ] In other words, a godly response. All right? And that's worship. All of life is worship. The issue is, who are you worshiping? Are you worshiping you or god in any given moment or situation that you're in?

So this is a part two, and I'll do a little bit of review in just a moment. Now in my reading, over the past couple of weeks, I came across this particular question.

We'll put it up here on the screen for you. What do you expect life to be like? Now I want you to just think about that for a moment. What do you expect life to be like?

It doesn't matter how old you are or what station in life you are or anything like that. This question applies to all of us, every human being on the planet. Now the author who asked that question went on to ask several other questions, and we'll put them up here one at a time for you.

The next question is this. Do you expect an ordered, predictable calm where your plans are unobstructed? Now we all need to be honest.

- [ 3 : 29 ] That's right. Thank you for your honesty. Amen. The next question. Do you assume that people will agree with you and affirm your choices? Yes.
- I am the law. Do you think you will be able to avoid sickness, accident, and injury? Do you believe you can plan your way out of stress and avoid situations where you feel overwhelmed?
- All right. All of this exposes what you expect life to be like on any given day, in any given situation.
- All right. And the issue is how much any of this and what you expect aligns with what God says life is about.
- There may be some disparity between what you expect life to be about and what God says it is about. All right. And we want to deal with that disparity.
- [ 4 : 36 ] When we carry unbiblical beliefs and expectations into the situations of our daily lives, we set ourselves up for failure. We set ourselves up for disappointment and discouragement.
- And we sabotage ourselves from responding to life's realities in God-honoring ways. Now, here's the arresting thing about this.
- You and I can do what I just described as a force of habit. In other words, without even giving it any thought. Because we can train ourselves to live like God in His ways don't really matter in the daily issues of our lives.
- We can actually live like our decisions and our responses to people, like our situations are divorced from what pleases God.
- In other words, we live self-sufficiently. We live self-reliantly. In any given situation or moment, it can seem as though we're not even thinking about God.
- [ 5 : 59 ] It's like He doesn't even matter or exist. Those are typically the moments we sin. Let me put this up here for you.
- When people push our buttons, disappoint us, hurt us, betray us, discount us, mistreat us, fail to appreciate us, or when various trials, troubles, heartaches, limitations, and adversities of life hit us, we can respond as if God doesn't matter.
- As if we've just pushed Him from the center of life to the margins, where He's out of sight, out of mind. Now, I don't believe for one moment there's a person in this room, as I've gotten to know you, who wants to live like that.
- The fact is, we all struggle with living like that. It's a struggle. That's the point. It's a struggle. Do you understand that's not a struggle for non-Christians?
- Why? Because they don't have a mind for Christ. If sin bothers them, it bothers them because they don't want to get caught.
- [ 7 : 23 ] They don't want to suffer the consequences of the wrong they do. For a Christian, sin and wrong are a matter of conscience and heart before a holy God.
- We don't want to offend a holy God. We've put a premium on God's holiness in our lives. And so we want to live holy lives in honor of God's holiness.
- Why do you want to live a holy life? I hope the answer is, because my God is holy and has called me to a holy life. And as I live a holy life, I reflect well on my God.
- That's why. Another way of saying that is, I bring in glory. I reflect His character in my life. He's a holy God. That's the joy of serving Jesus Christ.
- So I don't think any of us in here actually want to live a life where we're pushing God to the margins and not thinking about God in ways that help us respond to life in a God-pleasing way.

- [ 8 : 28 ] But we do, we do fall short of that, don't we? And we catch ourselves after the moment saying to ourselves, why did I say that?
- Why did I say that like I said it? Why did I do that? Then you know why you did it, because you're a sinner and you're fighting sin. And sin is deceptive. And our hearts are deceptive. So the question then comes, beloved, what can we do? What can we do? Well, I'm going to suggest a couple of things for you this morning.
- And here's how I'd like to start. One of the things that we can do together is this. We need to see the world in our daily situations from God's point of view.
- Now, did you know you could do that? You can actually learn to look at the world and look at the situations of life from God's point of view. You need to build the habit of perceiving your daily world in every circumstance biblically.
- [ 9 : 39 ] Okay? And I think that's what all of us want. People who come to Grace Church, they don't stick around long if the Bible doesn't become increasingly important to them.
- Because we're all about the Bible. We're all about telling people God's point of view, while at the same time saying as politely as we can what you think really doesn't matter at Grace Church.
- We can talk about what you think, but what we really want to see is this. We want to see you thinking God's thoughts after him so that more and more of what's coming out of your mouth is this is what God thinks.
- That's what's going to help you. If I let you stay in what you think, you're going to suffer and struggle and smother in sin. So we're going to tell you the truth and we're going to call you to live it.
- We're going to hold you accountable. Hopefully with much grace and love because those who would be saying those things to you, they're strugglers too. They need the same grace you do and they serve the same Lord you do.
- [ 10 : 44 ] So Romans 8. Now you know why I do this. I do these introductions like this because this is all free. The clock's not started yet. It doesn't start until I give you my first point.
- All right. Romans 8. Verse 20. This will give us a little bit of ammunition from Scripture in terms of seeing and perceiving our daily world biblically.
- What does God say about our world and how do our expectations line up with that? Romans 8.20. For the creation was subjected to futility.
- Now there's a word that we're familiar with from Ecclesiastes. Futility. Vanity. Not willingly was it subjected to this futility but because of him, God, who subjected it in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
- For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. Now I'm not going to exegete this passage or exposit this passage with you so much.
- [ 12 : 00 ] I just want to give you three quick points. This is all stuff that I've been doing and a lot of the reading I've been doing over the last few weeks. The first thing I want to point out to you is from verse 20 and we'll put it up here on a slide.
- This particular Greek word futility translated for futility is mataiotes. Mataiotes.
- It carries the idea of vanity, purposelessness, or folly. So you recognize that from Ecclesiastes. The Hebrew word matches that.
- Hebel or hevel. Vanity. All is hevel. Vanity. Smoke. Breath. Sin has broken the world and God has subjected it to function always falling short of what he originally created it to be.

It's part of the curse of sin. It's part of the fallout of the fall into sin that human beings experienced in the garden. The world doesn't work like God originally made it to work.

[ 13 : 10 ] It strives in futility. Came across a quote from David Lloyd-Jones, a very famous preacher not long ago, since deceased. A great mind and theologian.

And he said that the change of the seasons reminded him of how futilely the creation nature struggles to renew itself only to fall desperately short.

Right? The leaves die. The plants die. Whatever. And we go into winter. And then spring comes and everything tries to bud and revive and it's life it's life only to find that give it a little bit of time and it all dies again.

That's a reminder that the world is groaning and struggling. What do you think volcanoes and earthquakes and tsunamis and all that's about? That's the earth groaning and straining against itself.

It's suffering under sin just like we do. And so there is this built in aspect of futility in our world.

[ 14 : 16 ] It's always going to be like that. The world is frustrated. It's always going to be like that until God comes back and makes a new one for us. Okay?

That's a fact of the world you live in. It doesn't function the way it should. It doesn't function the way it was originally designed to function. So the question comes, beloved, where are you encountering futility and frustration in your life?

Boy, I got one. Right away I can tell you what I'm dealing with. It's in the next point. Here it is. Corruption. This is verse 21.

You'll see it up here on the slide. Corruption. This is decay. I'm decaying and I feel it. Oh my goodness. My joints hurt. My neck hurts.

My back hurts. I wake up in the morning and I'm like, I did go to sleep last night, didn't I? Disease happens. This is a hard Greek word to say.

[ 15 : 20 ] It's phthora. Phthora. The idea of destruction, decay, ruin captures this word. So your world is in bondage to decay.

That's what this passage says verses 20, 21 and 22. Your bodies will slowly deteriorate. That's what's happening to you.

Your energies are going to diminish until you finally die. That's coming. Everything in this life is either dying or falling into ruin.

Let me ask you something. How many of you are driving the same car you were driving 25 years ago? Raise your hand. Now you don't count.

He's raising his hand. He's got an old great truck, man. That's his baby. Most of us are driving new vehicles. Why? Or more recent. Why?

[ 16 : 20 ] Because they wear out. Even the stuff of the world wears out just like we do. Right? We're in decay. You see the point. Why can't you always experience joy?

Why can't you always know peace? Why can't you always know a vibrant spiritual life? Why do you slip into times when you feel dry spiritually or when you're struggling to have joy in the Lord?

Why? Because everything's decaying. Everything's in an ebb and flow reality in life. That steadiness is gone. Sin corrupted all that.

Why do you struggle with change, failure, and uncertainty? So where are you feeling this process of ongoing decay or corruption in your life?

And then finally we see in verse 22 another slide up here groaning. Groaning. This is the pains of childbirth in the way of an analogy. the Greek word here is sustenazo.

[ 17 : 29 ] Sustenazo. It's to groan along with. And then he has the analogy of the pains of childbirth. That's a word sunodino.

Sunodino. To suffer together or to be in agony along with. So this is taken together labor pains. And it pictures the reality you and I live in day to day.

We experience the pains of life and we groan together. Right? We express the heartache. We share in the hurt.

And we shouldn't be surprised, discouraged, or overwhelmed by the pain of this life given what I've just shared with you. This is how the Bible describes life on this planet, at least in one part of the Bible.

So the question is, where are you feeling the pains of living in a broken world? Where are you feeling the pain of living in a broken world? Among broken people?

[ 18 : 34 ] Because it's there. So you have futility, the frustration that we all feel living in this world. You have corruption, the decay that we're all experiencing in this world.

And you have groaning. You have the pains, that are part of our everyday lives. It's all very real, isn't it? Now when Solomon tells us repeatedly that this life is full of futility, vanity, meaninglessness, he's pointing out the truth of this life.

The hope, joy, peace, purpose of life are not found in this life. You can't look to the things of this life.

You can't look into the world as it is, broken, shattered as it is, and find the purpose and meaning that you crave. You will not find it in your search here.

People who are rich beyond our imagination are some of the most miserable people on the planet. I've read some of their bios. videos. I shared this with you before.

[ 19 : 43 ] I'll never forget seeing what's the guy? It's an actor. You would know him if I could remember him now.

This is what I get for just coming off the top of my head. He was in Remains of the Day. Anthony Hopkins. Thank you. Oh, yes. My repository.

Anthony Hopkins. You know who he is, right? He's the guy that did the bad movie he did. Never mind. All right. Anyway, you know who he is. I love that guy.

He is such an awesome character actor. I haven't watched everything he's in because I can't watch some of it, but it's really good. I remember him in an interview not long ago, and he said, you're going to find, he's talking to all the upstart actors and stuff.

He said, you're going to work, work, work, work to get to the top, and let me get to the top. Nothing. Nothing. It's all for nothing.

[ 20 : 43 ] He said that just as sober as he could be. It's all for nothing. I thought, wow, this is a guy at the pinnacle of his profession.

Nothing. You can't find life in this life. You find life in Jesus. God. Without God, life is pain without purpose.

Well, in my last couple of messages from Ecclesiastes 10, we talked about how it only takes just a little bit of foolishness to stink up life's moments. You remember that?

That was pretty vivid, right? That was 10, 1 through 3. So let me get back to Ecclesiastes and we'll read that. Dead flies make a perfumer's oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor.

There you go. It only takes a little bit of foolishness to stink it all up. A wise man's heart directs him toward the right, but the foolish man's heart directs him toward the left. Even when the fool walks along the road, his sense is lacking and he demonstrates to everyone that he is a fool.

[ 21 : 59 ] Then in verses 4 through 7, we talked about you being the contrast in the context of life. Look at 4 through 7. If the ruler's temper rises against you, do not abandon your position because composure allays great offenses.

There is an evil I've seen under the sun like an error which goes forth from the ruler. Folly is set in many exalted places which rich men sit in humble places. I have seen slaves riding on horses.

That was like unheard of. And princes walking like slaves on the land. What's he saying? Jesus in you is the contrast to foolishness.

Even a little bit of foolishness, which so often fouls up the situations and relationships we encounter in life, even that, a little bit of foolishness can ruin a lot of things.

And so he's saying here we have examples of that happening in the everyday that we experience. Last time we were together in this, we dealt with contrasting foolishness in your workplace.

[ 23 : 11 ] In your workplace. And here's what we said based on the verses I just read. The boss or the ruler, the ruler, has a foolish fit of anger.

anger. And you maintain your calm for the sake of the Lord in the hope that your wise response will have a godly influence on him.

That's the context that you're in. This is happening at work or under someone who's in authority over you. They're having a little anger fit toward you. And instead of you lashing back or getting your fee-fees hurt or going off and pouting or whatever, or just blowing back up at, oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah.

And in this particular case, well, I'll show you I quit. Not that either. In this case, you maintain your calm for the sake of the Lord.

Talk more about that in a minute. So the contrast to his foolishness is your wise, gracious response in the Lord. You see?

[ 24 : 16 ] When this kind of foolishness resides in exalted places, this is verse six. Look at verse six. Folly is set in many exalted places while rich men sit in humble places.

When this kind of foolishness happens in exalted places, bad decisions compound and people are impacted in negative ways. You've all seen this.

All of us have had to deal with the reality. Why is this person in charge? They don't know what they're doing. They're not competent to do this job. these decisions are just ruining everything.

Everybody's in a bad mood. Morale's at an all-time low. What in the world? Lives are at stake. Jobs are at stake. Careers are at stake. And all this person knows how to do is protect them. We all have dealt with this in one level or another with different people.

Right? This is in the Bible. Solomon is addressing this very thing. bad decisions compound because of foolish people acting in foolish ways.

[ 25 : 20 ] And it affects people. The normal good order of things is turned upside down and that's verse seven. I've seen slaves riding on horses and princes walking like slaves on the ground.

The normal order of things is turned upside down because of foolishness and it only takes a little foolishness to effect this. Now such is this broken unjust world.

Life isn't fair. That's not going to change. So what matters is your response. Your response.

And so next is point number two. Here's point number two. This is part two from last time we met with this. It's up here on the screen for you. Contrasting foolishness as a worker.

So you as a Christian are bringing the contrast to the foolishness that's going on around you. The life that you live, the responses that you choose to make for the sake of the Lord contrast with the foolishness that's coming at you.

[ 26 : 29 ] So you don't make yourself a lecturer. You don't make yourself a fixer. You don't manipulate and control and contrive. You live a life of faithfulness and you think in terms of what your response needs to be so that it pleases God first.

Now sometimes that response needs to be confrontational and you need to stand your ground. We saw that back up in what is it?

If the rule verse four, if the ruler's temper rises against you, do not abandon your position. There are times that you have to stand on the principle of serving the Lord and on your convictions.

It may cost you your job. It may blow up in your face. You just need to maintain a godly response in that though. Contrasting foolishness as a worker.

Look at verses eight through ten. He who digs a pit may fall into it and a serpent may bite him who breaks through a wall. He who quarries stones may be hurt by them and he who splits logs may be endangered by them.

[ 27 : 36 ] If the axe is dull and he doesn't sharpen it its edge, then he must exert more strength. Wisdom. Here's the punchline. Wisdom has the advantage of giving success.

What's he talking about? The positive side of this contrast is wisdom in the worker. There's foolishness going on in the workplace.

There's foolishness happening in the workers themselves around you. So not only is the boss potentially foolish and giving you grief because he's foolish, but you also have people around you who act foolishly.

Now I'm going to ask you church, what's the answer when I say, and why does that happen? Because we live in a broken world with broken people. It's always going to be like this.

So don't be shocked. Don't say, but this isn't supposed to happen to me. I'm trying to do the right thing. Well, you can just guarantee yourself the more you try to do the right thing, the more it's going to come at you.

[ 28 : 42 ] Because you're swimming upstream. You're against the flow. Eventually you're going to stand out. So Christian, there isn't any put my head down and hide. Living the Christian life puts you front and center and that's just where you want to be.

Why? Because you want people to see Jesus in you. So who are you putting front and center? Christ. Jesus goes front and center.

Don't hide Jesus. The world needs him. The world needs him. So verses 8 through 10 are successive proverbs and they highlight the need for you to have a serious, sensible approach to your work.

These are the kinds of labors that would have went on in everyday life among common people in this era. You remember Solomon's a king. I doubt very seriously if he's ever done any of this kind of work.

He was born into royalty and he is royalty writing this. But he sees what's going on around him and so that's what he says. I've seen this. Let me describe what it's like for you for people to go out and earn a wage and go through life.

[ 29 : 55 ] They wield axes. They quarry stones. They bust through stuff. They deconstruct and construct. They do all these kinds of things. They dig holes. And guess what?

They're in constant danger. This is a dangerous world. People get hurt. People die. From simple things that we could heal from now, they died because it was toxic.

They got infected. They didn't have any way to fight it. Let me ask you a question. What if more people took a wise, godly approach to their work?

Think of where you work or think of where you have worked. What if you were around people who took a godly, wise, biblical approach to doing their job with you every day and made it a point to please God in the way they did their work?

Would that change the way your workplace looked? Rob's in the military. Jeremy's been in the military. Had a couple guys in the military.

[ 30 : 58 ] Rico's been in the military, right? Yes. I was in the military. Let me tell you something, man. You can meet some neat people in the military. It's a rough place. Some foul-mouthed folks.

Foul-minded folks. I don't know if I was ready to walk into that. I walked into that and I was like, holy moly, man. So you got to put Jesus forward and that's tough to do it.

These environments are hard. I don't have to tell you that. They're harsh. They're cold. So the question is this then.

What do you bring to the situation? You know your situation at work. You know the context that you work in. What do you bring to the situation?

Because what you should bring to the situation is that serious, sober-minded, sensible approach that seeks to please the Lord in everything. And sometimes that will mean that you have to say no to high people.

[ 32 : 03 ] I can't do that. I can't compromise my integrity by doing that. I'm not going to lie. I'm not going to manipulate. I'm not going to mislead. It's not going to happen. Because I have a higher authority to answer to than you.

You can say that graciously and kind. See, you guys know this. This is how practical this teaching is. Each of the dangers that he's outlining here, look, fall into a pit, being bitten by a snake, having a stone fall on you, being cut by your own axe.

That all speaks of how the fall makes our world a dangerous place to work in. Now the end of verse 10 carries the point. Look at the end of verse 10.

Wisdom has the advantage of giving success. If you act wisely, you can know success. Here's the qualifier. It's a proverb.

It's not a universal truth. It's a general principle. Right? So, not always, but much of the time, wisdom will win the day.

[ 33 : 10 ] You could do the right thing, say the right thing, act the right way, and you could still have trouble with your boss, trouble with the people around you. You could do all those things, and it could actually create trouble around you, because you're the goody two-shoes.

You're the holier than thou. You're not on the same page. You're not one of the team, because you're not willing to lie and manipulate or something, you know. But generally, generally speaking, if you act wisely, you can know success.

So, wisdom, wisdom is responding to these situations God's way. Not your way. It's being in the hot seat and responding in a way that pleases the Lord.

If you look back at chapter 1, verse 3, look what Solomon led with. This is three verses into this book of 12 chapters. What advantage does man have in all his work, which he does under the sun?

Isn't that a great question? What advantage do you have working yourself to death the way you do for the years that you do? All the sweat and the toil and labor, all the days that you go unappreciated, unrewarded, no raise, or just a token, will give you 25 cent an hour raise.

[ 34 : 27 ] Woo-hoo! I'll go out and buy a new car. Don't be cynical. No. What is this wisdom?



Well, this is what Solomon is answering for us. What is the advantage of all of your work? This is what he's saying. That's the point, the whole point of verse 11. Look at verse 11 with me.

We'll put it in context. If the serpent bites before being charmed, there's no profit for the charmer. What in the world is he talking about? All this snake, right? Two times now he's talking about a snake.

They must have had problems with snakes back then. I don't know. So what's he saying in this one? Wisdom is what you apply before you act and while you are working.

Now stay with me. It's like sharpening your axe before you use it. We have some people in here who understand what I'm talking about. You get your tools ready and if your tools are ready, they can serve you well.

[ 35 : 33 ] And a sharp axe makes the work a lot lighter and a lot less dangerous. Right? A dull axe, you're having to put more into it. It's probably more likely to glance.

That happened to me one time and I busted my shin wide open with it out in the middle of the woods. I wasn't allowed to go out and play like that by myself anymore. It's like sharpening your axe before you use it.

Once the snake has struck, it's too late to charm him. What are we talking about? This is prayerful forethought. Prayerful forethought.

In other words, in other words, it's of no use to you to neglect applying wisdom and skill to your situation only to find that you've made a mess of things through that neglect.

You were bitten by your own neglect. You didn't charm before the fact. The snake bit and now it's too late to charm.

[ 36 : 37 ] You might as well put all that in your pocket and go home. Because all the sweet talking in the world ain't going to change the fact that you just got bit. So what is that calling you to?

Prayerful forethought. preparation. Preparation. Using your mind. Being sober minded. Going into the situation eyes wide open.

Being alert to your context. Being aware of what you're walking into. Getting to understand your context and the people in that context. People are wired differently.

It takes wisdom for you to work around a group of people and deal with those people as individuals. Even if you want to form them into a team. What do you think it is for pastors to take all these individual people with all these individual ideas and all the baggage they bring from their religious background and try to meld them into one unit and move them in one direction in unity of mind and heart?

You say, Jeff, good luck. That's right. That's why we all call you to one Lord. Not Jeff and Greg. We call you to Jesus. And that's why we say, so we're all going to do it Jesus way.

[ 37 : 47 ] Not my opinion. Now, when it comes down to having to make the decision where the buck stops, Greg and I step up and we say, OK, this is what we think is best. And we'll suffer the consequences or whatever.

Somebody has to. We point to Jesus. Once you've been bitten by your own neglect, it's too late. So let me throw this slide up here and see if it helps.

Wisdom. Wisdom leads us in sound judgment and keeps us focused on what's most valuable as we deal with difficult situations. So it's not about manipulation.

It's not about being clever, self-reliant. It's not about controlling outcomes. Here it is. It's about knowing the truth and applying that truth in your context so that God is pleased with your response regardless of the outcome.

Did you catch that? God is pleased with your response regardless of the outcome. Say, Jeff, what if my response is godly and I still lose my job? Is God pleased?

[ 38 : 55 ] If you've offered a godly response and honored the Lord and you lose your job, is God pleased? He's pleased with you. Right. Can you trust him with that outcome? Folks, I've been in that situation and it's hard.

It doesn't always turn out rosy peachy fine. You suffer. Your family suffers. Holding your integrity is immense.

I can't recommend it enough. Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about. Here's an example of what I'm saying as I encourage you to think about beginning with God, contemplating your response, being prepared.

I'll talk to you later about what happens if I blow it. Let me give you an example of this. Let's say you, this is very common. I chose this example because this is very common to our lives in a broken world.

You encounter someone who is angry and or emotional about some issue with you. You with me? Now, you have a choice in that moment about your response.

[ 40 : 06 ] You have a choice. Will you use that moment and your energy to make your point and to over talk or to overwhelm or to I'll show you or will you put the value in that moment on ministering to their heart and in seeking to be a vessel of honor to Jesus?

In other words, I'm not saying that there's never a time to contradict, rebuke or disagree. I'm not saying that. I'm saying how you do it matters to God.

What's in your heart and what's coming out of your mouth and the way that you do it matters to God. Don't marginalize God in a huff of pride. Don't push God out of the center and act like he doesn't even exist anymore while you make your point.

While you win that argument, while you show them. As if Jesus just took a hike like he doesn't even exist anymore. It's just like you forgot you're a Christian.

Now, is this real or what? This is very practical. A lot of people don't even know this is in the Bible. But Solomon's speaking right into the everyday that we live in.

[ 41 : 25 ] That's all I'm encouraging you to do because I think that's what the context is saying. As I lift this out of the passage and hold it in front of you. It's very wise that Solomon's talking to us about.

So do you see that what we're getting at is really concerning the attitude of your heart in that situation? That's what God's concerned with.

The attitude of your heart in that situation. So what you say and do reflects your own heart for Christ and the value you consciously put on using wise words for the sake of pleasing God.

because we all have troubles with other people. But what is your heart bring to the situation? And then how do you respond? Verse 11 helps set up the point of verses 12 through 14.

So Solomon turns next to the way we use words wisely or foolishly. That's point three. It's up here on the screen. Contrasting foolishness with your words.

[ 42 : 36 ] With your words. Words from the mouth. Verse 12. Words from the mouth of a wise man are gracious while the lips of a fool consume him.

The beginning of his talking is folly and the end of it is wicked madness. Wow. Yet the fool multiplies words. Man. No man knows what will happen and who can tell him what will come after him.

The toil of a fool so wearies him that he doesn't even know how to go to a city. What are we talking about? Well, the positive side of the contrast here with wisdom is in what you say.

What you say. You're still in the context of being around those in authority over you. So this could be government. This could be government officials handing down laws or edicts or regulations or God help us protocols.

Whatever it is. It could be your boss. Whomever you answer to who's in authority. Verse 12 puts the contrast here with our words right up front.

[ 43 : 46 ] A wise godly person speaks graciously for the sake of the Lord. As Christians, we're concerned about putting Jesus forward. Is what I said and the way I said it honoring to Christ because I can say the right thing in the wrong way and dishonor the Lord.

Right? So we just need to be concerned about this and Solomon's what he's doing is he's encouraging us to give careful thought, prayerful thought to this prior to to prepare the attitude of our hearts knowing that we will encounter these things just about on a daily basis.

And so don't let it sneak up on you and overwhelm you when people act foolishly. When they act like broken people. Folks, I know it's hard.

I'm human too. That's what he's trying to encourage us in. Gracious words are favorable words that bless, build up, and win over.

Would you look at Proverbs 10.32? Actually, I think it's up on the screen. Do we have a slide for Proverbs 10.32? Is it up there? Okay, let me catch up with you. The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked what is perverted.

[ 45 : 05 ] Do you know that God has a view of the way that we use words that is either acceptable to Him or perverted to Him? When you speak selfishly and wickedly in God's mind, that's perverted.

That's how God sees words that are not wise. They're perverted. God sees wise words as acceptable. And what matters most to us in the way that we use our words is what God thinks.

You're either using your words in an acceptable way to God or you're using your words in a way that God thinks is perverted. Now, you decide which camp you want to be in. I know which one I want to be in.

The foolish person's words, according to our text, consume. Do you see that back in Ecclesiastes? Words from the mouth of a wise man are gracious while the lips of a fool consume him.

They swallow up, literally, as swallow up. How so? Well, notice verses 13 and 14. The beginning of his talking is folly. The end of his talking is wicked madness.

[ 46 : 13 ] Yet, what does he do? He multiplies words. You see that? No man knows what will happen and who can tell him what will come after him. Here's what Derek Kidner, one commentator, said.

I'll put this little quote up on the screen because I want you to see it for impact. Here's what he's saying about this guy in verses 13 and 14. The foolish person. His thinking and therefore his speaking refuses to, church, begin with God.

That's the problem. That's the problem. Do you see? Christians can do this by just marginalizing God like you forget about him in the moment. So it's what you are already nurturing in your heart that is your beginning point.

We all speak from the overflow of our heart. Luke 6, 45. The mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart. So what is in your heart in those moments will dictate how you respond and what you say.

If you blow up or if you use perverted words and don't speak wisely and speak foolishly, that's coming out of your heart. That's your issue. You can't come and you can't say, yeah, yeah, yeah, but.

[ 47 : 27 ] No, no, no, no, no, but. Yeah, but you don't know what he said. You don't know how he got all up in my face. And so that justifies your sinful response. You take that to God and you try to convince God that answering sin with sin is okay.

It's not okay. And yet we do this all the time. God help us. And that has been my prayer for all of us all week. God help us. The fool, the foolish person adds insult to injury by talking incessantly.

It's not enough that he's foolish in what he's saying and it's perverted and it's not right and it's harmful and it's consuming. It's swallowing up. In other words, the idea here is it's all about me.

It's me getting and taking, right? Instead of giving. It's all coming to me and I'm swallowing it up. And what do you get?

Maybe whatever I vomit up. It's not good. It's a horrible picture. He adds insult to injury by talking incessantly, hear this, about matters he really knows nothing about or completely misunderstands.

[ 48 : 42 ] You ever been around those folks? They just can't stop talking and the more they talk, the more you realize they have no idea what they're talking about. They're just trying to make it sound good and you kind of feel bad for them.

Well, that doesn't stop him. The fact that he doesn't know, so he talks on. He multiplies words and proudly offers opinions beyond his ability. He overreaches himself.

That's what it says right here. Look, no one knows, no man knows what will happen in verse 14 and who can tell him what the reason that Solomon is saying that is because this guy is making it sound like he's got it all figured out.

Oh, I know how that's going to work. Oh, I know how that works. Oh, I know how this is going to come out. Oh, no, no, no, no. That's happened to me. I've got this figured out. Here's what you need to do. They're always telling you what you need to do, but you look at their life and it's like, dude, you need to look to home.

Have you ever had somebody that's been divorced several times or whatever come up to you and try to give you marriage counseling? I have. And I'm like, now hold the phone. Wait a minute. Are you talking to me out of the fact that you've realized humbly that you've really blown it and you've sought restitution and so now you're admonishing me or helping me based on the fact that you realize that you've done these wrong things and you're trying to get them corrected and so I'm supposed to, in my experience, it's been, just let me tell you what you need to do.

[ 50 : 11 ] They talk about things they don't know anything about. They overreach themselves. That's Proverbs 13.3. Do we have that? Proverbs 13.3. I'll just do it real quickly because I need to move on.

Voila. The one who guards his mouth preserves his life. The one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin. The ruin there is the swallow up. It's the consume.

You see, guarding, preserving, that takes forethought. That takes wisdom. That takes discipline, self-discipline.

Wicked madness. Boy, what a phrase. Wicked madness. This could also be translated evil delusion, evil misbelief. It invokes thoughts of the deceitfulness of sin.

In other words, we can all fall into this trap of speaking, not graciously, but wickedly. Even as Christians. It's as if our speaking and our thinking didn't begin with God.

[ 51 : 19 ] We didn't begin with God. That's the danger I spoke of earlier as we marginalize God. So I hope that you're seeing that this is all about worship. Hence the title of the message.

This is all about how you are worshiping the Lord in any given moment or context. And how is that worship that you're offering to the Lord in your life, being prayerful, how is it going to serve you in a heated moment when people are being foolish toward you?

Sinful? Ugly? How is your worship in your heart to the Lord going to help you in that moment? Are you just going to just throw that away so that you can...

What are you more concerned with? See, this goes back to the first question. What do you expect life to be? I expect life to be hard and I expect a good God to do a good work in helping me do a good thing for His glory.

That's what I expect. God help us stay there. Right? Not so with the fool. Verse 15.

[ 52 : 27 ] Look at this. The toil of a fool so wearies him that he doesn't even know how to go to a city. Now this follows the process to the outcome of a foolish person's lifestyle. This is lifestyle.

They can't even find their way to something as big as a city. Why? They're so full of themselves that they make simple things hard and lose their way along the way. You ever met these folks?

They make simple stuff hard. They take a simple thing and make it sound so complicated. You're like, I don't know. Okay. And they lose their way along the way.

It's like they get lost in their own talking. They get lost in their own view of life. Their life is pointed at and invested in shallow, worldly, temporary, fleeting, unsubstantial things.

Things that don't reflect valuing God and what God values most. Here's a statement that I would like to encourage you to hang on to. They live lost. They live lost.

[ 53 : 29 ] And that's why we need to bring them Jesus front and center. They don't need your opinions or your lectures or your wisdom. They need the wisdom of Christ in gracious gentleness.

And I'll tell you, you won't be able to do that apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. Me neither. Finally then, number four, contrasting foolishness in your world. It's up here. Contrasting foolishness in your world.

Verses 16 to 20. Woe to you, O land, whose king is a lad and whose princes feast in the morning. Blessed are you, O land, whose king is of nobility and whose princes eat at the appropriate time.

Strength and not for drunkenness. Through indolence, the rafters sag. Through slackness, the house leaks. Men prepare a meal for enjoyment. Wine makes life merry. Money is the answer to everything.

Furthermore, in your bedchamber, do not curse a king. In your sleeping rooms, do not curse a rich man. For a bird of the heavens will carry the sound and the winged creature will make the matter known.

[ 54 : 32 ] Okay. The positive side of this is wisdom in your world view. Wisdom in your world view. Now friends, just notice real quickly as I move here, notice the contrast between woe in verse 16 and blessed in verse 17.

Hopefully your translation reads something like that. Verse 16 tells of an immature, childish leader who's very self-absorbed as he feasts, as he parties, when he should be working.

And we all know these folks, we've all experienced this. We've been under people in authority who, if they would just apply some self-discipline and take their job a little more seriously, they could do some good things.

Verse 17, the wise leader blesses his people by his self-discipline, his proper sense of priorities, and his prudent outlook on life. By the way, that's a great way to be a husband.

So this requires humility. One of the reasons we don't see more of this is because there is a lack of humility in people.

[ 55 : 50 ] As Christians, much time in prayer over Scripture is needed, allowing God to search and saturate our hearts. If you look at verses 18 and 19, through indolence, the rafters sag, slackness, men prepare a meal for enjoyment.

They sit down to drink wine and make merry and they think money is the answer to everything. All right, we have the results of foolish, childish leadership here. This is what the end result of this leadership looks like.

The house falls apart and the people suffer. Indolence translates a Hebrew word that means extreme laziness due to a dislike of work. So husbands, be warned, be admonished, be encouraged.

Being a husband is all about being a man who takes care of his household, who lives prudently, who makes wise decisions, who lives humility before his wife and kids.

Proverbs 24, would you turn there real quickly with me? Proverbs 24, 30 through 34. I'm going to have you turn there because I want you to follow along as I read this.

[ 57 : 09 ] Proverbs 24, 30 through 34. I passed by the field of the sluggard. Now this is a foolish, lazy person. And by the vineyard of the man lacking sense.

So a fool. And behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles. Its surface was covered with nettles and its stone wall was broken down. When I saw, reflected on it, I looked and received instruction.

Here it is. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest. Then your property will come as a robber. Your poverty will come as a robber and your want like an armed man.

You'll lose it all. You'll lose it all to indolence, to laziness and sluggardness and a dislike of work. Work's tough, works hard. Foolish leaders, hear me, foolish leaders trade in excess and extremes.

Right? Excess and extremes. If you've ever served under one of these people or had a boss like this, this is super, you never know from one day to the next what the target is or the standard is.

[ 58 : 15 ] They're constantly moving the target on you because they live in extremes. Right? One day it's this plan and then a few days later it's this plan and that plan's not the plan anymore.

See? Excesses, extremes, cuckoo, cuckoo. They either work like work is a god or they work like work is a plague. Either way, it's not about honoring the Lord.

It's not about being a blessing to others. So they miss, this is what they miss in this, they miss the stewardship aspect of leading and serving. Now let me pick on the husbands a little more.

Husbands, fathers, please don't allow sin in your own life or in the life of your family rob you of the perspective of stewardship that you have before the Lord.

Your wife and kids are to be stewarded by you. They're on loan. They don't really belong to you, they belong to the Lord. You need to treat them as the possessions that they are in the sight of God.

[ 59 : 19 ] They're precious to Him. So that's just a call for husbands to deal with sin and to move into these things very humbly with great prayer and care.

Verse 19 takes us back to the idea in verse 16 regarding a childish leader. They have a self-serving anti-God approach to leadership. Several commentators pointed out that this concerns a nation's destiny.

Let me just say this real quickly. Inexperienced, immature, foolish leaders bring nations down. And foolish people pay little attention or no attention to these realities.

Their answers are all bound up in temporal pleasures and immediate results with money being the driving force primarily. That's what the text says. You and I both know that politicians are really, really good at telling people what they want to hear and promising them what they think they want.

Right? When you speak to a person's wallet or pocketbook, you're doing a great day's work. Just promise them that things are going to get better, that things are going to be more productive and profitable.

[ 60 : 43 ] make the bottom line the profit margin for your voters. Whatever you have to compromise to get it. Verse 20, verse 20, furthermore, in your bedchamber, do not curse the king.

In your sleeping rooms, don't curse a rich man. That little bird will take it to the king and then you're going to be in trouble. Now look, this refers to dangers that people of that time faced if their curses against authority were found out by the king.

That's what they lived in, right? So you didn't want to be the guy with somebody whispering in the king's ear that you're the dissenter. You can't get on the king's page.

Rebellion. You don't think people in that time squashed rebellion as quickly as they could hear about it and find it? That's right. I mean, remember, who lost his own son who was in rebellion to him right prior to Solomon's reign?

David. David lost a son because that son rebelled and David's captain of the guard killed him and David went to crying about it. And what was it, Joab?

[ 61 : 48 ] Joab basically said to the king, dry up. You got a kingdom to run. He was bad news and he needed to go and I took care of it. Now get out there and king. That ain't a yes man.

We need guys like that around us. Well, this is where your biblical worldview comes in. We don't face that kind of thing in our country yet.

Right? When you suffer under the foolish leadership of inept leaders, it happens. Whether it's your boss, as in this verse, a governing authority, don't marginalize God and take matters into your own hands.

We're not called to be those kind of people. Trust God, he's at the helm. Now just hear me out and I'm almost done. Be very, very careful about speaking disparagingly about leadership.

That's in the scriptures. Look, we can dissent, we can disagree, we can vote with our hearts, we can voice our concerns, we can act on our convictions as we prayerfully, humbly, and graciously follow the Lord.

[ 63 : 02 ] Here's what we cannot do. What we can't do is defame Christ and dishonor the truth. Under the banner of my rights.

If your rights go in conflict with Jesus and what he's called you to as a servant, your rights need to go. And Jesus needs to be exalted.

And that can happen. We can also stand for what Christ stands for and it could cost us our lives. Many of our brothers and sisters in the past have shed their blood and lost their lives because they stood firm on what Jesus stands firm on.

Right? It takes a lot of wisdom to know that line a lot. And you need to walk that line with humility and prayerfulness.

All right? So what would the Lord have us do to bring contrast in terms of his grace and wisdom the situation of a ruler ruling foolishly?

[ 64 : 15 ] Is this for our time or not? Now I'm not disparaging our leadership. You'll see in just a second. But I'll tell you straight up from the pulpit, I haven't agreed with a lot of what our governor's done in our state.

I've had a hard time with it. And so you're looking into the eyes of somebody who needed to hear this message because I'm a fighter. But I want to fight for what matters to God, not what matters to me.

So I need to be careful. So where do we begin when we live under what we consider to be based on scripture, foolish decisions that have negative impacts on people's lives and we see that and we live in it.

we don't agree with it. What do we do? How do we even begin? I can't answer all the questions for you today. I can tell you what the context tells us. I can tell you where to start and I can tell you with great confidence.

Here's where you begin. You can't marginalize God. You can't act like we're not Christians. So here is where we start. Let me get there. I'll read this and we'll be done.

[ 65 : 23 ] We'll pray and I'll be done. It's in 1st Timothy chapter 2 verses 1 and 2 and we'll put it up here on the screen for you.

Paul says, first of all, notice, first of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men.

This is a call to prayer. First of all, pray. If you're not doing that, you're missing the first step. What does he want us to do this for?

Look, verse 2, for kings and all who are in authority so that we may, here's the purpose clause, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

God's first order of business is a tranquil, quiet life, not anarchy. Mark it down. We are not called to anarchy. We are called to live a tranquil, quiet life in godliness and dignity, putting Jesus forward.

[ 66 : 35 ] You're going to want to ask me, Jeff, are there ever times we take up arms and all that? That's not this sermon. I'm only telling you this. This is where God calls us to begin.

When you're dealing with a foolish boss or a foolish leader or anybody in authority who's acting foolishly toward you and it's making a hard life even harder, your first calling is to pray for them.

For them. And then we go from there. Okay? Thank you for being patient and sitting in. It was my goal to finish 10 and I didn't want to skip much.

So I had to skip some. You didn't get it all, but you got enough, right? It's enough to digest, keep you full through the week. All right, go in, hug your boss, tell him you're praying for him.

All right, beloved, let's pray together. Well, Father, your word is incredible. It's wisdom for life and it's so practical.

[ 67 : 43 ] So, Father, we don't take lightly that we have said under the truth and I've tried to exposit it well, Lord. God help me. I've tried to do well in this.

I pray you'd help my brothers and sisters be as good Bereans and that they would study to see if this is so and they would measure the words that I've given them against what they see in the text and that they would be prayerful and careful.

I also ask you, Father, if you would continue to convict my brothers and sisters to pray for Greg and I as we offer leadership that we would not lord it over them, that we would not shower them with our opinions, but that we would carefully walk with them in love and in grace, putting Jesus forward and always holding before them what does the scriptures, what do the scriptures say?



What does God say about this in his word? Let's go knee to knee and let's look together. Father, help us have that kind of humility and a teachable spirit together. Father, these are hard things, Father.

These are difficult truths and we just pray that you would give us a spirit of humility and grace as we face off with a broken world and that you would adjust our expectations to line up with scripture so that when the foolishness of the world slams into our lives, we won't be overwhelmed or shocked, but we'll be prayerfully prepared to answer in the wisdom of Christ.

[ 69 : 08 ] It's in his name that we pray and for his glory. Amen.