

Sinister, Sense, and Sensibility

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 04 July 2021

Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[0 : 00] that we adore the Lord together as a church family is through the preaching and teaching of the Bible. Because we believe that in the Bible God has made Himself known to us.

Most supremely, the Bible reveals to us God in human form. And that is in Jesus Christ. Amen? And that's one of the reasons that we turn to the Scriptures to meet our God and to behold Him and adore Him.

I'm going to invite you to turn, if you would, in your Bibles to Ecclesiastes 10. It has taken me a while to get to chapter 10. We were in chapter 9 for quite some time.

That's okay. I heard my hero and mentor in the faith, John MacArthur, say one time, we could do this a little bit differently. We could go slower.

So we're just going to hit three verses today in Ecclesiastes chapter 10, verses 1, 2, and 3. The title of my message is Sinister Sense and Sensibility.

[1 : 17] So do I have any Jane Austen fans? Alright. So you're picking up on my tag for Jane. That's my nod to Jane Austen. And I'm going to have to admit, guys, that quite some time ago, Suzanne hooked me on period pieces.

I'm sorry. It's not very tough, but I love period pieces. Yes. They suck me in and make me cry. Get in with the tender side.

Sinister Sense and Sensibility in Ecclesiastes 10, 1 through 3. But I want to share things with you before we actually read the text. So if you'll look up on the screen here, I have a passage of Scripture that I want you to hold in your minds as we think carefully about the impact that our lives have on those around us.

So in 2 Corinthians 2, verse 14, it reads this way. But thanks be to God. That's a wonderful way to start. But thanks be to God who always, never fails, leads us in triumph in Christ and manifests or shows through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

So God leads us in this wonderful, triumphant, victorious life in Jesus Christ over sin and He shows through our lives a sweet aroma of the knowledge of Jesus everywhere we go.

[3 : 01] At least in theory. We hope in fact. He goes on to say this, Paul, For we are a fragrance of Christ.

Isn't that great? We are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one, an aroma from death to death.

To the other, an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things. The idea here is that we are to be a fragrance for Jesus.

Our lives are supposed to be, as it were, guys, hold on with me, perfumed or cologned in the way of being for Jesus a light and a wonderful aroma to His glory.

That's our calling. I want you to hold that in your minds as we go back to Ecclesiastes. Now, a couple of Sundays ago, I shared this quote with you.

[4 : 08] We can put that up on the screen for them. To have Jesus is to have everything that God has to give us. But to have everything without Jesus is in the end to have nothing.

So to have Jesus is to have everything that God has given us or gives to us. That, that side of the equation is a life lived in godly wisdom.

To live with Jesus as your highest treasure is to live in the eyes of God a life of wisdom. That's what God calls it. Now, hang with me.

That's not what the world calls people who follow Jesus. We're a bunch of morons or whatever else they would say. But now, to have everything without Jesus is in the end to have nothing.

That is a life in ungodly foolishness. To have everything and yet to not have Jesus is to live in ungodly foolishness.

[5 : 24] Wisdom and foolishness are two very different paths in life. And Christians who live in the wisdom of God should hold a trademark kind of life that is very recognizable.

very recognizable. Again, we are the fragrance of Jesus in our families, in our workplaces, in our communities.

And hopefully, as we go in and out of our everyday life. But there's more. I also shared a couple of Sundays ago when we were last in Ecclesiastes, I shared with you that every single person on the planet lives their life as a response to God.

You say, everybody, Jeff? Yes, everybody. Even people who are not Christians. This is true of every person regardless of nationality, ethnicity, cultural background, religious belief, or even for those who claim no religion at all and who don't believe in God.

Even those people live their lives responding to God. They just don't know it. I want to help you see what I'm talking about here and why it's important to your life.

[6 : 45] The reason for this is that this is God's world. He owns everything in it and God controls all things that happen in this world.

Now, does everybody in the world believe that? No. There are even Christians, quote unquote Christians, who don't understand that and don't live by that and that's a tragedy.

We don't want that occurring here among us. We want to give God the glory knowing that we live in His world under His authority and we want that to be a good thing.

Not something that we chafe against. So, to live in this world, friends, is to live under the authority of God who owns the world. Now, I just want to flood your mind with that truth.

So, I'm going to throw some scriptures here on the screen just for the sake of time and we'll look at them together and you can see. Look, the earth is the Lord's and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it.

[7 : 50] That's pretty clear, isn't it? If I were hungry, God says, I would not tell you for the earth is mine and all it contains. Oh, Lord, how many are your works?

In wisdom, you have made them all. The earth is full of your possessions. And then this one. Is there another one we can throw up there, Michelle?

There it is. Who has given to me that I should repay him, says the Lord. Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine. Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the highest heavens and the earth and all that is in it.

And we could go on and on and on. This is just a fraction of the scriptures that speak to this reality. It's overwhelming, isn't it? God is creator and the world belongs to him and everything in it.

That includes you. Whether you know it or not, whether you recognize it or not, whether you live like it or not, it's true. I hope that you'll consider living in that reality.

[9 : 05] Jesus said this. This is an amazing thing if you'll let it settle into your heart. Jesus said that God feeds the sparrows so that not one single sparrow falls to the ground without him knowing it.

that's Matthew 6, 26 and 10, 29. Then, in Matthew chapter 10, verse 30, Jesus said that God even knows the numbers of the hairs on every single human being's head at any given time in all the planet.

Now, that's detail. That's a God who knows what he's made. That's a God who sustains what he's made. And that's what we talked about last time, isn't it?

The last time all of you were here, that were here, we talked about Jesus being the creator of all things and the sustainer of all things so that all things hold together in him.

No Jesus, no world. It's that simple. That straightforward. Now, bring that together with this reality.

[10 : 15] Your lifestyle is then saying something about God. More importantly, the way you choose to live each day is saying something to God.

Your life is a response to God, whether you know it or not. The question then begs, what is your life saying to God?

Is your life saying, I could care less about you. I don't care that you made everything. I don't care that you hold everything together.

I could care less that you gave me life and that I was made in your image. I don't like you. I don't believe in you. I don't want to have anything to do with you.

Now, when you hear me say that, if that comes at you and offends you, if that comes at you and unsettles you, I'm glad. Because we can live a life like that, not saying those things out loud, and we don't want that to happen.

[11 : 26] The reason we don't want people to live like that isn't because we feel superior to those people. We don't want people to live like that because we realize one day they'll have to stand before God and answer for that heart and that attitude toward God.

And God will judge them. And what awaits them for an attitude like that is a devil's hell. Now, do we want that? No. We don't want that for our friends, our family members, our co-workers.

We don't even want that for the people who don't like us. Why would we want that for anyone? anyone? Well, God's done something about that.

We're going to talk about it together. What is your life saying to God? Perhaps your life says to God, I behold you and I adore you.

I love you and I want to do everything in my life to please you. I know that you are God creator and my savior and my king. And I know you have forgiven me for my sins and so every day of my life I live in debt to you.

[12 : 35] Gladly, willingly, joyfully. I don't know what your life is saying to God, but every single human being's life is speaking something to God.

So living in response to God as a Christian then is and should be very different from living in response to God as a non-Christian.

So we have believer and unbeliever. We're back in Psalm 1 where we have those who are following a path of scoffing at God and we have those who are delighting themselves in God.

Now I'm just giving you the Bible's view of how God sees human beings. He sees them in two classes of people. It doesn't matter what color you are or what gender you are or how rich or poor or how big or small or whatever else.

God sees everyone in two classes. Those who love him and believe in him and those who don't. That's God's view of humanity. We're the ones that carry the prejudice.

[13 : 44] We're the racists, not God. With God you either love him or you don't. And it doesn't matter what color you are. Christians have the privilege then of living.

Listen to this. Corum Deo. It's a Latin term and it simply means before the face of God or in the presence of God.

Corum Deo. It has to do with those whom God has made holy through faith in Jesus Christ.

Now you might say, well Jeff, listen, based on what you've been telling us about God owning everything, doesn't everybody live Corum Deo in the presence of God, in the face of God, before the face of God?

Doesn't everybody? Alright, that's a good question. In a sense, the short answer is yes. Because it's God's world, everybody lives before the face of God.

[14 : 46] That is, with God seeing all they do and knowing intimately who they are. Knowing the hairs on your beard. That's true. true. That's true. But is there a difference between the way a Christian lives before the face of God and the way a non-Christian lives before the face of God?

Well, you say, well I hope so. Perhaps there should be. What should that look like after all? Well, I want to ask the late, great theologian R.C.

Sproul to answer that and weigh in on that for us and help us understand that distinction a little better. So I'm going to put a quote up here on the screen for you from R.C.

Here's what he says. To live Coram Deo is to live one's entire life in the presence of God. That is, here's what he means, under the authority of God, to the glory of God.

To live all of life, Coram Deo, is to live a life of integrity. It is a life of wholeness. that finds its wholeness, its unity, and coherency in the majesty of God.

[16 : 01] A fragmented life, now he's going to say this, something very different from that, a fragmented life is a life of disintegration. It is marked by inconsistency, disharmony, confusion, conflict, contradiction, and chaos.

End quote. So, Christian living is living all your life as a wise response to God.

Now, the Christian life is also more than that, but we're zeroing in on this aspect. So let me say it again. Christian living is living all your life as a wise response to God while seeking to please God in every aspect of your life.

You say, Jeff, is it that detailed? Is it that serious? Yes, it is. These are the weightier matters of living, of being human. Why?

Because you're all that? Because I'm all that? No, because God is all that. God is all that. And when we start with God, it sobers us about life because we begin to see life the way God does.

[17 : 26] Well, that's much of what Solomon covered in chapter nine. So if you weren't here and you're visiting, you're good. You're up to speed. All right?

Solomon has been teaching us that the only worthwhile life is a life lived as God's gift to us. When we're living as God's gift to us, this life, we are living life then the way God would have us live it.

Cognizant, aware, deeply aware that God has given us this life and we owe him that we would live this life back to him as our gift to him.

It's a beautiful picture that Solomon's been giving us. In other words, the precious nature of life is that life is a gift from God that can be and should be lived with him and for him.

Now, you and I know lots of people who do not live their lives with God or for God. So again, we're going to hear throughout this message that there are two different kinds of people living in the world.

[18 : 48] And I'm asking you to evaluate this. Even if you claim to be a Christian, I'm asking you to evaluate what is my life saying to God even as a Christian?

And what is my life saying to God if I claim not to believe in him? And where does that leave me? Alright?

We come to chapter 10 in Ecclesiastes and Solomon shows us some very real life examples of the antithesis.

I know, big word, it means opposite. opposite of living a worthwhile life in his wisdom. It's what God calls the foolish life.

So we're going to see an example just in a few verses. All of chapter 10 is going to cover this, but just in a few verses we're going to highlight this. We're going to see a fragmented life marked by inconsistency, disharmony, confusion, conflict, contradiction, chaos, just as R.C.

[19 : 55] Sproul mentioned earlier in that quote. So will you look with me at Ecclesiastes 10? Verse 1 reads, and I'm reading from the New American Standard Translation, dead flies make a perfumer's oil stink.

So a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor. 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.

So God's doing a little bit of name calling here. What are we to do with that? Where I'd like to begin in verse 1 is with this, the foolish persons hurt.

The foolish persons hurt. If we could put that up there for them. That's my first point. What I'm talking about here isn't the foolish person being hurt. It's the foolish person doling out hurt.

[21 : 05] It's how a foolish life hurts the people around us. it's ruinous. And we want to talk about that. How then, since we're going to be talking about a fool and foolish living, how does God define a foolish person?

How does God define a foolish person? Now I'm going to put you busy. We're going to turn to a number of scripture passages that I hope I'll be able to use as illustrations for you and examples to kind of round this out for you.

All right? Because we're not interested in Jeff's opinion this morning. We're interested in what God has to say. So we'll use God's word to round this out for us.

The first place that we're going to go to define God's view of a foolish person is Psalm 14 1. Will you turn there with me? I'll get you busy. We're going to use our Bibles.

Psalm 14 1. Now I'm not going to comment on all of this very much really. I just want to read it for you. The fool has said in his heart there is no God.

[22 : 21] Now folks, everybody on the planet that claims no belief in God and doesn't live their life for God, God calls them a fool.

Now what we want to do is understand better what does God mean by that and why is that so important? The fool has said in his heart, there is no God.

Now if you'll turn to the next book in the Bible, Proverbs chapter 1. Proverbs chapter 1 verse 7.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. The fear of the Lord means a high and holy reverence for God. To have a high and holy reverence for God is the beginning of having good knowledge.

But, notice the next part of the verse, fools despise wisdom and instruction. That is, fools despise God's wisdom and instruction.

[23 : 23] They don't want to have anything to do with anything connected to Jesus or God or the Bible. Then, if you look at Proverbs 14, now there's lots of other places we can go.

I just tried to pick a few that would keep us in one place. Proverbs chapter 14 verse 8. How does God view a fool? How does He define a fool?

The wisdom of the sensible, notice that, is to understand His way, but the foolishness of fools is deceit. Now, if you've ever been around a foolish person, you will recognize immediately that there's a level of deception or deceit in that person.

These are the kind of people who will tell you what you want to hear. They'll tell you what they're chameleons. They change faces with whomever's in front of them, so they can't be trusted.

Now, this verse is telling us that the wisdom of the sensible is to understand His way. God gives us a certain understanding that as we live life, we have an ability to discern and see into and see the way forward.

[24 : 40] It doesn't mean everything always works out rosy, peachy, fine for us at all. That's not what it means. But it means that God gives us a certain insight, wisdom, and understanding as we move through life.

and what it does is it helps stabilize us in the of life. The movement of life. It helps stabilize us in that.

That's what the wisdom of God does for us. If you look at verse 14 of chapter 14, the backslider in heart will have his fill of his own ways.

Notice that first part. This is the one who draws back from God in his heart. That's one way to translate this. So, someone who draws back from God in his heart will be filled with his own ways.

He'll have his fill of what he wants most. I want to be my own God, do it my own way. And so God says, you know what?

[25 : 50] You'll get a belly full of that. And then in verse 16, a wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, but what does a fool do?

A fool is arrogant and careless. So, a fool rushes into things. He's arrogant, he's prideful, I can handle this, and he moves in and he's very careless about it.

Do you know people in your life that start a lot of things and never finish them? Do you know people in your life that have a hard time with following through? Those are foolish people.

They're careless. They don't do what Jesus said and before you sit down to do a project, count the cost so that you won't get into it and then leave it incomplete and people look at you and say, well, that was foolish.

And then finally in verse 33, wisdom rests in the heart of one who has understanding. Do you notice how all of these are speaking to the heart?

[26 : 56] Wisdom rests in the heart of one who has understanding, but in the hearts of fools it is made known. It's just simply a way of saying that wisdom rests in the heart of someone who has a godly understanding on life.

it's a depository. It's there to be drawn on, to steady you in life and to guide you through life. But then in the next part of the verse it says, but in the hearts of fools it's made known.

It's not there, resting there as a depository to draw on. What's made known is that it's absent. The way a fool lives reveals that there's no wisdom of God in their heart.

And that's what their life is displaying. And on and on and on it goes. How can we sum all of this up? Foolishness is ungodliness.

Let me say it a different way. Foolishness is un- god-likeness. It is not like God. God is not foolish in any way, shape, or form.

[28 : 08] So foolish living shows no sense about what is sensible. Do you know these people? You've encountered these folks?

Has this been something that you've struggled with in your life? We're all liable to foolishness at any time, right? All of us. Unfortunately, this is something that we really never outgrow, Christian, and so we are constantly in need of grace, wisdom, discernment, truth, to ground us in the way of the Lord and help us stay away from this kind of thing.

Another way of expressing this, friends, is this. Thoughtless living shows no grasp of what is reasonable, no understanding of what is valuable, sound, judicious, wise.

you've seen this happen in people's lives before. They just don't seem to be able to ground themselves in what really matters. They're constantly flitting all over the place, using people, manipulating people, trying to control events, because they can't settle themselves, and steady themselves, and get a direction.

They're in and out of jobs, they're in and out of relationships, they're in and out of responsibilities, okay? This is what we're talking about.

[29 : 38] As Proverbs 1, 7 said, foolish people actually despise God's wisdom and instruction. They're not just apathetic toward it, they don't like it.

So it's not that a foolish person can't learn, they refuse to learn the wisdom and ways of God. So a foolish person, this is what they do, listen now, a foolish person wastes his life or her life by living by his own wits and wants.

Now, can any of you identify with that? Have any of you ever lived at all in your life at any time in your life by your own wits and wants? How'd that work out for you?

Is that okay? Right, same here. It gets you in all kinds of trouble. Foolish person wastes their life like that.

Well, we have a proverb in Ecclesiastes 10.1. Dead flies make a perfumer's oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor.

[30 : 46] That's a proverb. Now, I need to tell you real quickly as we interpret a proverb, proverbs express general principles for living. So, proverbs are not always true all the time in every circumstance, but they are norms for living.

Proverbs speak to the reality of the way things normally are or normally will take place. So, when you read through the proverbs and you're seeing wisdom and it says do this and you'll get this and you say I did that and I didn't get this.

Life, that's why we have Ecclesiastes and Job and Song of Solomon because you do proverbs and it doesn't work out like it said quite like it said and so you turn to Ecclesiastes and Solomon says, yeah, guess what?

Life's full of injustice. You can never figure everything out. There's a big old sovereign God. You plan your way but God directs your steps. So, get over yourself.

That's a paraphrase. Right? In ancient times, scented oils, scented oils were used for making people and places smell better.

[32 : 05] Now, think about it with me. Alright? Lots of animals, lots of human bodies in hot places with no air conditioning. Yuck! Right?

That's what's going on. So, there's a lot of smells and just like now, then, flies were a problem. What are flies attracted to?

Yes! Right! You spray more stuff on and they just seem to love it and they come get you and land all over you. We don't really have gnats here, do we?

I'm from Georgia. Alright? We have gnats in Georgia. This motion is how we live for four months. Right? We eat watermelon, you're just going to eat some gnats.

That's the way it is. Flies. Flies were attracted to perfume oil. They landed in it and at best, at best, they left their germs and feces and then flew off.

[33 : 12] Terrible, right? At worst, what's worse than that? They die in it. That's what's worse. They get tangled up in it and they die in it.

So one tiny fly flies into a perfumed container. It's got the perfumed oil in there. He flies in there. They don't know it.

They close it up and then when they open it, after he's dead and putrefied in there, that's the graphic nature of the proverb, they open it up and nasty.

And so one tiny little fly ruined that expensive perfumed oil. And now they've got to pour it. Would you want to put that on you? No.

You wouldn't want to put that on your kids or you or anybody else. So the Hebrew here, the Hebrew is very graphic. It's very descriptive of what's going on. Literally, it reads this way.

[34 : 11] There's no conjunction. There's no and. Makes stink, makes bubble up. That's nasty. Right? It's putrefaction.

No and. Makes stink, makes bubble up. Okay. So we need to see all of this, though, in connection with the context of chapter 9, verse 18.

It's unfortunate that there's a chapter break between 9, 18 and 10, 1. We really need to put those two together. Look at 9, 18 with me. Wisdom is better than weapons of war.

Okay? That's God's wisdom. But, one sinner destroys much good. Dead flies make a perfumer's oil stink. So a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor.

Do you see how those go together? Those concepts go together? wisdom benefits the common good. But it only takes one foolish sinner to ruin that good for everyone.

[35 : 21] So the principle comes across in chapter 10, verse 1, as we consider the term weightier. I don't know what your translation might say, but mine says this.

A little foolishness is weightier. some translations outweighs. That's a great idea. And it's helpful. The idea is this.

Even a little foolishness goes a long way. It takes a lot less to ruin something than it does to create it.

You with me? It's easier to be stinky than to be sweet. Yes? Come on!

It's harder to be sweet. It's a lot easier to be stinky. Yes. Here's how we say it. It only takes one bad apple to ruin the entire thank you.

[36 : 23] Even a little foolish behavior can do much damage and undo much good. That's the proverb. It only takes a little foolishness to stink up life's moments.

Now, think with me. Have you ever been at a wedding? Have you ever been at a social gathering, a reunion, a family gathering, and some kind of conversation is going on like this?

Oh, no, it's Uncle Ted. Okay. No, we'll get through this. It'll be fine. Mama, you know Uncle Ted's going to say something and it's going to ruin everything.

You ever been in that? Come on, I'm not the only family with an Uncle Ted. Let me off the hook here. Right.

You get into situations and social contexts with people, people, and we have a foolish person, God help us, a foolish person, who just seems to constantly put their foot in their mouth, constantly act in some faux pas, some inconsiderate, ungodly, foolish way, and what was a great moment, a savored moment, becomes a wash with ugh.

[37 : 46] And everybody just kind of walks away and nobody wants to talk about it. Nobody wants to go tell Uncle Ted, duct tape his mouth shut or something, I don't know.

It only takes a little bit to stink up life's moments. Foolishness is therefore weightier than wisdom and honor. One example of how this applies to your walk with the Lord, I think, could be found in Matthew chapter 5.

Told you I was going to keep you busy, so let's go to Matthew 5. Just want to give you a biblical example of what this might look like. I've given you one from your everyday social context.

You might have a person like that in your job. You might have a person like that in your church. Matthew 5, beginning in verse 13.

You, he's speaking to people who are his followers, the disciples, you are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again?

[38 : 58] It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

And here's the punchline, verse 16. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify you and think you're all that.

No, that's a terrible translation. Let's do that again. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Amen? That's living a life of influence. People, hear me friends, this is about influence, a godly influence in your life.

Foolishness is weightier than wisdom in these contexts because it only takes a little bit of foolishness to rob you of that influence. That's sobering, isn't it?

[40 : 13] we need grace every moment of every day looking unto Jesus, treasuring him with everything that we are, everything that we are.

That's what God would call us to. That has to do with the influence you have on others. Even a little of this would spoil your saltiness and dim the light of hope that lives in you.

Now, I think it would help at this point as we transition to verse 2 to do this. I think it would help us to understand where do these attitudes and where do these behaviors come from?

I mean, they're not done in a vacuum. They're coming from somewhere. Is it our world that's doing this to us? When Uncle Ted shows up and acts like this, when the person who's acting foolishly and has a habit of living foolishly shows up at church stuff and does and says things and it just throws cold water on everything.

Or when someone shows up and they say or do things that hurt other people and they're just so inconsiderate. And you know that that hurt Aunt Margaret when Uncle Ted did that.

[41 : 33] And it's just hard to be around them because Uncle Ted is constantly saying things that just hurt Aunt Margaret and run her down. And it's hard to see. Right? That's what we're talking about in that.

Where does that come from? Why does Uncle Ted do that? Now, why have you done it? You've done it. Haven't you done this? I have too.

Why? Where's that come from? Did somebody make you mad? Did somebody make you act foolishly? Did somebody make you be inconsiderate to them?

Do you really feel like they deserve that? So you let them have it? Here's the second point we'll look at in verse 2.

The foolish person's heart. We've looked at the kind of hurt that these people can bring on people's lives. Just like a dead fly in oil.

[42 : 32] They kind of go into the mix and spoil, putrefy, and ruin everything. Right? What about the foolish person's heart? Is that up there? Yeah.

Look at verse 2 with me. A wise man's heart directs him toward the right, but the foolish man's heart directs him toward the left.

We have the answer to the question, where does this come from in this verse? I'd like for you to remember something. Remember according to scripture, at the center of foolishness is a refusal to live by God's wisdom and instruction for life.

It's a refusal. It's not just simply apathy or ignorance. It's rebellion. And in scripture, typically, the right hand is the hand of blessing and favor and honor.

And the left hand carries the lesser of these things. it doesn't mean that the left hand doesn't have some of that to it in the concept of scripture.

[43 : 39] It just means lesser. So the right hand is the greater favor, the greater blessing, the greater honor. It's represented by the right hand in scripture.

There are a lot of depictions in the Old Testament about this and I started to take you to a couple of them, but perhaps the most graphic example of this biblical concept of right hand favor, left hand not so much, is in Matthew 25.

Here we go back to Matthew again. Hold your finger in Ecclesiastes. Matthew 25. And we are talking about this idea of the right hand and the left hand.

Blessing and not blessing. Favor with God and being out of favor with God. God. And in verse 31 we read this, but when the Son of Man, that's Jesus, comes in his glory, so we're talking about another appearing of Jesus post resurrection.

Jesus coming back after his resurrection and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him.

[44 : 55] Now don't just think nations, think people, think individuals, giving an account. And he will separate those people one from another as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

And he will put the sheep on what side? And he will put the goats on the left. Then the king will say to those on his right, come you who are blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Then he goes on to speak to these people about what that means. It's very interesting that in verse 41, he transitions and he says this, then he will also say to those on his left, depart from me.

So one group of people on the right were being welcomed into the kingdom, that is eternity, into heaven. Verse 41, depart from me, accursed ones.

Accursed is under a curse. What does he say to them? Depart from me into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.

[46 : 13] What's the eternal fire? Right. So we have heaven and we have hell. What side is heaven on? The right. What side is hell on?

The left. What side gets the favor of God? The right. What side gets the displeasure and judgment of God? The left. Graphic, isn't it? Very graphic.

This biblical concept, then, this concept, is where we get the idea of something being sinister. Sinister. Let me put this up there on the screen for them, Michelle.

The next slide. Sinister. Sinister, bad, evil, base, wicked. It's living on the wrong side of what is right.

That is, in our context, the left side of life. It actually comes from the Latin word sinistra. It means left hand. Left hand. Now, I want you to notice, because I've pointed this out to you, that in verse 2, the emphasis is on the heart.

[47 : 18] The heart of each person. A wise man's heart moves him in the direction of God's blessing, favor, and honor. That is, the right side.

A foolish man's heart directs him in the opposite way, that is, the left side. And we've already seen Solomon speak to the issue of what is in the heart of every person who is not living in faith to God.

I want to show you just a couple of quick references in Ecclesiastes chapter 3 verse 11. It says that God has made everything appropriate in its time.

And then notice this, chapter 3 verse 11, God has also set eternity in their heart. And when we covered this, I explained to you that that means that almighty God has put the knowledge of eternity in every single human being.

It's why people wrestle with eternity. It's why they wrestle with the idea of an afterlife. Some of them, that scares them to death.

[48 : 33] And then for others, they make up all kinds of things that invent an afterlife for themselves. And then still others say, there isn't an afterlife. When we die, that's it.

So you better grab everything you can while you're here because this is all there is. Do you understand what I'm saying? But God says that he has put the knowledge, the awareness of an eternity into every human heart.

Every person. So when you hear people who are unbelievers tell you they don't believe in that, they're deceiving themselves. Because it's in there. It's absolutely in there.

then he goes on to say this. In chapter 9 verse 3 this is an evil in all that is done under the sun.

What is? That there is one fate for all men. What is that? The hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives.

[49 : 44] Afterward they go to the grave. Whoa! The hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity. Insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives.

That's hard to fathom, isn't it? That we have people who live out of the sinful insanity of their hearts. Knowing that God has put eternity in their hearts.

That's what we're dealing with. Now I want to give you another biblical picture of this just real quickly. So if you'll turn to the book of Luke, let's do some biblical illustration here for you.

This is Luke chapter 12, beginning in verse 15. Luke 12, 15.

Then Jesus said to them, Beware and be on your guard against every form of greed. For not even when one has an abundance in this life, does his life consist of his possessions.

[51 : 01] You see that? Even if you have everything and you don't have Jesus, you have nothing. Okay? Look at verse 16. And then Jesus told them a parable, and here is what he said.

The land of a rich man was very productive, and he began reasoning to himself saying, Oh, what shall I do since I have no place to store all of this abundance, all these crops?

Well, then he said to himself, this is what I'll do. I'll tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods, and I will say to my own soul or myself, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come.

Take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said to him, you notice that we have a conversation here. We have his soul speaking to him and telling him nonsense, and now we have God speaking to him and telling him truth, but the truth is rough.

What does he say? You fool. Raka, you fool. This very night your soul is required of you, and now who will own what you have prepared?

- [52 : 16] In other words, he's going to die. And then who gets it all? What's he saying in all of this? Well, when we think about Solomon telling us that eternity is in the heart of people, and that insanity is in the heart of people, sin is in the heart of people, this example shows us this kind of person.

What is this kind of person? This is a man who is not recognizing and living by the reality that God has given him a wonderful thing, a bounty. God has provided this overflow of abundance of good things in his life.

In this example, crops. Now, you lived in these times, an abundant crop was a big deal. It meant you didn't starve. You had lots. An overflow.

And God said, you fool, instead of seeing this as an opportunity to be a blessing to others, to influence others for good based on what God has done good to you, you're going to hoard it all and keep it.

This was a perfect opportunity, God said, for you to be rich toward me. Compassionate. Kind. Giving. Generous. God said, you missed it. Not only did you miss it, but you made it all about you.

- [53 : 35] Tonight, tonight, you're going to die. Then who's going to get it all? Sobering, isn't it? It's meant to be sobering.

That's why Jesus told it. Every one of us have an influence on people around us. Every single one of us have a life to live, and we have stuff that God's given us.

And the question becomes, what is my life in relationship to my stuff saying to God? Is it saying I'm generous toward God or stingy?

Is it saying I'm sweet toward God or stinky? Which is it? I told you at the beginning, I warned you, God sees it in two ways. That's it.

Your life is a sweet aroma to God or it's stinky. stinky. That's it. What stands in the middle to make the difference?

- [54 : 30] Jesus Christ. The person of Jesus Christ. It isn't a plan, an ideal, or a concept. It's a person. We are called to relate to, to worship a person.

To love and treasure a person. He is the difference. It's not my faith that's the difference. What I bring to the equation is my stinky sin.

He perfumes it with himself. And then I get forgiveness. He gets my stinky and I get his sweet. And that all happened on the cross.

As he paid the debt for my sin because he took my place. He substituted himself for me. Did he do that for you? Are you putting your faith in Jesus for that same reason?

God-fearers, wise people, live by eternity's realities. God-fearers live with the idea of eternity in the forefront of their minds.

- [55 : 37] And they're good with that. It doesn't make them sour. It gives them hope. And they live out of that hope in Christ.

Christ. Eternity guides their heart. But foolish people do this. Foolish people ignore, deny, or distort eternity.

That's what reincarnation is. They believe in eternity. They just believe in a reincarnation of it. They distort it. They give their hearts over to evil, insane living.

You say, Jeff, now listen. I know unbelievers. And their life doesn't look insane to me. I mean, are we talking Jeffrey Dahmer and Ted Bundy here? What are we talking about?

No, listen. Listen. It's insane because unbelievers refuse to live with Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. That's insane.

[56 : 36] But they don't know it. Most of them don't realize that's what's at stake. Because they're deceived. We're told that sin is deceptive.

They're under the spell of sin. And only God has the power to undo that. Yes? I can convince the people in my life to turn to Christ.

I can share with them, talk to them. I can live before them. I can plead with them. Yes. But there's nothing in my life that's powerful enough to transform them and to change them.

That has to come from God. So what do I do in my pleading, Jim? What do I do, Nathan? What do I do? Andy, when I talk to these people, I point them to Jesus. I tell them about the hope that they can have in the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ.

That's what I do. I point them to Jesus. I enter this wonderful treasure that is Jesus Christ. What better can I do for them?

[57 : 43] Nothing. Well, this begs a question real quickly. Where does sin come from? Where does sin come from?

Where does this foolishness of living life apart from God come from? We were talking about that a few minutes ago and we're going to clarify it now. Jesus answered these questions. I want to take you to a couple more places.

So hang on with me. Mark. Mark chapter 7. Do you want to know where your sin comes from? Do you want to know why you do wrong things? Why do you sin?

Why do you gossip? Why do you tell lies? Why do you say things to people that hurt them? Why do you do the wrong things that you do?

In Mark chapter 7, Jesus answers this question. Why do the people around you do this? Why do they hurt you? In verse 18 of Mark 7, And Jesus said to them, Are you so lacking in understanding also?

[58 : 46] You see that? Now he's asking the disciples, do you lack the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding that you need about these things? Do you not understand whatever goes into the man from outside cannot pollute him, defile him?

Because it does not go into his what, church? Heart. It doesn't go into his heart. What comes from the outside of you doesn't go into your heart.

What does it say? Jesus uses food as an example, but into his stomach and is eliminated. Then in verse 20, he was saying that which proceeds out of the man.

That is what defiles a man. So our sin comes out of us. Well, where does it where does it coming from inside of us for from within out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting.

That's greed, wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. And then notice in case none of those really got the one that you deal with all these evil things.

[60 : 02] That means even more. All evil things proceed from within and defile the man. So scripture clears it up. Where does your sin come from?

Look, the world gets it wrong, friends. Nobody makes you sin. If you do wrong to me and I do wrong back to you, your wrong did not cause me to do my wrong.

Nope. I can't even blame it on the devil. The devil made me do it. Well, scripture just said that that sin came out of my heart, not the devil's heart.

The scripture just said that my sin didn't come out of your heart, even though you sinned against me. My sin back toward you came out of my heart, not yours. Just like your sin didn't come out of my heart.

Yeah, but when you did this, it really. Yeah, well. Your choice. Do you see? Look, this is how we're all going to stand before the Lord. We're going to stand before the Lord and give an account for everything that we say and do.

[61 : 12] And there's not going to be any blame shifting. We're not going to be able to say, yeah, but, but, but, but. Uh-uh. This is all about the way you chose to live and what your life said about me and to me as you lived your life.

That's what we're going to deal with. You see? Now, do I have you thoroughly depressed and concerned? Scared out of your wits? I hope not. I hope not.

Because here's the next question. Well, where is the good? Where's the hope in knowing this about myself? Right. Here's the answer.

Here's the answer. In Jesus Christ, you have met the changer of hearts. All glory be to him. In Jesus, you've met the changer of hearts, beloved.

Since the Bible uses heart to describe the real you, that's what we mean by heart.

[62 : 14] It's not the organ pumping blood. The way the Bible speaks of the heart means the core of who you really are. It's the center of your personhood. It's what makes you who you are.

When the Bible refers to Jesus then giving you new life, it means that he makes you a new you. That's why the Bible uses the terminology born again.

Born again. You're a new you. You're a new creature in Christ. Your relationship with Jesus means you're a new person. That is the work of almighty God.

It's not the work of another man or woman. It's the work of God himself. You get a new you. Can I just take you to a couple more places and show you this and then I'll be done.

It's in 1 Corinthians chapter 6. This is the really good news and I don't want to just gloss over it. So just go there with me. 1 Corinthians 6. We use our Bibles here, don't we?

[63 : 20] We use our Bibles here, don't we? 1 Corinthians 6. 1 Corinthians 6. The context here is that Christians in the church at Corinth are turning against each other and there's actually been some of them who've gotten so mad at each other and they've gotten into these groups and factions and they're fighting and they're you'd be amazed how this can happen and it's gotten so bad they're actually suing each other.

They're actually bringing each other to court to get what they want from each other. And Paul picks it up in verse, what did I say? 5. I say this to your shame.

Now Paul's going to offer him a little bit of godly shame here. I say this to your shame. Is it so that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brothers?

You don't have anybody wise enough to help you arbitrate these things in your church? But brother goes to law with brother and that before unbelievers you're showing all of this off to the world, the city you live in?

Actually then it is already a defeat for you that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Now that's that's novel. Why not rather be wronged?

[64 : 40] Why not rather be defrauded? What? What? What if I lose my stuff? Well what if? Well what about my reputation?

Well what about it? Verse 8. On the contrary you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brothers. Or do you not know that the unrighteous.

Now look at this list. Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, nor drunkards, revilers, swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Now notice the next verse. Such were some of you. But you were washed.

You were sanctified. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the spirit of our God. Now whoa that's a big difference. You seen the difference between a sheep and a goat there?

[65 : 49] Such were some of you. Friends that's the power of the gospel. The gospel is the good news that God sent Jesus Christ to pay the price for our sin.

To pay our sin debt that we owe to God. God laid all of our sins on Jesus on the cross and then Jesus died for us paying the penalty of death that sin demands.

Somebody has to die for your sin. God sent Jesus to die for your sins. So that you wouldn't have to die and be sent away from God into a devil's hell for all eternity.

As you look to Jesus Christ in faith, Jesus takes on your sin, pays the debt, releases you from the penalty, and then God gives you the gift of Jesus' perfect life as if you lived it.

And that's how he sees you as holy. You get Jesus and Jesus gets your stinky. That's a pretty good deal, isn't it?

[66 : 52] Well, it costs the Lord of glory his life to make that happen. Amen. Such were some of you. Jesus is the changer of hearts. Jesus is the architect of giving human beings new life.

Amen. Isn't that why we gathered this morning? Because we are new lifers? Do you know what they, when the iron curtain went down in Russia, we knew some missionaries, met some missionaries that came over and they were talking about what was going on behind the iron curtain and the different things now that were starting to blossom in that first year.

Russians were coming out in numbers, openly worshiping the Lord, something they couldn't do for decades after World War II. And do you know their favorite term themselves?

You know what they wanted to be called and what they called each other? They would call this to each other, we were told in their churches. Repenters.

Brother repentor, sister repentor. You know why? Because that meant so much to them. That they could repent of their sins and turn to Jesus Christ and have a new life meant everything to them.

[68 : 20] And they knew how precious it was. That's the main thing. Well, so much more I could say. Let me just give you the third one and I'll mention it. Give you a quote and be done. The foolish person's habit in verse 3.

The foolish person's habit in verse 3. Even when the fool walks along the road, his sense is lacking and he demonstrates to everyone that he's a fool. You ever been driving down the road and have somebody walking down the middle of it?

Now, I don't want to know what you said. I don't want to know what you thought. So I'll do it for you. What in the world is a fool doing walking down the middle of the road? Don't do that. But the idea is in the proverb, isn't it?

What in the world is going on here? God is saying that the way that a fool lives reveals what he is. His behavior and his speech reveals what he is.

He can't hide. Sense in the word here in verse 3. Sense is actually the same word translated as heart in verse 2. Even when a fool walks along the road, his sense, you may have a different word there, his sense is lacking.

[69 : 35] That's his heart. He's heartless. His life displays the mindlessness that makes everything so miserable around him.

I want to offer you this quote from Derek Kidner. Listen to this. He sums up the life of a foolish person this way. He is too full of himself to refrain from airing his views to everyone he meets.

To judge from Proverbs, his fine phrases will sound incongruous. His tactless remarks impertinent. And when you talk to him, he's not really listening.

If he has a message for you, he'll get it wrong. And if he comes out with a sage remark, it'll misfire. You can fortunately sense his approach by the efforts of all and sundry to slip away.

You ever been in that situation where so-and-so walks through the door and you quickly say, come on, come on, come on, come on, come on, come on. And you go find a place to hide. It's tragic. But it's true.

[70 : 39] And this is what we've seen. This isn't how Jesus calls us to live. He calls us to live as a fragrant aroma. A sweet aroma. And not to be a stinker in this world.

So heed Solomon's warnings to live with good sense and godly sensibility. And it'll take you a long way in life. And it'll give you a godly influence.

Let's pray together. Well, Father God, we have been confronted with the truth. Such were some of you.

And so we glory in Jesus Christ and we thank you for who he is in our lives, Lord. We are ushered into the throne room as we contemplate these weighty matters of life.

As we think about how you have written your word to deal with such intricate, delicate matters that drive right into the heart of the everyday of our lives.

[71 : 44] You haven't left anything out. And when you've given us Jesus, you've given us everything we need. So I pray for those in our congregation today who might not have a relationship with Jesus through faith.

I pray that you'll use this message to prick their heart and to inform their heart and to open their heart so that they can come to you and seek forgiveness from you and believe on you and become a Christian and live a life to please you and honor you in all things.

And for the Christians in our congregation, I pray that this has fed their souls and challenged their souls. That we would soberly ask ourselves, what is my life saying to God? Not just to the world, but more importantly, what is my life saying to God?

How do I live in relationship to the stuff of this world and all of the things that God has given us and blessed us with? So Father, please don't let us be like the man who hoarded it all.

Please let us be the person who offers all of that to you and ask you to use it for your own glory and kingdom. And if you were to take it all away, help us to realize we haven't lost a single thing because we still have the greatest treasure in Jesus Christ that we could ever have.

[73 : 03] That's the way we want to live and worship and breathe. So we pray you would help us to live that life by grace through faith in Jesus' name. Amen.