

At the start of the Reformation of the Church in Scotland in 1557, John Knox wrote to his congregation before going into exile and said,

“You are bishops and kings; your wife, children, servants, and family are your bishopric and charge. Of you it shall be required how carefully and diligently you have instructed them in God’s true knowledge . . .

And therefore I say, you must make them partakers in, exhorting, and in making common prayers, which I would in every house were used once a day at least.”

Let's Worship God

24th-29th October 2016
Ecclesiastes



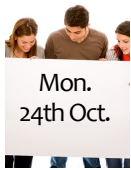
Let's Worship God is a ministry of



Airdrie Reformed Presbyterian Church

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Family worship, a joy to be experienced every day!



Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

The words of a wise man's mouth win him favour, but the lips of a fool consume him. Ecclesiastes 10:12

reading Ecclesiastes 10:1-3 - A Foolish Heart

notes The daily newspapers regularly prove the truth of Solomon's words in verse 1 when they highlight how one single act of foolishness can destroy a reputation gained over many years of diligent work! How many public figures, considered to be upright and blameless have had their careers destroyed when some foolish misdemeanour is splashed across the tabloid press!

In a very plain and straightforward manner, the preacher shows the great importance and value of wisdom in the way that we live our lives. It is no surprise that he stresses the importance of the heart v. 2. He uses an image that would have been very familiar to his original readers, for the right hand was regarded as the side of strength, skill, and favour, and so the heart of the wise man directs his life in an honourable and God glorifying direction. This is very often seen most clearly in the way that we use our tongues - how many people have damaged their own reputations by an injudicious or foolish use of the tongue; words spoken in haste or anger have come back to haunt them! No wonder that Jesus warned us to guard our hearts Luke 6:45, for 'the mouth speaks what the heart is full of'.

If the heart of the wise directs him in straight paths, the heart of the fool does exactly the opposite! Even his most basic of actions like walking along the road, show him to be a fool! V. 3. The preacher is quite right when he says that the lack of sense that the foolish man has cannot be hidden but will show itself in one way or another. It is the heart that directs the steps of man and if his heart is foolish his conduct will be foolish also, if his heart is godless we must expect his conduct to be godless too.

- questions**
1. How does wisdom affect our lives?
 2. What happens if a person has a foolish heart?

- praise pray**
- Ps. 23B:all
1. Pray that you would have a wise heart.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 - 3 Pray for family matters.



Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

The words of a wise man's mouth win him favour, but the lips of a fool consume him. Ecclesiastes 10:12

reading Ecclesiastes 10:16-20 - Wisdom for All

notes There are a number of word pictures given in the closing verses of this chapter dealing in a very practical manner with the way in which both rulers and ruled are to conduct themselves and their affairs.

1. The influence that comes from those in positions of authority. Solomon contrasts the effect upon a people of two different types of ruler: one who is without dignity or wisdom, surrounded by decadence; and one who is wise and principled who is surrounded by responsible men. The nation who suffers the first is in a woeful state and much to be pitied but the nation which rejoices in the second is truly blessed! How important is it, therefore to pray for our leaders, both in the state and in the church.

2. Idleness is ruinous both in the affairs of nations and of individuals. 'Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!'. Prov. 6:6

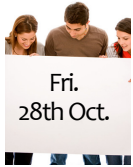
3. God's good gifts are to be used wisely and not abused, vs. 17, 19. The preacher is making the point that the good things that God provides can be used wisely or foolishly; feasting can be used for 'strength' or for 'drunkenness' v. 17. Money also, can be a means of doing good, if used wisely or if unduly loved, 'the root of all evil'.

4. Be respectful of authority and be careful with what you say. Those in positions of authority in church and state are to be respected for the office they hold, even if we disagree with their policies and criticise them for them! How often do the words we speak about others eventually get back to them, 'a little bird told me'!

Here there is wise counsel for both the rulers and the ruled - we should pray that our rulers would heed such advice and ensure that in our personal lives we put it into practice.

- questions**
1. Why is a good ruler a blessing?
 2. Why should we be careful what we say?

- praise pray**
- Ps. 26:all
1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 - 3 Pray for family matters.



Fri.
28th Oct.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

The words of a wise man's
mouth win him favour, but the
lips of a fool consume him.
Ecclesiastes 10:12

reading Ecclesiastes 10:14b-15 - Nothing Beyond This Life

notes In what may appear to be something of a contradiction, the preacher now seems to cast doubt on the premise that there is nothing beyond this life, and that this life should be lived 'under the sun' with very little thought about what lay ahead. The fool - and the word here means 'a dense and confused thinker' - assumes that there is nothing beyond this life and so takes no thought for the future, whether that be providing for a future 'under the sun' or for eternity. His only thought is to live for today!

This attitude obviously affects the way that such a person approaches his work. He does not see work as the Christian should view it; as a gift from God and as a means to glorify God, but rather as a burdensome necessity, something that interferes with and interrupts his enjoyment of life! Such a fool does not see beyond the present and does not see the need to prepare for a future they may never have. It is no wonder that work for such a one would be wearisome!

In a rather sarcastic comment in verse 15b the preacher says that the fool does not even know the way into town! In other words, he cannot see what is immediately before him, he cannot even understand what is very plain and conspicuous! What he is really highlighting is that the fool - one who lives without the knowledge of God - has no sense of direction and lives his life as though it were meaningless and futile.

What a sad way for a person created in the image and likeness of God to live their life. To have no purpose, no direction and no goal other than personal gratification is truly to see evidence of the blindness and foolishness of sin, "To be ever learning, never arriving, as 2 Timothy 3:7 portrays some people, is to be a trifler who contrives to get lost on even the straightest way to the city. That is folly without even the excuse of ignorance." (Kidner)

questions 1. Why does a fool get tired of working?

praise Ps. 25:13-17

- pray**
1. Pray that we would live our lives in light of eternity.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 3. Pray for family matters.



Tue.
25th Oct.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

The words of a wise man's
mouth win him favour, but the
lips of a fool consume him.
Ecclesiastes 10:12

reading Ecclesiastes 10:4-7 - Foolishness in High Places

notes Solomon now turns his attention to foolishness in high places! He acknowledges that those who are in positions of authority do not always exercise their power wisely or justly. He first of all deals with the way that the ruled should react when the ruler acts unjustly v. 1. This appears to be dealing specifically with somebody who is working closely with a ruler and the 'ruler's anger rises', but the principle could equally be applied to anyone in a situation where the person in charge behaves unfairly. The preacher urges that the best course of action in such a situation is to carry on with the job calmly and not to react hastily! The same advice is given by Solomon in Proverbs 15:1 where he says; 'A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger'.

As he considers the foolishness of rulers, the preacher comes to the conclusion that life is not fair! Sometimes those in authority make foolish decisions and give authority and power to those who are not fitted to exercise it! He speaks of fools in high positions and 'slaves on horseback, while princes go on foot'. If this is true in the affairs of the state, it is also true in ordinary affairs of life. We often wonder how some of the people in public office got to have the power that they do, when so many of their decisions fly in the face of common sense and seem to be so utterly foolish! Many people have experienced in their working lives incompetent people being given positions of influence and control which experience soon shows they are completely incapable to exercise.

Solomon shows us that this is nothing new! If life 'under the sun' is unfair and foolish, it should not surprise us, for true wisdom comes alone from the fear of the Lord.

questions

1. How should we react when someone in charge behaves unfairly?
2. Why are some rulers so foolish?

praise Ps. 24:all

- pray**
1. Pray for rulers and those in authority over us.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 3. Pray for family matters.



Wed.
26th Oct.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

The words of a wise man s
mouth win him favour, but the
lips of a fool consume him.
Ecclesiastes 10:12

reading Ecclesiastes 10:8-11 - Preparation and Care

notes Solomon had been commenting on the fact that there was much foolishness evident in the world, even amongst those in authority, he now gives some examples of what one commentator calls 'foolishness in action'. He gives examples of everyday activities that through inattention, carelessness, or stupidity could cause harm to the individual doing it!

The digging of pits was a common practice, either for trapping animals or indeed, in a battle to trap the enemy soldiers. If the person had forgotten or not taken sufficient care to remember where the pits were, it was quite possible for him to fall into them himself! It was not uncommon for snakes to be found in walls that were made of earth or wood, and so great care was needed if the wall was to be broken through especially as the bite of some snakes could be fatal! The physical activities of quarrying stones or splitting logs carry with them the possibility of injury being incurred if the job was not done with due care and attention. A foolish man will continue using a blunt axe, thus expending far more energy than necessary, rather than taking the time to sharpen the axe!

All this Solomon sees as highlighting the contrast between the wise and the foolish man - one who considers carefully how he is going to proceed with any action, weighing up the pros and cons so that the endeavour can be accomplished effectively and safely. The foolish person, on the other hand does not plan nor consider the possible setbacks that must be taken account of, but carries on regardless! In a very curious illustration the preacher emphasises the need for care in doing a job! He speaks of a snake charmer being bitten before he is able to 'charm' the snake - a clear evidence that he has not done his job very well! If there is need for preparation, care and wisdom in the mundane course of life, how much more when it comes to the work of the kingdom of God?

questions

1. How does a foolish person approach a task?

praise Ps. 25:1-6

pray

1. Pray that you would take care in doing your work.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
- 3 Pray for family matters.



Thur.
27th Oct.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

The words of a wise man s
mouth win him favour, but the
lips of a fool consume him.
Ecclesiastes 10:12

reading Ecclesiastes 10:12-14 - Words

notes There is an old saying "sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never harm me" and whilst there may be an element of truth in it, the reality is that many people are grievously wounded by harsh, spiteful, or untrue words. Words are nevertheless, very important, for by them we communicate our thoughts and ideas to others. The preacher in this section contrasts the words of the wise with the those of the foolish.

The importance of words is seen very clearly in the Word of God by the number of times that the proper use of the tongue is mentioned and attention is drawn to the damage and hurt caused by inappropriate or foolish talk and the great good accomplished by wise and prudent conversation. Just a couple of verses from Proverbs will demonstrate how wise words can be 'gracious' v. 12: The wise tongue brings healing Prov. 12:18, gracious words bring sweetness Prov. 16:24, wise words 'turn away wrath' Prov. 15:1, good words make a man glad Prov. 12:25. How important it is therefore to use words carefully and wisely.

The fool, in contrast allows his tongue to lead him in directions that are damaging to himself and to others. The Bible is quite clear about from where both the gracious words of the wise and the damaging and hurtful words of the foolish come; 'the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.' Luke 6:45. Solomon shows what the apostle James later confirmed, 'the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark' when he shows how silly and foolish words can easily develop into what he calls 'wicked madness'. The wisest counsel in many situations is not to 'multiply words' like the fool v. 14, but to heed the advice given in Proverbs, 'Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent' Prov. 17:28.

questions

1. How can words be damaging?
2. How can words be encouraging?

praise pray

Ps. 25:7-12

1. Pray that we would be wise in all we say.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
- 3 Pray for family matters.