

The Fool and His Folly

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Date: 03 April 2022

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[0 : 0 0] So, get your Bibles out. How about we move into that? And find the book of the Proverbs with me. Proverbs chapter number 22 is where we'll be.

It's going to be a little bit till we get there. I remembered what I wanted to say. That is, after church, we're going to go out and do some door hangers. And so if you can, stick around.

Put in about 45 minutes to an hour with us. Partner up with somebody and just go out there and beat the streets for a little bit. Hand out some tracks and some door hangers. And please be part of that ministry once a month.

We do it the first Sunday of every month. And thank you for participating in the song service this morning. In most churches, they don't participate as much as they just observe.

And are entertained by the quote-unquote worship service. And so I'm happy that here you can participate and be part of it. And so Proverbs chapter 22, we'll get there in just a short time.

[1 : 0 2] I'm kind of just going to warn you. The topic or the content of the scripture and the message this morning is kind of nasty. I should say it's a little more on the negative side.

And so I want to warn you up for that. You know, it's something fun before we get to that. So you don't throw things at me here. But Friday was April Fool's Day.

Anybody here get fooled? Just be honest. Anybody get nailed by anything? One, two, three, four. It's okay. Doesn't mean that you're gullible. Just means that somebody got you. I read up on this a little bit.

Nobody knows the exact roots of April Fool's Day. There's a lot of speculation and theories about it. But it's definitely one day people kind of set out to fool somebody else with pranks and hoaxes and, you know, just sometimes outright lies.

I found it funny that they say April Fool's Day is a day when conservatives get to act like liberals all day. But you didn't hear that from me. Back in 1957, I noticed here some things that caught my attention.

[2 : 1 0] Back in 1957, the BBC, British Broadcasting Company, reported that Swiss farmers were experiencing a record spaghetti crop.

And they showed footage on their networks of people plucking spaghetti noodles out of trees and harvesting spaghetti. And that caught on for a little while as the joke. And one time in 1985, a Sports Illustrated writer, he tricked his readers when he ran a story about a rookie pitcher named Sid Finch who could throw a fastball faster than 168 miles an hour.

Taco Bell. They announced in the 90s, they announced that the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia was going to be renamed the Taco Liberty Bell, that they had purchased it.

And then also, a few years later, Burger King announced the left-handed Whopper. And it's reported that scores of clueless customers came and ordered the left-handed Whopper.

I also saw where Burger King announced they were going to have a chocolate Whopper, saying that it was going to melt in your mouth. Now, a couple from this year, in the UK, Anytime Fitness announced Mars Muscles, which is a new class where they proclaimed that they're going to have anti-gravity kettlebells.

[3 : 34] And anybody of any strength level will be able to lift the heaviest of weights. You know the airline Emirates Airline? They launched, just the other day, Emirates, saying that they're going to be bringing international foods across the ocean to anybody's doorstep.

They asked for Emirates. Also, the supermarket chain Aldi announced that they're going to spread their wings and launch an airline, calling it Aldi Air. A few other hoaxes put out there, one of which was ketchup-flavored toothpaste and fried chicken-flavored soft drinks was announced.

Really? Really? Not amen. Somebody help him with his timing there. My favorite, just because it's kind of cute and funny, my favorite here was in Australia.

A police force announced that they're going to be teaming up with the Australia Zoo. They're going to create a special task force called PAWS, P-A-W-S. It's Police Animals in the Wild.

And they claim that this new elite squad is going to add more ears and eyes and wings and claws to help keep everybody safe. And the interview showed that they're proclaiming that they've been training these wild animals at the zoo and going to be releasing them into the wild and they're going to be keeping their ears and eyes open for any suspicious activity.

[5 : 00] So April Fool's Day, it's quite a fun day. It can be. It can be annoying. I got home and found out that I left, I think I left the house around 645 Friday and came over here to church.

And when I got home, my wife said that she woke Samuel up earlier than normal and said, Hey, get up. Your dad's coming back to get you. He needs your help at church.

And so he was up out of bed a little bit early and sitting there at the kitchen bar there just waiting for me to come back. Waiting, waiting, waiting. And that didn't happen.

She's definitely a lover of April Fool's. Anyway, let's move on. The Bible has plenty to say about fools. Plenty to say about fools and about the fool and his folly.

And in looking this up through the scriptures, over nearly 200 mentions of fools or foolishness or their folly or some derivative of that term. And I found it interesting to note that one author, King Solomon, in just two of his books, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, has well over half of those entire Bible mentions of fools.

[6 : 12] Well over 100 times he references the fool and his folly. He identifies in these books the fool and his behavior. He identifies his speech, his pleasures, his thinking, his wrath, and even his end.

Solomon also instructs us how to answer a fool and how not to answer a fool. What we can expect of a fool and he even admonishes each of us to avoid a fool saying forsake the foolish and live.

Now fools come in all shapes and sizes. They come in all ages and races and all classes and genders. And not one of those things is a determining factor necessarily of what a fool is.

In the Bible there's foolish men, there's foolish women, there's foolish children, there's foolish kings, there's foolish prophets, there's foolish judges, there's foolish nations. And the potential, without a doubt, is there for all of us to be marked as a fool.

And to display characteristics of a fool. And this morning I'd like to present to you some Bible truth on this subject and help you understand what the Bible says about the fool and his folly.

[7 : 24] And identify it whether it's in your own heart or in the hearts of others that you know and are acquaintances or companion with. And then also to help you respond in a biblical manner.

To the fool and his folly. And so I want to just offer some biblical counsel here on dealing with the fool. And so let's pray together and then we'll get into the problems. Father, it's my request to you that you'll help me now to preach and present this truth.

Lord, may the word of God have free course and be able to speak to each heart and mind. And may your Holy Spirit take control of these words. Guard my tongue and my thoughts. And may Jesus Christ be glorified in all of this.

I pray that you'd open our eyes to our own folly in our hearts. Lord, help us to respond biblically and to understand these truths and not be deceived. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Alright, in Proverbs 22, take a look here. And I want to begin just by pointing this out. Verse number 15. The Bible says, Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child.

[8 : 31] But the rod of correction shall drive it far from it. The Bible says it's bound in a place. Foolishness is bound.

And while this often is talked about correcting children, amen, it's right, it's necessary. And it deals with their folly. It's pointing out something that it's bound in their heart.

It's bound up inside of their heart. And if foolishness is not driven out like the scripture teaches, guess where the foolishness is going to stay?

And guess where it's going to grow? In the heart. They're not going to just get better. They're not just going to forsake their foolish ways. What's inside is going to get manifest more and more, stronger and stronger, deeper and deeper.

And it'll grow. The Lord Jesus Christ said, Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, because foolishness is bound in the heart of a child.

[9 : 35] Look at chapter 18. If it's not driven out, it's going to grow and stay right there. Chapter 18, notice in verse number 2. A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.

It wasn't driven out of that one, was it? Look at chapter 19 in verse number 3. 19 verse 3. The foolishness of man perverteth his way.

It's not talking about a little baby boy anymore, is it? Or a little girl. It's talking about a grown man that's a fool. The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord.

That man's because of his folly and it's inside of his heart's against God. Now, it is a parent's responsibility to understand the scripture, to administer correction, to recognize the folly in their own children, to reprove it, and to try to drive it far from, and try to get it out while they're young.

Amen. I mean, that is your job. I don't care what direction the world, or our land, or the teachers, or psychiatrists, or psychologists, or whichever they are, what they teach and believe in the books there.

[10 : 51] It doesn't matter what they teach and believe. What the Bible says is still true. What the maker of man said is still right. And it's right to take and drive that far from them.

The rod of correction. As a matter of fact, take your place, should have kept you there in 22. Look at 23. Proverbs 23. And verse 13 and 14.

Going along with that first verse that we read about the rod of correction, driving it far from him. Verse 13 says, Withhold not correction from the child. For if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. Now that's a good motivation. You want to, correcting your children, you do it in love.

You do it controlled. Just because it uses the term beat, you don't associate what you've heard on the news with that. You just allow the word of God to teach it. And anytime somebody's getting corrected by a parent, it's done in love.

[11 : 59] God describes himself as chastening. He chastens the son whom he loves. And that's the same thing that's true with a parent. It's out of love. He that hateth his son does what?

You know what the Bible says about that? Do you? You better look it up if you don't. Look at, I'll stay here, we'll stay right here.

As a principle now, I want to get this across. As a principle, correction will work in getting the folly out and driving it far from the child. As a principle, it will work, it will remove the folly.

But it doesn't always work. It doesn't completely do the job. And somebody might, oh, what are you saying, the Bible's wrong? God, no, no, that's not at all.

I'm just saying there's more to that. This is a principle, not a Bible doctrine. Similar to the one, train up a child in the way he should go. And when he's old, he'll not depart from it. Have you not, I've seen it, train up a child in the way he should go and seen him depart?

[13 : 03] It's a principle, a Bible principle that you do right and it'll work. But it's not a rule or a doctrine that is infallible. It's, the proof is out there.

There's more to it. Look at chapter three. I want to back this up with the Bible, of course. Proverbs chapter three. Let God be true and every man a liar.

So let's just go to the Bible. This biblical principle tells us that foolishness is bound in the heart of a child. The erotic correction will drive it far from him.

But does it work 100%? The proof's in your own life. Have you not been punished by your parents for a particular sin or wrongdoing against them?

Did that fix you for life on that particular thing or did you go back to it? Have you not had to deal with your own children about the same thing over and over and over again?

[14 : 06] So it doesn't just, it's not a magic wand. Proverbs chapter three, verse 11 and 12. My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord.

Neither be weary of his correction. For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Fools can despise correction.

And Solomon tells his son, don't despise it. Don't reject it. Don't rebel against it. Receive it. It's for your good. But I want to get across the point that fools won't receive correction.

They can despise it. And while foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, the rod of correction offers the ability to drive it far from him. But the fool can resist it and can despise the correction.

And that's what Solomon warned against. Look at chapter 15. Keep your fingers ready. Chapter 15, verse number five. Not only can a fool despise correction, he can also refuse instruction.

[15 : 16] Chapter 15, verse five. A fool despiseth his father's instruction, but he that regardeth reproof is prudent. It's a choice. The fool, though, despises it.

Look at verse 32 of the same chapter. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul. Isn't that what the rod of correction was attempting to clear up and to deliver his soul from hell?

But the one that refuses instruction doesn't care at all. He doesn't give a rip. He despises the correction. He refuses the instruction. And so it's not a magic wand, you punishing or correcting your children or reproving their errors in life and offering them the truth and the instruction.

It's not a magic wand at all. They have to choose it. They have to receive it. But a fool, the Bible says, hates knowledge. A fool despises wisdom and instruction.

A fool hath no delight in understanding, like we read in chapter 18. Wisdom's too high for a fool, and its Bible says he'll despise the wisdom of thy words. Look at chapter 17 now.

[16 : 30] Proverbs 17. Here's the counsel here. is realize, first of all, realize that correction is not always foolproof. Correction is not always foolproof.

Proverbs chapter 17, look at verse number 10. A reproof entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool.

A hundred stripes doesn't get the job done because correction is not always foolproof. Look at chapter 27.

One more verse on this thought. 27 verse 22. Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.

You get the picture, you take that mortar out and that pestle and you got your grain, your wheat in there and you're just grinding it up into powder, just grinding everything until it's just exactly what you want and nothing else.

[17 : 42] And if you could do that to a fool, it's hypothetical. If thou shouldest, if you could do that with a fool, just grind him down, you still can't get his foolishness out of him. So correction is not always foolproof.

Understand that. That's the first thing you need to consider when you're dealing with fools and their followers. You can't just fix it. And you can't second guess yourself if your child did this or did that or didn't turn out the way you want or went off or there's other, I'm not just talking about children by any means because folly is within all of us and it could be a total different relationship than a child.

It could be a spouse, it could be a parent, it could be a boss, I mean, you name it, they can be a fool and you can't just fix it. You can't just wave the wand and say, well, this is that and that's the way it should be and they're going to have to receive it.

Now come back to chapter 8. Understand when you're dealing with the fool and his folly, corrections not always foolproof. Chapter 8 now.

And look at verse number 5. I'm going to move on to a second thought here. Chapter 8, verse 5. Look at this. It says, O ye simple, understand wisdom and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.

[19 : 10] This is wisdom in verse number 1 that's crying, putting forth her voice, understanding his. And it says in verse 4 she's calling and she's calling out to the simple and to the fools to understand wisdom, to be of an understanding heart.

So I want you to realize although fools can and often will reject and resist the truth and instruction and wisdom and even correction, wisdom cries out and doesn't stop offering it to that fool.

Never stops calling the fool away from his folly. Never stops trying to draw him toward wisdom and toward truth and toward the word of God. The fool may despise correction, the fool may ignore instruction and reproof, but that doesn't mean you quit offering it.

That doesn't mean you quit attempting to get it out there. Look at chapter 1 for another case of this. Chapter 1 of Proverbs. Here is verse 20.

Wisdom crieth without. She's not crying to the wise to be wiser. She's crying to the simple and to the fools.

[20 : 24] In verse 20, Wisdom crieth without. She uttereth her voice in the streets. She crieth in the chief place of concourse and the opening of the gates and the city. She uttereth her words saying, How long, ye simple ones, will you love simplicity?

And the scorers delight in their scorning and fools hate knowledge. Turn you at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you. I will make known my words unto you.

That's the offer, the continual offer of wisdom. The fool can reject it, but wisdom never stops offering truth. The Bible says in Proverbs that fools make a mock at sin.

You can expect that. Here they're called the scorner. They'll scorn and love doing it. The Bible says the fool rageth and is confident. Why is that?

Because the way of a fool is right in his own eyes. He doesn't care. He doesn't even think twice about it. The fool's mouth is his destruction. His mouth calleth for strokes.

[21 : 30] These are all verses out of these Proverbs. His mouth calleth for strokes and he's gonna get them. He's gonna get it. The Bible says the prating fool shall fall.

A companion of fools shall be destroyed. Now look at chapter 26. And all of this is true of the fool.

But wisdom doesn't stop offering the choice to turn. Proverbs 26 and notice verse number 10.

The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool and rewardeth transgressors. Now we're building up to a point here.

God will reward the fool according to what he deserves. The prating fool shall fall. It's gonna take place. His mouth calleth for strokes. He's gonna get it and it's gonna be from the Lord.

[22 : 30] That's what we wanna remember. You will reap what you sow and be sure of one thing if you're the fool. Your sin will find you out. But remember wisdom is calling and offering instruction.

But do not do not attempt to deliver the fool. Attempt to rescue the fool. Attempt to help the fool because you could be interfering in the work of God.

Look at chapter 19 of the Proverbs. Chapter 19. Wisdom what we saw is only calling.

Wisdom is only offering. Wisdom is not going to the fool and fixing their problems that they made. Wisdom is only calling them to turn and come back and change.

Now chapter 19 and notice this in verse 18 and 19. Chasten thy son when there is hope and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

[23 : 42] Now we already understand what that's about. Verse 19. A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment. But watch this.

For if thou deliver him yet thou must do it again and again and again and again and again and again. If you get involved in the reaping of the fool and try to fix their problems and make their life better you can be interfering with the work of God and if you deliver him you're just going to have to do it again and so the counsel here I'm getting to it is to resist interfering with the work of God.

Let's leave the Proverbs and go to Psalm 119. Psalm 119. Psalm 119.

Then what happens? The fool gets himself into a mess and it's the work of God and when God's working don't interfere allow the work of the Lord to do its work.

Here's what could happen. Psalm 119. Look at verse 67. David speaking says before I was afflicted I went astray.

[25 : 30] I went astray. I was wrong. I got out of fellowship with God. But he says but now have I kept my word. Now come down to 71.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn thy statutes. I needed the affliction. It helped me. Now look at one more verse.

75. I know O Lord that thy judgments are right and that thou in faithfulness hath afflicted me.

When? When he went astray and the Lord sent affliction on him and it turned him back to the Lord and now he's acknowledging God thank you number one and it was because of your faithful affliction that I'm back.

So recognize this. It's the faithfulness of God that brings about the rotten fruit of sin and rebellion. The nasty things that happen because of one's sin and rebellion and the way they get themselves into a mess.

[26 : 43] It's the faithfulness of God that brings that fruit out. It's his working. So resist interfering with that and delivering the fool when they're dealing with their problems.

What can you do then? You can pray. You can pray. And what I pray is I've prayed this multiple times in the course of my life and continue to just because it's what makes sense to me.

I've had parents come to me and say tell me about their kid, their teenager that went off. You know in the church I was at in the youth ministry or even in the Christian school and over the years had ninth and tenth graders come through and come through and come through year after year and then I hear that they're out.

I hear that they got into this. I hear that they did this and sometimes I'm visiting that very kid in jail and sometimes it's in a hospital room and I think when I hear that they're out I pray for them.

They say please pray for them. Please pray for that kid. Please pray that God will get a hold of their heart. God please get a hold of their heart but I pray please do it in mercy. That's just how I pray. God be merciful to them.

[27 : 55] They're a fool. They've rejected counsel. They've despised your word. They're a fool. They deserve to get it but please be merciful to them and turn their heart back to you.

But the fool has to learn a lesson and he needs to learn it from God because God rewarded the fool and the transgressor. So be careful not to interfere with the work of God.

Pray for them. Be faithful like wisdom to instruct them and to offer wisdom. Be available to them. Be available by not shutting the door, by not burning the bridge.

But please don't bail them out when they're in affliction. Not unless they repent. Look back at 2 Chronicles.

Sorry. All the way back into one of the kings here. 2 Chronicles 33. Let me illustrate this thought. King Hezekiah was an amazing king.

[29 : 03] And you read about the reform brought about because of his reign. Now he may have slipped up toward the end of his life. But all in all, he was quite a man.

He did some things that nobody before him and nobody after him ever did. And he had a son. A son named Manasseh. Manasseh, of all the kings to reign in Jerusalem, reigned the longest.

In 2 Chronicles 33, he reigned 55 years. Longer than anybody else. And this is what really gets me. He was the wickedest king Jerusalem ever saw.

And we're going to read a little bit about this son of Hezekiah. Son of a godly king. And look what he put out. In verse 1, Manasseh was 12 years old when he began to reign.

And he reigned 50 and 5 years in Jerusalem, but did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out from before the children of Israel.

[30 : 10] For he built again the high places, which Hezekiah his father had broken down. And he reared up altars for Balaam, and made groves, and worshipped all the hosts of heaven, and served them. Also he built altars in the house of the Lord.

That is, he's defiling and profaning the holy place. Built altars in the house of the Lord, whereof the Lord had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be forever. And he built altars for all the hosts of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord.

And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom. This man is filthy wicked. Also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards.

And he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger. He set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God. Now moving on to verse 9, this little synopsis of his reign says, So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen.

How is that possible? That if you want to put in today's vernacular, that the Christian could live worse than the lost world. Manasseh made them to do worse than the heathen whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel.

[31 : 33] And the Lord spake to Manasseh and to his people, just like wisdom called out, but they would not hearken. Nothing to do with truth. Nothing to do with righteousness.

Rejected it. Rebelled against it. So the Lord, in faithfulness, brought the affliction. Verse 11, Wherefore, the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of king Assyria, and took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.

So he's in prison. He's bound up. He is not on his throne. He's not living it up. I mean, you can't even imagine the change from being king on a throne, ruling a land, to being imprisoned, and taken far away from his home.

I mean, who's ruling the land now? Who's watching over all of these things? Not him. He's removed. He's out of sight and out of mind.

They don't know where he's at. They don't know what's going on with him. He's gone, as far as they know, forever. The work of God was accomplishing something. Well, what if his army decided we're going to fix this?

[32 : 42] We're going to come and save our king? It wouldn't have worked. It wouldn't have helped. God had to do the work in him. Look at verse 12. And when he was in affliction, he remembered.

He remembered the word of God. He remembered the truth. He remembered what his father, what he had seen in those days of his father reigning. When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord.

The games are over. Playing with these other gods and these other foolish things. I'm done. He says, he humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers and prayed unto him.

And he was entreated of him and heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. And Manasseh knew the Lord was God. Manasseh, I would have loved to hear the words because to hear how bad he was and that the Lord gives him back to his throne, I'd have loved to hear the broken speech of that man as he repented and acknowledged before God all of these sins that he brought about upon himself and upon his people.

He had to apologize for profaning God's holy temple, for the idolatry, for the things he set up, the images. He had to apologize and confess and forsake all of that before.

[34 : 02] I'd love to see that part written down. I'd like to read it just to hear him repent. God knew it was real. He humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.

I don't doubt he wept. I don't doubt he fasted. I don't doubt he mourned and mourned and cried out to God. It wasn't just a flare prayer.

It wasn't just, oh God, sorry about that. Could I have my throne back? Think we could? Surely it took some time. It took some time in a jail for him to come to his self and to repent and to call out to God and get it right.

What brought that about? The affliction from the Lord when he was in affliction? That's when he besought the Lord as God. I don't really like to talk about the things I regret in my life, but there was a moment where being trained in a godly home with the word of God and with truth and I have nothing.

I mean, it was nothing but just purity that the Lord put me in. That I turned from that and wanted something else so badly. The folly was in my heart. And I wanted it so badly that I was getting fingerprinted in a prison by a police officer who was a Christian.

[35 : 32] And when I had to fill out some paperwork and things, he asked about where I went to school. And before him was just some worldly looking punk.

And I told him I went to redline Christian school. He's writing and he looked up. And he said, you think maybe God's trying to get your attention?

You think I didn't think about that already? I'm sitting there. I didn't want to hear that from him. I didn't want to hear that from anybody. It took something.

It took some affliction. And I understand that. And this wicked king, Manasseh, had to get tossed in a prison cell until he'd look up to God and humble himself greatly.

And anybody that tried to deliver him from that would have been messing with the work of God. You can't get all the folly out of their heart. Sometimes it's going to take a work of God to do it.

[36 : 40] Now there's one last thing. Come over to the New Testament, to Titus chapter 3. This is the last scripture I'd like to read with you. Titus chapter 3. Titus chapter 3. Titus chapter 3.

The fool in his folly. Notice we'll read verses 3 through 5.

And notice as Paul writes to Titus, he's writing to believers, including himself. And if he's just writing to Titus, he says, For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving diverse lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

That's what we were, Titus. But after that, the kindness and love of God our Savior toward men appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, not me and you, Titus, but according to his mercy, he saved us.

By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

[38 : 21] Paul acknowledges that he was a fool. Titus, one day you were a fool. And now you're a preacher.

And now I'm an apostle of Jesus Christ. But we ourselves were sometimes foolish and disobedient and deceived and such a mess. And I counsel you this morning to understand, to realize that the correction you try to, the work you try to do in the life of that fool, whether they're old or young, it's not foolproof.

It's not that you're going to get it all out. And then when God is doing a work, don't get involved. Don't interfere. Just pray. Resist trying to interfere with what God can be doing in that fool's life.

And then thirdly, to give you some hope, remember the work that God has accomplished within your own heart. My life, regretfully, resembles a lot of verse 3.

And maybe you're here too and you can say, yep, I know what you're talking about. Paul, Titus, me too. I was that fool at one point. Remember then this morning that God's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save.

[39 : 40] God is still not willing that any should perish, but that all come to repentance. When you consider the working that God has accomplished in you and in the testimonies of so many others, let it give you hope that any fool can be changed by the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ or by the working of the Holy Spirit of God inside of them.

God has turned around some real loudmouth losers into some bold witnesses for Jesus Christ. God has done a work in some hearts.

He's touched some of the most selfish and proud reprobates out there. And he's changed them into caring and selfless Christians. He's changed them into caring and selfless Christians. He's changed them into caring and selfless Christians.

He's changed them into caring and selfless Christians. Don't underestimate it. Don't underestimate what God can do in the heart of a fool. He can take a stony heart and make it a heart of flesh. He can make the driest desert burst forth with clean springs and blossom with fragrant flowers.

Jesus Christ can take a man filled with the devil and clean him up and have him seated in his right mind. Still the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse us from all sin.

[40 : 59] You know, the fact that you're in church today, whoever you are, is evidence of the mercy and grace of God in your life. That you're not on the street. That you're not in hell.

That you're in church. Some of you are faithful to attend. Love it. You wouldn't want to be anywhere else. That's the mercy and grace of God that's worked in your heart, which were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceit.

If God could do it for you, he could surely do it in them. So don't lose hope. Remember the work that God's accomplished. In your heart.

This morning, are you dealing with a fool in his or her folly? Do you find yourself stressing over somebody in your life? Or do you recognize some of these traits even in yours?

Realize that your correction may not cut it. And in your attempts at rectifying their behavior or their thinking, you're powerless to accomplish it all.

[42 : 07] You can't do it. It might be futile. But if God gets involved and starts dealing with their heart and putting them through some things, my advice and counsel then is to resist interfering with what God is attempting to do and can use to get glory.

Allow his work of correction to penetrate that foolish heart. And thirdly, don't lose hope. Remember what he's done for you. Remember what he's done for others.

And hold on to that. Hold on to that. Let's pray. Let's bow our heads together. Father, I know that within me and within so many of us is that foolish heart of sin.

And it's but by your grace and your spirit that's given us victory over making stupid and foolish decisions every day. God, we rely on you to keep us right.

We rely on your blood to keep us clean. We rely on this book to keep our minds right and renewed. But Lord, not everybody that we know and that we love is interested in truth and serving and obeying you.

[43 : 22] And it breaks our hearts. It's hard to see it. It's hard to allow it. And Lord, we pray for your mercy. We pray for the fools in our lives.

I pray, Lord, if there's a fool in this church this morning that you'll do a work in their heart. That you'll draw them to salvation. That you'll draw them to deliverance of sin.

That you'll draw them to cleaning up their way. Father, I pray that you'll give grace and hope for those that are hurting.

For those that have heavy hearts that no one even knows about because of relationships, because of folly in the hearts of others. We pray that Jesus Christ, would get the glory in their life.

Help us to be faithful like wisdom to instruct and to call and to try to draw them to wisdom. But Lord, give us wisdom also to know when to back off and to allow your hand of affliction and your hand of correction in mercy to deal with their hearts.

[44 : 32] with your heads bowed still, if you don't mind, just a private moment around this place. I don't know if you know somebody's coming to your mind and heart this morning.

Maybe you need to pray for them. Maybe you need to be faithful to praying for them every day and commit to God to do that. Maybe you're dealing with something that nobody knows about and some of these verses just seem to bring that out.

I gave you the counsel from the Bible this morning. I hope you'll receive it. Attend to it. Don't lose hope.

Trust the Lord. Be strengthened in His Word daily. Don't charge God foolishly. Walk with the Lord.

If you need to use this altar this morning to talk to the Lord, come and use it. Come and pray. Come and lay a burden down.

[45 : 43] Come and pray for somebody that's on your heart. Use this time to talk to Him. We're going to sing a hymn number three something. I'll find it.

We're going to sing Trust in a Word.