

Wisdom for Life

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[0 : 00] I want to begin by saying that chapter 10 in Ecclesiastes is quite different from the rest of the book of Ecclesiastes. And the reason is that the chapter covers a broad variety of topics.

In introducing his commentary on chapter 10, Derek Kidner describes it this way. So, this chapter takes a calm look at life, sampling it at random so as to help us keep our own standards high. Without being too surprised at the oddities of others or taken off our guard in dealings with the powerful. Now, while it is true that chapter 10 is a random sampling of life, the unifying theme in chapter 10, as we will see, is wisdom.

And so, I've entitled this morning's sermon, Wisdom for Life. Let's read together. Please follow along as I read Ecclesiastes chapter 10, beginning in verse 1.

I'm reading from the English Standard Version. Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give off a stench.

[1 : 28] So a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor. A wise man's heart inclines him to the right, but a fool's heart to the left.

Even when the fool walks on the road, he lacks sense. And he says to everyone that he is a fool. If the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place.

For calmness will lay great offenses to rest. There is an evil that I have seen under the sun. As it were, an error proceeding from the ruler.

Folly is set in many high places, and the rich sit in a low place. I have seen slaves on horses and princes walking on the ground like slaves.

He who digs a pit will fall into it, and a serpent will bite him who breaks through a wall. He who quarries stones is hurt by them, and he who splits logs is endangered by them.

[2 : 42] If iron is blunt and one does not sharpen the edge, he must use more strength. But wisdom helps one to succeed. If the serpent bites before it is charmed, there is no advantage to the charmer.

The words of a wise man's mouth win him favor, but the lips of a fool consume him. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is evil madness.

A fool multiplies words, though no man knows what is to be, and who can tell him what will be after him. The toil of a fool wearies him, for he does not know the way to the city.

Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child, and your princes feast in the morning. Happy are you, O land, when your king is the son of the nobility, and your princes feast at the proper time, for strength and not for drunkenness.

Through sloth the roof sinks in, and through indolence the house leaks. Bread is made for laughter, and wine gladdens life, and money answers everything.

[4 : 19] Even in your thoughts do not curse the king, nor in your bedroom curse the rich, for a bird of the air will carry your voice, or some winged creature tell the matter.

Let's pray together. Father, thank you once again for the privilege of being able to gather your people. Thank you for your saving work in our lives, and thank you for the way that you use your word to sanctify us.

I pray that your word will have its sanctifying effect in our lives. I pray that it would cause us to be less sinful and more like Christ.

Would you grant me grace, Lord, as I proclaim your word to your people this morning, and cause us all to hear your voice in the midst of it, I pray. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, once again, although chapter 10 in Ecclesiastes is a random sampling about life, chapter 10 in reality is about wisdom and folly in life.

[5 : 30] And as we consider these samplings of life from the preacher, here's what I believe we will see. I believe we'll see that although wisdom is better than folly, the bad in folly outweighs the good in wisdom.

Although wisdom is better than folly, the bad in folly outweighs the good in wisdom. Or to put it another way, a person can have a lot of wisdom, but a small display of folly can overshadow and even destroy that person's wisdom.

And this is a part of the mystery of sin. How does the seemingly small disobedience of Adam plunge the entire world into sin and the fall?

It's because the bad in folly outweighs the good in wisdom. And it only takes a small bit of leaven to leaven the whole lump.

Now, although these samplings of life are random in chapter 10, I've organized them under four headings. And for those of you who are taking notes, here they are. Number one, wisdom and foolish conduct.

[6 : 52] We see that in verses 1 through 4. Wisdom and life's realities. Number two, we see that in verses 5 through 11.

And then wisdom and foolish talk. We see that in verses 12 through 15. And then finally, number four, wisdom and political leadership.

And we see that in verses 16 through 20. So let's first consider verses 1 through 4, wisdom and foolish conduct.

Now, from the outset, I think it's important for me to remind you of something I've said along the way in this series. And that is that in the wisdom books of Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon, a fool is not simply someone who does silly things.

So if a person goes and maybe they put a cup of water on a door and someone pushes the door and the water falls on them, we'll say, you're so foolish. But that's not what the wisdom books refer to as folly or as foolishness.

[8 : 09] We call that silliness. We call it childishness. But that's not what the wisdom books get at when they talk about folly. Instead, a foolish person is someone who lives his life without any reference to God.

And the godly influence and restraint that comes to those who live their lives with reference to God. That's the fool. That's why the Bible says, the fool says in his heart there is no God.

So folly is a moral issue. It is a sin issue. And when we think about folly this morning and certainly for the rest of this series, we want to think of it biblically.

So when we talk about a fool, we're talking about a biblical fool. Not a general fool, but a biblical fool. A fool who lives his life and he has no reference to God and therefore he lives life as he wants to as he pleases.

Without that understanding of a fool, we will miss what the preacher is saying in chapter 10. So the preacher begins in verse 1 and he says that the same way, in the same way that small dead flies get into the performer's ointment and cause it to give off a stench, a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.

[9 : 37] Now evidently in that day and time, the way perfumers did their work, by observation the preacher knew that these flies would be attracted to the fragrance of the perfume and somehow they would get in the perfume and onto the ointment and when they died, mixed with the ointment was their experience, it gave off some kind of stench and it destroyed the perfume.

It was no good. Now I think it's reasonable to conclude that it wasn't a whole lot of flies because if it was a lot of flies the perfumer could easily take them out before they died.

It seems more reasonable to conclude that the perfumer didn't see these flies. It was just a few flies that somehow got into the perfume and they couldn't be detected before they died and decayed.

And when they decayed they gave off a stench and they destroyed the perfume. Folly has the same effect in the life of an otherwise wise or honorable person.

One act of folly can cast a wise or honorable person in a bad light. As I was thinking about this, one person who came to mind, a vivid example of how a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor, the person who came to mind is Olympic swimmer, the well-known person now, Brian Lochte.

[11 : 13] You may remember that he lied and said that he was robbed at gunpoint in Rio de Janeiro at the Olympic Games and it turned out not to be true.

So here's a guy, 12-time medalist in the Olympic Games, second only to Michael Phelps, which is a great honor. And he lies about an incident that happened really to cover up his own misdeeds. And today, as people think about him, when they think about his name, even, I've noticed, when you go and even Google his first name, Ryan, it's like right up there in terms of how quickly it comes up in the search bar.

And so when people think about him, instead of thinking about his great feet and the honor that should be bestowed on him, instead, it is shame that comes to mind.

Because he did a foolish thing. And it would take a miracle to restore the honor that he had. not only has he lost money, he has also lost honor.

[12:27] And the reason is this. A little folly will outweigh great honor and great wisdom. And again, remember the definition of folly in the wisdom books.

It is a moral issue. It is a sin issue. It refers to the person who lives his life without any reference to God. as I prepared this message and being mindful that we are going to be together this morning, my heart was turned to the young people.

This applies to all of us. But in particular, my heart was turned to our young people. And I want you to hear me this morning. Those of you who normally would not be in here on a Sunday morning, those of you who would be in here on a Sunday morning as well, I want to say this to you.

no one act of wisdom in your life can build your life. But one act of folly can destroy it.

No one act of wisdom that you will do will build your life. You will build your life by act of wisdom after act of wisdom after act of wisdom till the day you die.

[13:45] But even up until the moment that you die, an act of folly can destroy it all. I want you to be aware of that.

As I was preparing for this, I remembered a guy who I went to high school with. And he had gone off to college, doing very well, great athlete, promising.

very, very promising. And he got him with the wrong crowd, got people to tell him somehow that there was a way that he could somehow bring drugs through the airport and get it back in the United States, and he did that.

And his life was destroyed. Just an act of folly, living without any reference to authority and to God, and destroyed the scholarship that he was on, the promise that he had for athletics beyond university, and just a wonderful life that he was being prepared for.

A single act of folly. And now if his name is mentioned among classmates, that comes to mind. Prior to that, what would have come to mind was an amazing athlete, great, someone with tremendous promise.

[15:13] And so young people, I say to you this morning, I say to all of us, but I say to you especially this morning, remember this, be a wise person. The wise person lives his life with reference to God, and God in our lives would help us to have the governing restraint to do what is right.

We sing a song here, that grace enables us to do what is right. God's grace does that for us. And so we are, this is not to put fear in you in a negative way, but it is to encourage you to draw near to the Lord and to serve the Lord and with the help of the Word of God and the Spirit of God to do what is right so that we would not be fools.

Now, why do people act foolishly like Loctean did? after spectacular Olympic performance, he goes out partying, gets drunk, urinates outside of a bathroom.

There's the bathroom, he urinates on the outside of the bathroom, pulls down posters, just for no reason, just pulls them down. Why?

Well, the reason is that Loctean acted out of the folly in his heart. And notice what the preacher says to us in verse 2.

[16:41] This is what he's saying. He says, a wise man's heart inclines him to the right, but a fool's heart to the left. In biblical revelation, the right hand is portrayed as superior and good, and the left hand as inferior and bad.

We see, for example, in Genesis 48, where Joseph takes his two sons, Manasseh the older and Ephraim the younger, and he brings them to his father Jacob to bless them.

And he takes Manasseh and he puts Manasseh at Jacob's right hand and he puts Ephraim at the left because the older son is supposed to get the greater blessing.

And Jacob crosses his hands and he puts his right hand on Ephraim's head and his left hand on Manasseh's head and he begins to bless them and Joseph protests and he says, no, father, and he tries to take his hand to switch them back and Jacob resists and he says, I know what I'm doing and he blesses Ephraim and he says that Ephraim, the younger will serve Manasseh the older.

It's an indication of the left and the right hand and how the right hand is the preferred hand over the left hand. We see this also in Matthew 25 in the parable about the sheep and the goats.

[18:17] Jesus says that on the day of judgment he will put on his right the sheep and on his left the goats.

And so in biblical revelation what we see is that there's this picture that the right is right or the good side and the left is wrong or the bad side.

And so the wise man's heart inclines him to the right to do what is right but the fool's heart inclines him to the left to do what is wrong. Coincidentally this is where the terminology in politics really is derived.

You would hear them talk about right wing conservatives and left wing liberals. Of course we know that it doesn't always hold true because some of those who are called conservative on the right wing are really liberals in disguise.

We think we have lived long enough to see that. But what's the point in all this? The point is that conduct flows from the heart. The point is that conduct flows from our very core from who we are and it will in time be exhibited and when it does flow out if it flows from the left if it flows from foolishness it will outweigh any wisdom or wise conduct that would have been exhibited in our lives.

[19:55] And this is the point that the preacher makes in verse 3. Because our conduct flows from our hearts you can tell a fool is a fool by the foolish things that he does by the folly that he displays in his life.

And that's why you can be walking down the road and you can see a fool. Why? Because whatever is in our hearts comes out and for the fool folly is in his heart so that is what comes out.

In verse 4 while it seems like the preacher has changed subjects he really hasn't changed subjects. He is still talking about wisdom and folly. And the preacher's advice in verse 4 is important to all of us because all of us have to deal with people in authority every single one of us.

And the preacher's point is that we must act wisely towards those in authority and those who have power over us. Especially if they have power over us the way the king would have had power in the preacher's day.

The king could have just ordered your execution without a trial. Your neck is gone. I mean that was the way things were in that day. But the picture that he is painting for us in verse 4 is the person who takes offense when he or she is not pleased about something a person says or does and they turn and they show the displeasure by responding in a huff and walking out walking off rather than remaining calm and demonstrating humility.

[21:36] Now the preacher does not use the words wise and foolish but they are clearly in view in verse 4. the fool shows his displeasure and leaves in a huff but the wise person remains and remains calm and that calmness this scripture says will lay great offenses to rest.

And again remember that the preacher is addressing a moral response. This is a moral issue. The proud person the proud person is the one who when offended leaves in a huff.

The humble person who when offended remains in calmness. And oftentimes that calm response brings conviction upon the person in authority if he or she is wrong.

The conscience is pricked. And sometimes even when it doesn't result in any kind of conviction because maybe the person in authority was right but responded in the wrong way.

It calms the person down when they see the response that is being exhibited in the face of their anger. I think it is also important to see that the preacher doesn't tell us whether the rule is right or wrong.

[23:00] And the reason is it doesn't matter. Right or wrong, rage, and anger on behalf of the ruler requires still the same response.

A humble, calm, wise response in the face of that kind of anger and rage which itself is an exhibition of folly.

How many hear people say you fight fire with fire. The scripture says no don't do that. Fight fire with water. And the water is the calm response.

The humble response. And this ruler can be not just a king. This ruler can be anyone who is over us. It can be a parent young people. It can be a parent.

Sometimes your parents may be displeased with you in particular ways. And we're not perfect. And sometimes we may be wrong in what we are objecting to or we may humble and to kindly respond and not go off in a huff and slam your door and throw things down to show your displeasure.

[24 : 14] Wisdom calls for a different response. It can be a teacher. It can be the police. It can be your boss. Anyone who is an authority over you, this scripture calls us to respond wisely in the face of anger, displeasure, objection.

Next, the preacher addresses wisdom in the context of life's realities. This is in verses 5-11.

Wisdom and life's realities. First, he addresses contradictions in life.

We see these contradictions in verses 5-7. In verse 5, he says there's an evil that he has seen under the sun and it is as if it were an error proceeding from the ruler.

Here's the point. The point is it's a contradiction. He's saying that as glaring and as contradictory as it is to see error proceeding from a ruler, someone you would expect to be an example, someone you would expect to be different from everybody else because that's the role that is expected, to see folly in a similar way to see folly set in high places and the rich set in low places is also a contradiction.

So notice that he's saying that. He's saying there is an evil that I have seen under the sun as it were an error proceeding from the ruler.

[26 : 07] And then he tells us what it is. Folly is set in many high places and the rich sit in a low place. Both the contradictions. But the contradiction that he is really pointing us to is not the ruler from whom error is proceeding.

He's saying that's glaring but here's what is really glaring that I'm talking about when you have folly set in high places and the rich in low places.

It's a contradiction and it happens. Fools sometimes occupy high offices and prominent positions and oftentimes rich powerful people because normally you find those two going together that power goes with wealth and that's a reality.

If you're not aware of it and I hope that you are politics doesn't run our country wealth does. The people who own the wealth in this country they run this country doesn't matter which government is in and it doesn't matter which government they support.

Wealth runs this country. We had a political revolution that took place back in 1967 where majority Bahamians became the rulers of this country but the wealth component really has not changed.

[27 : 34] Our standard of living has improved yes but those who held the real power the economic power they continue to hold that. My only point about that is to say we can add power that sometimes you see the wealthy rich and the powerful and low positions and really that's the way it is in our country today.

Most of the very wealthy people have no positions of prominence in this country. So there's this contradiction where you see that. But fools occupy these positions.

we should never make assumptions about people because of the position they occupy. Don't think because the person leads the country or because the person is the supervisor or because the person has some position of authority that that person is necessarily a wise person.

The preacher says no I've seen situations where fools occupy high positions. And those who should be in high positions they are in some other position where they aren't able to bring the same kind of influence in that way.

It's a contradiction. He says this is what I've seen in life. In verse 7 is another example. Slaves on horses while princes walking on the ground.

[28 : 58] How do slaves get on horses and princes walk? Well in Proverbs 17 2 we have one example of why. Proverbs 17 2 says a servant or slave who deals wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully and will share the inheritance as one of the brothers.

And this happens. This happens where sometimes in a business a trusted employee a faithful employee sometimes will inherit over children or as much as children.

Who are wayward and who are really biblical fools. These are contradictions in life. They stood out to the preacher and they should stand out to us and we should be aware of them.

Don't be taken by the fact that you're in a high position you must be wise. The preacher says fools are in those positions as well. You're in a low position you must not be sensible or powerful.

No. There's some powerful people in some positions that don't exhibit power on top of the door. Another reality that the preacher points out to us in life is in verse 8.

[30 : 14] And it is that people who seek to harm others will themselves be harmed. That's what he's saying in verse 8. Now I know when you look at verse 8 it doesn't seem to be saying that so let's look at verse 9 first and 8.

The reality in verse 8 is better seen after you've looked at verse 9. In verse 9 the preacher is addressing the reality of occupational hazards. In essence he is saying that certain jobs include certain hazards so if you quarry stones if you quarry them long enough you're going to be hit by them.

If you split logs you'll be endangered by them. You can be hit by a log or by the flying axe head or something. It's the same is true as if you're a carpenter and you hammer nails eventually you're going to hit your finger.

If you get on ladders a lot eventually you're going to fall off. The point is that certain jobs have certain risks. So when the person quarrying a stone is hit by a rock it's not the devil.

It's the occupational hazard that goes and recognizes the occupational hazards associated with his job and he exercises the kind of care that is needed to try to avoid or minimize the hazards associated with the job.

[31 : 43] The fool on the other hand exercises no such care. Now let's compare what the preacher says in verse 9 with what he says in verse 8.

Notice in verse 8 he says he who digs a pit. He doesn't say he who digs pits. He says he who digs a pit.

Notice in verse 9 he says he who quarries stones not he who quarries a stone. He also says in verse 9 verse 8 sorry he who breaks through a wall not he who breaks through walls plural.

As he said in 9 he who splits logs not he who splits a log. And what you should see between the two verses is in verse 9 it deals with someone who does a particular hazardous thing in an ongoing way so he does multiple ones of them.

In verse 8 you're looking at a person who does a singular act of digging a pit or breaking through a wall and in context and in the culture that this would have been written is referring to a person who is digging a pit in terms of a trap digging a pit and maybe putting grass over it so that someone who comes will fall in that pit setting some kind of a trap for them.

[33 : 20] And the preacher is pointing to a principle in life. He who digs a pit for someone else will himself fall into that pit.

We have a similar saying. When you dig one grave, what do you do? You dig two. Because the other one is for you. And this helps us to see that the evil that we sometimes would try to inflict on others will backfire on us.

And it is a principle that the preacher is addressing in this particular case. The same harm that you wish to inflict on others will be inflicted on you. It's a similar picture with breaking through a wall. Why would someone want to break through a wall? The owner would not break through a wall. The owner walks through the gate. But the intruder is the one who is breaking through the wall, bringing destruction, seeking to violate somebody else's property.

The thief is the one who breaks through the wall. And so in the preacher's day, it was not uncommon to find in these very rustic walls that they had that aren't like our smooth plastered walls.

[34 : 43] There would just be stones with mortar here and there, but sometimes there were holes in them and snakes would coil up and nest in them and you go and bring the wall down and the snake comes out and bites.

And it's a principle about how evil often time backfires. I remember seeing a video of this guy. He goes to tort someone's car, to burn someone's car down.

And as he's torching the car, the flames get on him. And he is engulfed the flames and he runs off. He's in flames and he's trying to get all the flames off of him.

But the funny thing about it is, after he got the flames off of him, he came back to finish the job.

You'd think he'd gone his way and think he was blessed, but he came back to finish the job.

And of course, the police caught him because everything was on video. But those things have a way of backfiring and coming back to us. In verses 9 and 10, we see the need to be diligent in work.

[35 : 52] The foolish person who neglects to sharpen his tool, no doubt because of carelessness and laziness, in the end has to work harder because his instrument is blunt.

The wise person takes the time to sharpen the tool. And you can easily see it. The foolish person says, man, I'm just going to work because I know if I get to work now, I'll get more done. The wise person takes the time while he is hitting his blunt instrument, he sharpens his, and then when he goes to work, he uses less energy and he can get more done because he has a sharper instrument.

And then likewise in verse 11, talking about a person who charmed snakes and who obviously did it for advantage or profit or for money. But if the snake bites before you charm it because the person is just so lazy and not proactive enough to do it quickly enough, then there's no advantage for that person.

And what this should remind us of this morning is that all work is to be done as unto the Lord. And so the wise person who is living with reference to God works in a diligent manner, mindful that ultimately he works for God.

[37 : 09] The fool on the other hand has no reference to God. He does what he wants, when he wants it, how he wants it, and he works foolishly. Now these are principles not rules. These are proverbs.

These are principles not rules, so there are exceptions to them. You sometimes do find biblical fools who are diligent in their work, who take pride in their work. And sometimes you find wise people who are slothful and not diligent.

But all of these are realities in life. And the point of the preach is that we need to be wise. We need to be wise and not seek to harm others.

We need to be wise and not seek to destroy other people's property or to steal from them. We need to be wise and recognize the dangers associated with our work and be careful.

And we need to be wise. And do what is necessary to be successful in our work. Next in verses 12 through 15, the preacher shares his observations about wisdom and foolish talk.

[38 : 19] The point that the preacher makes is that wise speech from the wise man will result in blessing and favor on his life, but foolish speech from the foolish man will destroy him.

The preacher is saying to us, the fool has nothing to say, he really has nothing to say, but the fool has too much to say. Though he has nothing to say in terms of substance, he says a lot, he talks too much.

So the preacher says he multiplies words and even though no one knows the future, the fool does and no one can tell him anything about the future because he knows it.

And in verse 15, we get this picture of this foolish person who despite all of his talking and pretends to know everything, the things that he should know, the basic things that he should know, simple things he doesn't know, like how to find a way into the city.

Yet he boasts about knowing other things. And brothers and sisters, this is a call to us to govern and watch our speech.

[39 : 32] By God's grace, let our speech be wise. And wise speech doesn't happen in a vacuum. Wise speech does not happen by accident. Wise speech happens when we draw from the treasury of God's word, as we are called to do in Colossians 3, 16 through 17, where the apostle Paul says, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. This is the way we cultivate wise speech, godly speech, that brings glory to God.

And finally, in verses 16 through 20, the preacher addresses wisdom and political leadership. In verses 16 and 17, we see this contrast between wise and foolish political leaders.

In verse 16, foolish political leadership is highlighted and it begins with the word woe. woe. Foolish political leadership is a burden on any land and it's marked by immaturity and inexperience and leaders who do the wrong things at the wrong time.

For example, the preacher says they feast when they should be working. They feast in the morning. And in that day and time, this was a huge indictment because they didn't have electricity where you can say, well, I'm going to cool out in the morning and then I'm going to work at night.

[41 : 23] No. The word in that day was work in the day for the night is coming when no man can work because they didn't have electricity and they didn't have modern lighting like we have today.

And so he says, woe to you when your king as a child. I ran your prince's feast in the morning.

And the reason this was such a woe was because in those days you didn't get to vote for the king and say, okay, you know, we can change you in five years. No. That king wasn't voted upon. But contrasted to the leadership in verse 16 is the wise political leadership that we see in verse 17. It begins with the word happy. Happy are you, O land, when your king is the son of the nobility and your princes feast at the proper time for strength and not for drunkenness.

[42 : 31] Here, wise political leadership comes from someone who has the experience, has the example of other leaders whom he can follow.

He knows when to feast. And he doesn't abuse food and drink. He eats for strength, not gluttony. And he avoids drunkenness.

And so must we, we must not abuse God's gifts that he has given to us. Now in verses 18 and 19, I know they, on their face, seem to be random thoughts, but when we consider them in context, I believe that they're best understood when applied to political leadership.

And we see in verse 18 that when leaders are not diligent in their leadership, things fall apart. when they're feasting in the morning, when they're getting drunk and not paying attention to their duties, then things just fall apart around them.

And while I would not accuse our leaders of getting drunk and doing all the other kinds of things we're seeing exhibited here, I think there are many evidences in our country of this kind of neglect and falling apart that is evident.

[44 : 04] And sometimes we're so accustomed to seeing it that we don't really think about it. Here we have a post office that is a most essential service in our country. It's been neglected for decades.

It's falling apart. People's mails are being destroyed. Workers are walking out because they have two feet of water in the building. And it's been like that for decades.

And I'm not talking about the current government alone. This is over successive governments.

Horrible state of disrepair. And not just there, other places. We would shudder to see what some of the other family islands are faced with.

Someone circulated a video the other day of the airport in Maguana and they were saying that you got less rain outside than inside the airport.

that's neglect. That's indolence. Our schools, year after year, as important as education ought to be in the country, year after year, our schools fall into disrepair and we have money to waste on other things.

[45 : 16] We could understand it if the issue was we didn't have the money. We have the money. There's no reason why things should be in the state that it's in.

Traffic lights not working because somebody didn't pay the bill. Didn't think it was important to pay the bill on time. Infrastructure falling apart all around us. And sadly, if it wasn't for tourism or if tourists didn't go on a certain road, they'd neglect those too.

Or if some dignitaries didn't travel from abroad, they wouldn't put the street lights up or put flowers along West Bay Street.

This is what bad, neglectful political leadership results in. In verse 19, we seem to have the philosophy of foolish political leadership and it is this.

Bread is made for laughter and wine gladdens the heart and money answers everything. This statement is an exaggeration and it is an abuse.

[46 : 32] It represents an abuse of bread and wine and money. bread or more generally food is not for laughter or partying.

That's not why God gave us food. God gave us food to sustain us and to strengthen us. Do we enjoy it? Yes, we do. But it's not for partying.

It's for enjoyment but strengthening and sustaining all that he has made. Wine does not gladden life.

Very interesting statement where it says wine gladdens life. Wine does not gladden life. Psalm 104 verse 15 says that God gave us wine to gladden our hearts.

Wine gladdens the heart. It doesn't gladden life. And there's a big difference. A huge difference.

There are people who really believe that wine can gladden life.

[47 : 40] Wine can make life better. And they end up drinking excessively and getting drunk trying to get alcohol to do what alcohol can never do and that is to gladden life.

Instead, in our fallen world, alcohol doesn't gladden life. It saddens life. And I don't believe there's one single person who could take an honest survey of the world and the honest survey of the effect of alcohol in our world and who would say alcohol gladdens life.

It does not gladden life. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can gladden life. And last, money does not answer everything. There are people who say, oh, money answers everything.

That's not true. It doesn't answer everything. If your body is wrecked with terminal cancer and the doctors have done all that they can do for you, medicine has done all it can do for you, no amount of money can answer that.

I know back in the 80s, I knew a very wealthy man, he's dead now, lived on this island and he would travel to Japan to get a cancer treatments.

[49 : 08] Because Japan at the time had the best cancer care in the world. And that's where he would travel to get his treatment. He died. Money does not answer everything and he was a very wealthy man.

And I believe because he had experienced wealth, if they had said to him, we guarantee you that we will give you your health, but you must give us all your wealth, he would have done it in a split second.

Money does not answer everything. When a child or spouse is addicted to alcohol or some other drug, money can't answer that addiction.

But there are people who believe that money can indeed answer everything, but the truth is only God can answer everything. all money can answer is what money can answer.

It's all it can answer. And that's when money is a blessing. Money is a blessing when you have a need and money can meet it. And you have the money, money is a blessing.

[50 : 16] But money is no blessing when you have a need that money can't meet. Money does not answer everything. money can only do what it can do.

In verse 20, the preacher ends with sound advice. And it's advice that really is connected to how we relate to political leaders when we are upset with them.

And the preacher says, even in your thoughts, do not curse the king, nor in your bedroom curse the rich.

For a bird of the air will carry your voice, or some wearing creature tell the matter. In the preacher's day, the leader was a tyrant.

The leader operated by decree, by personal decree. He did whatever he wanted. And so you have to be very careful. And the king, he was just saying, listen, the best thing to do, you just need to discipline yourself to even think evil about the king.

[51 : 23] Because if you don't think evil about the king, then no evil will proceed out of your mouth pertaining to the king, and you just never know who those little two-legged birds could be around you who may go to the king, thinking that they're doing a favor by telling the king what you said.

And so he said, you need to be radical with your view on this. Now, we don't have a king like that. I think some of you heard the, I didn't hear it, I heard about it, the very inappropriate, vulgar song that went viral concerning the prime minister and his family.

It's wrong, no justification for it, haven't heard it, heard it described. but I can tell you, if the prime minister, I did read this in the newspaper this week, where he said that he can't forgive the person who wrote that.

I imagine if he was a king like this one, that guy would be dead. He'd be dead. And the preacher's advice is don't curse the king.

Don't curse the king, even in your thoughts. What this is, is it is a call to exercise restraint and to be careful in how we speak about those, when we criticize them, those political leaders is whom we disagree.

[52 : 55] We're not to speak evil of them. We can criticize without speaking evil. We can object to what a person does without becoming personal.

Keep them out of the equation. You can say, what you're doing is wrong. I disapprove of that. It's inappropriate. But we can spare the venom and the inappropriate talk.

Let our criticism have merit. Let our criticism be objective. We are to exercise care in what we do.

And the preacher says, you know what, you need to even govern how you think about them in your heart.

I think you would agree that those are helpful thoughts for us about life in the random areas that the preacher has sampled. And if we followed them, I think we would all have a good life, a better life in some cases.

things. But is that the reason that these things are in Ecclesiastes 10? To help us to have a better life? To help us to be wiser in how we deal with our work and deal with angry people and deal with powerful kings?

[54 : 15] Is that why Ecclesiastes 10 is in our Bibles? That's not why it's there. Now Ecclesiastes 10, like the rest of Ecclesiastes and like the rest of the Old Testament, is there to point us to Jesus.

And see, this is what we always do. When we read our Bibles, in the Old Testament in particular, we want to be asking ourselves, what does this say to me about Jesus? How does this point to Jesus? And Old Testament scripture points to Jesus in many different ways.

Some of them prophesy the coming of Jesus. In very clear terms, like in the book of Isaiah, for example, a lot of prophecies about Jesus. The way that Ecclesiastes 10 points us to Jesus is it reminds us, as we read it, of how broken and how fallen our world is.

It reminds us of the folly of sin, that even in high places where we expect people to do otherwise, where we look up to this king and we expect the king to be other than us and better than us and the king is no different.

He gets angry and he does rashful things. And as the preacher said, sometimes errors proceed from him. And we look to them and it results in disappointment and failure.

[55 : 45] Ecclesiastes 10 makes the case for the need for another king, for a better king. A king who will come not just to rule us, but a king who will also rescue us.

And that king has come in the person of Jesus Christ. He came, he lived, he died. He died for sinners so that they may have eternal life.

So that they may live in this fallen world that the preacher talks about. But they would live with a wisdom that comes from God that is a foretaste of the perfect wisdom that is to come.

And that's how Ecclesiastes is to function in our Bibles. It is how this is to function for us this morning. To help us to hope in this one, this Jesus Christ, who would enable us to live circumspectly as wise people, not as fools.

And for those of us this morning who have trusted in Jesus Christ, our hearts should be filled with gratitude for his salvation. Gratitude that he's saved us, gratitude that he's rescued us.

[57 : 02] And for those who have not yet trusted in Christ, my encouragement to you is to come to Jesus, repent of your sin, turn to Christ, and receive forgiveness happiness and joy and peace that only he can give.

Let's pray together. God bless us, God bless us, God bless us, God bless us, God bless us,