

ECCLESIASTES 10 & 11

Review: Last week we covered chapters 8 and 9 of which Solomon speaks in parables about different things he has observed in life. He makes comments on wisdom, authority, how the righteous and wicked in life seemingly get the opposite of what we think they deserve, the sovereignty of God, and the day of death.

Ecclesiastes 10:1-3 Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: *so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour. A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left. Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool. The apothecary mixed perfumes and medicinal ointments that were both pleasing to the smell and had healing properties. This is where we get the phrase "a fly in the ointment" meaning that a small thing can ruin or undo what was useful or meant for good. He compares this to a wise and honorable person that entertains a little foolishness in their life...not meaning a sense of humor, but behavior that is void of wisdom can ruin their reputation.*

The right and left hand is not about political sides as some have suggested, it has to do with taking paths that lead to acceptance or rejection - Matthew 25:33-34 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: Matthew 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: The fool is known to everyone, he can't hide it. People may not take note of wisdom, it may slip past them but everyone can spot a fool.

Ecclesiastes 10:4-7 If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences. There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler: Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place. I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth. *If a person in authority over you gets upset with you, don't abandon your station in defiance. Composure and calmness prevents great offenses. The vexing sights that Solomon has seen...foolishness exalted and the wealthy abased, slaves riding on horses like princes while princes go walking like slaves.*

Ecclesiastes 10:8-10 He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him. Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; *and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby. If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct. All work that can be done has it's possibility of perils. If you're digging a pit – the sides could collapse and you could fall in, if you're removing a piece of a stone wall to get through it – a snake could be in the wall and bite you, if you are quarrying rocks – one could fall on you, if you're cutting wood- a piece could splinter off and hurt you. The idea is that wisdom is needed in labor to avoid the danger and be more effective. A blunt axe requires more physical exertion to work than a sharp one. Wisdom sharpens the axe first.*

Ecclesiastes 10:11-14 Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler is no better. The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness. A fool also is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him? *The wise and the foolish are both known by their words. The words of the wise are beneficial and comforting. The words of the foolish destroy themselves and the people that listen to them. A fool talks all the time* **Proverbs 17:28** Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.

Ecclesiastes 10:15-17 The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city. Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning! Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness! *Woe means grief, anguish, affliction, wretchedness, calamity or trouble. A land with immature and irresponsible leaders will bring all of those things upon it. Princes eating in the morning means that the rulers give themselves to banqueting and drunkenness because they are foolish. Blessed is the land that has righteous, responsible and wise rulers.*

Ecclesiastes 10:18-20 By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through. A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all *things*. Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter. *Whatever you don't maintain, will decay and and come to ruin...whether it be a house, a relationship, or a business. If you neglect your spiritual life, it too will deteriorate. Officials make a feast for their enjoyment(instead of repairing what is broken)and serve wine to make life merry, and money is the answer for everything to them. They are self indulgent while squeezing the common people and the poor.*
Verse 20 is where we get the phrase "a little bird told me" Be careful what you say because it can be carried to places you don't want it to get to. The time in which we live is even more so with phones, social media, video texting etc... Silence can't be misquoted!

Chapter 11 Solomon gives instruction about wisdom for living

Ecclesiastes 11:1-2 Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth. *This is wisdom for investing...turning what you have into more by sending it out, sowing it, or pouring into others. It is wise not to put all your eggs in one basket because you don't know what the future will bring and if you have evil come to an area that you have given to, you still have other areas to recover from it. The Bible teaches the law of sowing and reaping - 2*

Corinthians 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. **Proverbs 3:9-10** Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

Ecclesiastes 11:3-6 If the clouds be full of rain, they empty *themselves* upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what *is* the way of the spirit, *nor* how the bones *do* grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both *shall be* alike good. *These scriptures are about the wisdom to understand the things that are beyond your control – clouds bringing forth rain or a tree falling in any direction. It is God that upholds all things and much of it beyond our understanding BUT we can be wise to act and work when the opportunity presents itself. When the wind isn't blowing...it's time to sow the seed. When it isn't raining...it's time to reap the field. Solomon always spoke well of diligence and cursed laziness – sow in the morning, work in the evening as the conditions are right.*

Ecclesiastes 11:7-10 Truly the light *is* sweet, and a pleasant *thing it is* for the eyes to behold the sun: But if a man live many years, *and* rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh *is* vanity. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these *things* God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth *are* vanity. *Youth and the prime of life is fleeting. Whether you live many years or few, your life is passing away before your eyes. So rejoice in all your days and let your heart be glad. But remember: for all these things God will bring you into judgment. You and God are going to talk about your choices one day, so live with the end in view.*