

Topic	Use Wisdom
Reference	Ecclesiastes 9:13 – 10:20
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Speaker	Jeff Stillwell

### Background and Context:

The Bible references certain class of literature called Wisdom Literature and it includes Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes. It is characterized by attention between the ordered universe guided by God and the sometimes sobering reality of earthly life. It doesn't always happen like we think it should, sometimes good people get hurt, sometimes innocent people are injured, sometimes the unrighteous succeed and it just doesn't make sense to our Christian mindset. Wisdom in wisdom literature in reality is an approach to life, a way of looking at the world and a way of living out in the very deliberate rationale way our commitment to God. This book is the book of a man under the sun. Ecclesiastes, I think best to be understood, is a man who is looking at life and observing life in the natural way; meaning largely apart from the effect of God and the activity of God in our lives, he certainly recognizes that there is a God, but he is looking at it completely horizontal and so you find him coming to conclusions that are a bit troubling and sometimes even shocking to our more spiritually-minded disposition.

Ecclesiastes 1 says that

**1:1 Reasoning from the standpoint of man “under the sun”.**

Ant this kind of give us context to the rest of the book.

**1.2 Vanity, means, not foolish pride, but the emptiness found in the final result of all life apart from God.**

The word stupid means ‘having or showing a great lack of intelligence or common sense. The word silliness means ‘ridiculously trivial or frivolous’. The word foolish – foolishness – folly, there is a slightly different but very important meaning worth noting. First of all, a fool is not so much stupid as he is immoral and pernicious or evil. These are the intentions behind his action and it comes from the Hebrew word ‘Sahal’. It occurred seven times in six verses and every time it is in this passage in Ecclesiastes. The fool is not somebody to be taken lightly because the consequences of his behavior and his decisions can bring about a great impact and great harm and we will see that repeated throughout.

In scripture a fool means an unrepentant and unredeemed sinner.

**A fool has said in his heart there is no God! Psalm 14:1**

Richard Dawkins is one of the most world renowned atheist and very antagonistic towards the religious world and Christians in particular. In his one statement, he said he wants to know why he was born. Life is very complex. There are lot of deep subjects but here is a man that says that reality is defined by matter plus time, plus chance. All that exist is physical matter and some choice configuration or chance configuration and it is involved over millions and millions of years. If that's true and if there is no moral authority in the universe, if there is no God then there is no place for questions or values, meaning what is good, what is evil, what's the standard, what's the judge. If man is simply an electrochemical machine and all of his behaviors dictated by the presence of serotonin or dopamine or some other chemical in his brain what responsibility does he have for any of his own decisions. All emotions like love and self-respect and all that they are just chemical and biological responses that is what this man believes and yet he struggles with the question why was he born.

If we take his position, there is no purpose in universe. There is no final reality or judgment by which we should measure these things. So in his own heart and soul he is struggling with the question of why he was born. He wants that answer but his own philosophy does not give him any lasting answers.

Knowledge, we talk about people being smart, generally we are referring to people that have a great deal of knowledge may be in a specific field or subject, some are more generalist and have a lot of facts and information. Facts, information, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. There are two kinds of wisdom.

- Worldly wisdom.
- Godly wisdom.

The soundness of an action or decision with regard to the application of experience, knowledge, training, and good judgment. Sometimes we say that wisdom is really knowledge applied properly and in perspective. The Hebrew word here is 'Hukmah' and it is used here several times in the passage that we are reading. C. H. Spurgeon said, *Wisdom is the right use of knowledge to know is not to be wise, many man know a great deal and are the greater fools for it.*

There is no fool so great a fool as the knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom.

As Christians we have to make a decision where our loyalties lie and one of the things that I think we have to decide is what our commitment is to Christ, how we are going to live our lives. What frames the context by which we make decisions.

Mr. Rogers is a children's TV personality in the US and he has a great quote, *"Life is deep & simple, and what society gives us is shallow & complicated"*

If I could put a single message over to today's content over the scripture, I would say that it is very close to this statement right here. This Mr. Rogers would come in on the TV program and he would take off his certain outerwear and he would always put on this sweater and he would change his street shoes for a pair of sneakers. He is very casual, very relaxing, calm, he spoke slowly for the children, but Mr. Rogers in his previous life was actually a United States marine sniper in Vietnam, who had been credited with 55 kills and yet this man was Christian man, had such a soft and peaceable heart and he wanted to help children. Mr. Rogers was a wise guy and the reason he was wise was because he believed in God and trusted God.

There are three large sections of the scripture. These are Solomon's observations.

- Appreciate Wisdom in Others (9:13-18)
- Avoid Foolishness at any expense (10:1-7)
- Apply Wisdom to Life (10:8-20)

### **Appreciate Wisdom in others:**

**13 I have also seen this example of wisdom under the sun, and it seemed great to me. 14 There was a little city with few men in it, and a great king came against it and besieged it, building great siege works against it. 15 But there was found in it a poor, wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man.**

The story is, small city, almost defenseless, certainly not capable of defending itself against the great army is this king brought, was vulnerable and they would have been destroyed, but there was in the city a wise man and we don't know much about him, scripture doesn't tell us a lot about him. Whatever he did, whether it was military strategy he might have been a Mr. Rogers kind of guy. So he might have given advise of military tactic or something of that to save the city. We really don't know what he said or what he offered to save the city, we do know the outcome, the city was saved and the man was promptly forgotten. That is the one of things that we have sometimes, a hard time being satisfied with and Solomon says and point a fact there are role reversal that we are going to encounter in life, we may do some really terrific work only to have our boss take the credit for it. Wisdom is sought out only in desperate times.

It is kind of like this wise quiet man in the city who saves the city and gets nothing for it, he doesn't benefit in any way that we can tell other than his life is spared and may be that was sufficient motivation for him.

**16 But I say that wisdom is better than might, though the poor man's wisdom is despised and his words are not heard. 17 The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.**

There is Godly wisdom and there is conventional wisdom. We have all heard it said that we should give credit where credit is due, unfortunately because we live in a fallen world we know

that doesn't always happen and so we have to be conscious that this world is not our final reality, it is not our final home, it is not the place in which we receive the payment for all the good deeds which we have done. As a matter of fact, there is a payday someday but that payday may be in eternity. Sometimes God will honor your faithfulness if you will just stay by the stuff and do what you know to be right.

**18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.**

So we say one bad egg spoils the omelet. An average American spends 28 hours per week watching TV. The toxic values of the modern entertainment or culture that are entering our lives are destroying our Christian faith.

### **Avoid Foolishness at all Costs**

In Ecclesiastes 10, he uses the word "fool" nine times. He illustrates through the use of 5 proverbs in vs 1 - 7. In Solomon's three books (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon), he uses the words "fool, fools, foolish, and folly" a staggering total of 128 times. He certainly seems to have a theme going and a commentary on the condition of man.

Verse 1 starts out with a curious parable and it is about dead flies spoiling the ointment. Let's look at some facts about flies.

There are more insects in one square mile of world land than human beings on the entire planet. There are 120,000 species of flies ranging from 120<sup>th</sup> of an inch to 3 inches.

The average housefly lives about 21 days.

Flies are unique among insects and that they only have two wings, all others have four.

A house fly's feet are 10 million times more sensitive to the taste of sugar than the human tongue.

After studying 300,000 fly's researchers have concluded that the average fly carries 200 million bacteria on its body and flies carry typhoid, cholera, can cause diarrhea, amoebic dysentery, tuberculosis, anthrax, gangrene, bubonic plague, leprosy, scarlet fever and yellow fever. So basically it seems that there is nothing good in the flies.

Life lesson: A little foolishness can destroy the fragrance of a person's dignity, honor and wise reputation.

**10:2 A wise man's heart inclines him to the right, but a fool's heart to the left.**

Life Lesson: A wise man is predisposed to do the right thing. Similarly, a fool is predisposed to do the wrong thing.

**3 Even when the fool walks on the road, he lacks sense, and he says to everyone that he is a fool.**

Life Lesson: The fool doesn't have to do a lot to demonstrate his foolishness. It is easily seen in how he lives his life.

**4** If the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for calmness[a] will lay great offenses to rest.

Life Lesson: Never let another's actions determine your action. Your calm demeanor will pacify most aggression.

**5** There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, as it were an error proceeding from the ruler: **6** folly is set in many high places, and the rich sit in a low place. **7** I have seen slaves on horses, and princes walking on the ground like slaves.

Life Lesson: Life isn't fair but then again there's a "Payday Someday"

### **Apply Wisdom throughout Life**

**8** He who digs a pit will fall into it, and a serpent will bite him who breaks through a wall. **9** He who quarries stones is hurt by them, and he who splits logs is endangered by them. **10** If the iron is blunt, and one does not sharpen the edge, he must use more strength, but wisdom helps one to succeed.

Life Lesson: Be diligent, "use your brain and not just your back, think safety"! Think before you act! You'll experience safety and productivity.

If the serpent bites before it is charmed, there is no advantage to the charmer. **12** The words of a wise man's mouth win him favor, but the lips of a fool consume him. **13** The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is evil madness. **14** A fool multiplies words, though no man knows what is to be, and who can tell him what will be after him? **15** The toil of a fool wearies him, for he does not know the way to the city.

Some of us the ability to control our mouth. It is like before we know it we are speaking and we are lashing out or we respond without thinking and often times we regret that. So knowing the right way of doing something is not the same as doing the right thing. A lot of people have knowledge but the execution of godly wisdom makes all the different in the world. When we don't take too much we can preserve our reputation.

Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child, and your princes feast in the morning. **17** 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!

Life Lesson: Bad rulers satisfy their own desires whereas good rules use moderation in their lives and concentrate on governing their people well!

Through sloth the roof sinks in, and through indolence the house leaks.

Life Lesson: While effort alone will not guarantee success, lack of effort due to laziness will almost certainly guarantee failure.

**19 Bread is made for laughter, and wine gladdens life, and money answers everything.**

Life Lesson: While a fool thinks that happiness consists of having an abundance of necessities and comforts; wise people know wisdom is as valuable a possession as gold.

**20 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.**

Life Lesson: A wise person doesn't say something in private that he wouldn't want heard in public. He turns away from gossip, slander and comparison with others.

Orson Scot Card say, *among my most prized possessions are words that I have never spoken.*

Very rarely will you regret what you do not say, very likely that the more you say, the more regret you will have.

## **10 Wise and Godly Things to Do**

- Obey the Gospel
- Keep Yourself Morally Pure
- Build a Christian Testimony
- Lead others to Christ
- Get a Biblically based Education
- Prepare for a decent Profession
- Build a Christian Home
- Encourage and Help Others
- Prepare for Leadership at your Church
- Be Faithful Throughout your Life.