

# The Way of the Fool

A Sermon on Psalm 53

by

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## 1. Introduction

## 2. The Fool Is Bound Under the Power and Dominion of Sin (vv. 1-3)

a. *The fool says in his heart, "There is no God" (v. 1a).*

i. This opening statement is what sets the scene for the rest of this psalm.

1. It is vital that we understand the fullness of what David tells us in this one little line.

a. If you don't start with that base reality, you will never come to see the path of wisdom.

b. The stark reality this psalm paints for us is that the mere belief in there being a god does not ultimately make one into a wise person.

2. Categorically speaking, there are two different types of people on this earth: the wise man and the fool.

a. The wise man is defined as one who places their full hope and trust in God.

b. The fool is defined as the person of unbelief. They are ungodly, and while we think of that term as if it describes their character, the reality is that ungodliness is simply describing a state of being flowing from one's heart.

ii. The heart is the wellspring from which all else flows, and a dead heart can only produce deeds worthy of death.

1. A dead heart can never love the way of wisdom, which is to simply say that a dead heart cannot delight in righteousness.
  - a. A dead heart will only ever delight in the way of death. It is not merely that the deadened heart and mind simply rejects the way of wisdom and life—the deadened heart and mind loves the very things which it knows will bring them to hell.
  - b. Unless there is a supernatural work of God through the power of the Spirit, the dead heart will simply continue to love the way of death.
2. There are, ultimately, only two things the dead heart loves:
  - a. The dead heart loves its sin.
  - b. The dead heart loves its master, Satan.

*b. The way of the fool is bent on destruction and committing abominable injustice (v. 1b).*

i. “They are corrupt, and have committed abominable injustice. There is no one who does good.”

1. When he speaks of this corruption and abominable injustice, it has a specific reference to their iniquity, or their sin.
  - a. If you were to translate this sentence in a woodenly literal way, it would read something like this: they corrupt and make abominable their iniquity.
  - b. What David shows us here is rather profound when you stop to think about it, and its much the same thing that the apostle Paul speaks of in Romans 1 where he describes mankind as “inventors of evil.”
2. David uses two terms to highlight this reality in full.

- a. The first is “corrupt,” which is the same word used in Genesis 6 to speak of the whole human race in Noah’s day, where every intent of the thoughts of the heart was only evil continually.
  - b. The second is “abominable injustice,” which speaks to something profane and detestable in the sight of God.
  - c. The point of using these two terms is to show that they further corrupt even that which is already corrupted, which leads him to his conclusion: there are none who do good.
- ii. *All of humanity are bound up together as fools (vv. 2-3).*
1. “God has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there is anyone who understands, who seeks after God. Every one of them has turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one” (vv. 2-3).
    - a. The way David describes God here is as if He bends down intently to search out humanity for some level of goodness, but instead, what God finds is that the whole human race is altogether bound up in the folly of unbelief.
    - b. This examination of mankind is a pronouncement of Divine judgment.
  2. Notice the descriptions given of mankind here in these two verses:
    - a. There is no one who understands.
    - b. There is no one who seeks after God.
    - c. Every one of them has turned aside.
    - d. They are altogether corrupt, or spoiled, like sour milk.
    - e. There is no one who does good, not even one.

### 3. The Fool Persecutes God's People to Their Own Judgment (vv.4-5)

#### a. *The fool's rejection of God leads them to persecute the faithful (v. 4).*

- i. "Have the workers of wickedness no knowledge, who eat up my people as though they ate bread and have not called upon God?" (v. 4).
  1. The wording of this verse shows an utter callousness and casualness with which the wicked showcase their lack of knowledge.
  2. This lack of knowledge plays out in two very important ways though.
    - a. The first way is that they devour God's people as if they are merely eating a piece of bread.
    - b. The second way their lack of knowledge plays out is that they do not call upon God.
- ii. Ultimately, the fool does all of this because they have no fear of God, and for that matter, they do not fear His judgment.
  1. There is a sense of ignorance conveyed in this passage about the fact that the fool does these things.
  2. But it is not that they do not know what they do, but that they do not understand just how serious it is.

#### b. *The fool's rejection of God leads them to their own destruction (v. 5).*

- i. "There they were in great fear where no fear had been; for God scattered the bones of him who encamped against you; you put them to shame, because God had rejected them" (v. 5).
  1. This verse speaks of a time where sudden ruin comes upon the wicked on a day of judgment.

- a. Picture it much like the proverbial fool in Proverbs 1, where lady wisdom is crying out at the gates, day after day, for them to heed the way of wisdom and life—and yet they reject her.
    - b. On the fateful day when calamity overtakes them and they fall into ruin, they cry out to lady wisdom to try and find her, but she is not found.
  2. The fool is lulled into a place of complacency, where on the day of judgment, all of their hopes failed them.
    - a. For them, on the day of their judgment, it is already far too late.
    - b. But notice the reason why all of this takes place at the end of verse 5: God has actively rejected the fool in his folly.
- ii. The fool, in his own folly, has neglected to see beyond his nose to understand that the very steps he takes lay the path to his own destruction. This is the great irony of the one who rejects God in his heart.
  1. If you are the fool rejects God, know that He is still present.
  2. If you are the fool who lives as if there is no God and there will never be a day of judgment, He is still the righteous Judge of all the earth.
  3. If you are the fool who refuses to cry out to God because you believe you can take care of that on your own time, know that there is a day coming where it will be too late.
  4. If you are the fool who devours the faithful in your hatred of God, understand that the church will always prevail.
  5. Yet the greatest irony of the fool who rejects God in his heart is just that. They are always seeking to overcome God, but they will always fail, and God will not.

#### **4. The Fool Cannot Destroy the Hope of the Righteous (v. 6)**

a. *Though the fool devours God's people as bread, they cannot devour God's promises (v. 6a).*

i. "Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When God restores His captive people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad" (v. 6).

1. David has just taken deliberate pains to describe the characteristics of the fool who rejects God in his heart, part of which is that they persecute the righteous.

a. David sees that there is a day coming where the unrepentant fool will be brought to justice and the righteous will be redeemed, and yet that day has not yet come.

b. So, he cries out to the Lord that He would do only that which God can do: to save His people from the throes of the wicked, finally, and fully.

2. What David has in mind here is far more than a temporary relief from their current enemies.

a. David is looking toward that great day of salvation when God will put every last foe underfoot, and utterly vanquish our three greatest enemies in sin, death, and Satan.

b. Ultimately, the psalm concludes with this burning hope—a hope of God saving His people to the uttermost.

c. For everyone that has ever believed in the promises of God by faith, from the first to the very last—this is our same hope.

b. *This is ultimately what makes the life of the fool who rejects God so futile.*

i. The fool, though they believe they can dash the hopes of the righteous, they cannot.

1. The fool can reject God, but God will not go away.

2. The fool can live as if God will never judge evil, but God has promised that He will.

3. The fool can persecute the Christian and take everything from them in this life, but God will usher the Christian safely into the next life.
- ii. All of life is hurtling towards the great Day, and on that day, the question for all of you will be who you are: are you the fool or the wise man?
  1. If you are the wise man or woman—the one who would call themselves a Christian, I ask you: how does the hope of Christ’s return inform all of your life?
    - a. What are you passing on to your children?
    - b. What are you spending your time doing?
  2. If you are the fool—the one who has not placed your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, I ask you: what hope do you actually have today?
    - a. The way this psalm has pegged you, you are an utter slave to your foolishness—but it doesn’t need to end here.
    - b. God has made the way of salvation known, even for fools.

## 5. Conclusion

**Benediction:** Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen (Jude 1:24-25).

### Small Group Questions:

1. Why is it so important that we understand the full reality of what David speaks to regarding the fool who rejects God in his own heart? How does this inform your habits, who you listen to for counsel, what resources you choose to take in?
2. Seeing that all of humanity is given this sentence of Divine judgment—how does this shape your view of the lost and how you engage with them?
3. Who is someone you can be active in sharing the gospel with?