

**Ecclesiastes 10: 20; “A Bird of the Air”, Message # 73 in the series –
“Remember your Creator”, Conducted by Pastor Paul Rendall
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Many people in our day base much of their contentment in life upon how things are going in government and in Wall Street, as though it is the government and Wall Street that controls their happiness and their contentment. When things are not going the way that they think that they ought to go, in the running of the government, they are tempted to curse the king. When their investments take a turn for the worse they are tempted to curse the rich. This is what the current “Occupy Wall Street” demonstrations, in our society, are all about; all these extremely dissatisfied young people and adults protesting that they have not gotten their fair share of good things in this life. But if we will believe the Bible (which is God’s Word) we will see over and over again that it is God who has the ultimate control over kings and kingdoms, and riches and poverty; so our real happiness and contentment rests upon a much firmer foundation than the stability of our government or our financial investments, at any given time. We ought to be extremely thankful that this is so. And so this evening I would like us to speak together about the reasons that we should not curse the king or the rich. First we want to think about how important the control of your thoughts is in the sight of God. And then we want to look at God’s amazing way of making secret sins known if it is His will.

1st of all – Let’s consider together the importance of having your thoughts under control in the sight of God.

“Do not curse the king, even in your thought; do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom.” We must ask ourselves why it is that if a king is doing badly in reigning his kingdom, if he is acting as a tyrant, and if the rich are wickedly withholding the pay of the poor and oppressing them, then why would it be a sin if the people who are affected by these sinful actions do curse the king or curse the rich in their thoughts, or in the privacy of their own bedroom? Who would know? And who would care? The answer is, that God would know, and God cares. And God is very concerned with the thoughts of our hearts. God is the evaluator and the rewarder of what we think in our hearts and minds. Looking at a few verses will serve to prove the point. Proverbs 11: 26 – “The people will curse him who withholds grain, but blessing will be on the head of him who sells it.” The people, in other words, may only see the man’s selfish actions and curse him, but God knows how to reward the righteous person who does good. Also, Proverbs 23: 6 – “Do not eat the bread of a miser, nor desire his delicacies; for as he thinks in his heart, so is he.” “Eat and drink!” he says to you, but his heart is not with you.” “The morsel you have eaten you will vomit up.” This has to do with a man who is miserly; he has what the marginal rendering terms, “an evil eye”. What is a miser? A miser is an extremely covetous person. He will not spend his money on much of

anything, in order to become rich by that means. Over time, he makes himself miserable through fear of poverty. He thinks himself to be very wise when he is really very selfish and foolish. People around him may be very tempted to curse him because he has the means to help many; he has the means to do good to many people around him, but he hoards all that he has to himself and spends almost nothing at all. Here in this text in Proverbs we find the miser pretending to be generous. He says to you, "Eat and drink", and yet his heart is not with you. Even so, there are many person who will pretend to be generous, who will pretend to want to be helpful, when all the while their heart is not with you; it is with themselves. This is why it says that, "The morsel which you have eaten, you will vomit up." In other words, there is no blessing for you in either desiring or partaking of his delicacies. You are going to have to give up trying to be the friend of such a man. You can never truly be profited or satisfied in the company of such a man because he is covetous and greedy and selfish.

But the principle that Solomon would have us to understand is, that as he thinks in his heart, so is he. He thinks that he can conceal his true thoughts and reasonings from you, so that he can either keep something material of his from you, or get something material from you through being stingy and grasping with what he has. This is an awful sin to be held captive by. But the principle has something for each of us to learn from. A Christian cannot be a pretender. "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." The principle can work both ways; both to confirm the wicked in his wickedness and the righteous in their righteousness. If a person reasons or thinks in a sinfully selfish way, apart from the teaching of the word of God, that is how he will cultivate his sinful nature. If a person sees their own heart as inherently sinful because they have inherited a sinful nature from Adam, and they confirm those sinfully selfish and independent thoughts in many ways every day in their speech and their actions. This is the reason that they should apply to Christ for a new heart; so that they can learn to think in new righteous ways which please God, and then they will not come under God's judgment. If a man has righteous thoughts, of giving, serving, and helping other people, it is something which he has learned from God Himself, and from the grace of Christ working in his heart.

Look at Luke 6: 35 and you will see what Christ's grace will do for your heart. "But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High." "For He is kind to the unthankful and evil." "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful." "Judge not, and you shall not be judged." "Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned." "Forgive and you will be forgiven." "Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom." "For with the same measure that you use it will be measured back to you." This is why you should not curse the king or the rich in your thoughts or even in the privacy of your own bedroom. It is because God is watching and He

will reward you according to your works. Look at the parallel passage to this one over in Matthew Chapter 12, verse 33. Jesus says, “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.” Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees who after they had watched him cast out demons from a blind and mute man, they also saw that the man was healed so that he both spoke and saw. They then tried to deceive other people who were benefiting from Jesus’ ministry, by saying that He had cast out demons by the ruler of demons. In verse 34 Jesus says to them, “Brood of vipers!” “How can you, being evil, speak good things?” “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” “A good man out of the treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.” “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.” “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” Here these supposedly religious men were, cursing the King, the Lord of Glory, by saying that He was doing His mighty miracles by the devil’s power. They were doing these things openly and in public. These were lying, idle words, and they would be held eternally accountable for them. But our verse in Ecclesiastes is saying that we should never curse an earthly king either, even in our thoughts. This is the way that we are to think about people in public office; especially the king, or in our case, the President of the United States. Let me ask you this evening if you might be guilty of doing this very thing? Our President has not led us well as a nation. He has actually taken our nation a long way down the path to economic destruction and military weakness, not to mention many other things which he has done. There may be a temptation to curse him, even in your thoughts. Our text says no. Applying this from the opposite direction. It may be a great temptation to a person in authority to curse those under his charge because they do not really care for the cause or business which we would like to see succeed. Just a few chapters ago we read this is Ecclesiastes 7: 21 – Also do not take to heart everything people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you.” “For many times, also, your own heart has known that even you have cursed others.”

We should understand from this that it is much easier for a Christian to fall into cursing the king than he might think. Both Peter and Jude warn us against false teachers. They warn us against “speaking evil of dignities; that is, people in political authority. (2 Peter 2: 10 and Jude 8) who we may think may have the ultimate power over us to do us or our country harm. But let us remember the words of our Lord Jesus before Pilate in John 19: 10 and 11. He did not curse him under the worst of circumstances. “Pilate said to Him, ‘Are You not speaking to me?’” “Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?” “Jesus answered, ‘You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above.’” You see, He And James also has something to say to this as well for we cannot tame our tongues by anything but by the grace of Christ. James 3, verse 8 – “But no man can tame the tongue.” “It is an unruly evil, full of

deadly poison.” “With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.” “Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing.” “My brethren, these things ought not to be so.” Let us remember Peter in his denial of our Lord, and let us pray that we would not fall into the sin of thinking that just by our sheer determination we shall follow our Lord and defend His kingdom and cause of truth and righteousness. Matthew 26, verse 71 – “And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, ‘This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.’” “But again he denied with an oath, ‘I do not know the Man!’” “And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, ‘Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you.’” “Then he began to curse and swear, saying, ‘I do not know the Man!’” Let us rather pray to be able to speak what is right and true; that which will really glorify God in difficult situations involving political or ecclesiastical matters of importance.

2ndly - We want to look at God’s amazing way of making secret sins known if it is His will.

“For a bird of the air may carry your voice, and a bird in flight may tell the matter.” We have already been looking at some of the implications of not being able to control our thoughts and words, but now we want to look at God’s secret and sovereign ways of making secret sins known to others. What do the words, “the bird of the air”, and “the bird in flight” refer to? Well they refer to the ways God brings the knowledge of secret sins to public light, through very unusual means. Turn with me over to 2 Kings 6, verse 8. “Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, ‘My camp will be in such and such a place.’” “and the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, ‘Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there.’” “Then the king of Israel sent someone to the place of which the man of God had told him.” “Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not once or twice.” “Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, ‘Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?’” “And one of his servants said, ‘None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.’” You can see here that it was Elisha who was the “bird of the air” who carried the voice of the king of Syria’s plans, to the king of Israel. God was protecting His people from their being destroyed by the Syrians.

Or think of the Apostle Paul in Acts Chapter 23, verse 12, where it says, “And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.” “Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy.” “They came to the chief priests and elders and said, ‘We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul’” “Now you, therefore, together with the council, suggest the commander that he be brought down to you

tomorrow, as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near.” “So when Paul’s sister’s son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul.” You can plainly see here that Paul’s sister was the “little bird in flight” who told the matter. It was just as though he was a courier pigeon sent by God to Paul. God sovereignly and providentially arranged all of these things for Paul’s good, the forward progress of the gospel, and for His own glory. God has amazing ways of making what sinful people would like believe in perfectly secret, very public. Just one more verse in closing which will give us further application. Matthew 10: 25 and 26 – “It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master.” “If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!” “Therefore do not fear them.” “For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.” That is, we should not fear to do good and to speak the truth of the gospel and the word of God even if people curse us for it. We should not fear because there is nothing of what those opposing us shall either say or do in secret or covertly, which will not be known to God, and eventually to men if God so wills it. Let us therefore be very bold for the truth and not curse the king if we are persecuted.