

The Danger of Foolishness pt 4

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Ecclesiastes 10, this is where we are in our study here on Wednesday evenings and I flirted around in my mind with preaching on something else but this, as the Lord knew, this day would fall on this day and this is exactly what he has for us so we're right where we are in Ecclesiastes 10 dealing with these principles that Solomon gives us from the word of God.

Look, if you would, at verse 12,

12 The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself. 13 The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness. 14 A fool also is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him? 15 The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.

Let's pray together.

Our Father, I do pray, God, tonight that you would take me as your vessel, cleanse me of sin, empty me of self, and fill me with your Spirit. Help me to be a blessing to these thy people. I do pray, God, that you would remind us that the word of God is true, it still works, it still changes lives, and it still makes the difference, and I pray, God, that as we gather around it tonight, that you'd help us to hear it and heed it. In Jesus' name. Amen.

You may be seated. Thank you for standing.

In chapter 10 of Ecclesiastes, we're dealing with the subject: the danger of folly. For those of you who have not been with us during this study through the book of Ecclesiastes, by way of a simple theme, Solomon spends these chapters in the word of God at a time in his life where virtually he lost his mind and I want to tell you why he lost his mind. He didn't lose his mind because he was encompassed by some physical ailment. He didn't lose his mind because he was hit with dementia late in life. He didn't lose his mind because genetically something came upon him that he was due. He lost his mind because he attempted to view life under the sun apart from God.

Now, let me remind everybody in the room tonight, no matter how smart you are, how long you've lived, how much experience you've amassed, how many certifications you've earned, how many places you've traveled, how high up the social ladder you've climbed, I don't care how skilled, how smart, I don't care how you think you are geared up and ready for this thing called life, you can be on top of the world today and on the bottom of the world the next day and it can have nothing to do with the devil and everybody that's against you and everything to do with you taking your mind off of God. We're living in a world that views this thing called life under the sun and this world is generated by people who think they can succeed in life by stuff down here and what they learn, and what they know, and what they make, and where they go, and how smart they are. Can I tell you, I don't care how geared up this world gets and how advanced our society becomes and I have no question in my mind that we're living in the greatest country on planet earth and I'm glad to live in America, amen there, but you will not be successful because you're an American. You will not be successful because you're living the American dream. You will not be successful tomorrow because you're successful today. I'd like to remind you about what Paul said to a group of Athenians who were caught up in godless worship of idolatry who were gifted and skilled in drama, in art, in music, and architecture, they were on the cutting edge of society, they were the most culturally developed people in all of the world and yet the Apostle Paul looked at those skilled, dramatic, architectural geniuses and said, "Let me tell you, you don't live because of what you know, you don't live because of who you are, in him we live, we breathe, and we have our being." And if you're going to make it today, it's going to be God and God alone.

So Solomon lost...he knew it once. You read the book of Proverbs right before Ecclesiastes and a man that sounds crazy in Ecclesiastes sounds real wise in Proverbs. No wonder in chapter 10 he says foolishness is dangerous because you can go from wise to crazy too. And here's the thought, in the chapter prior he said, "You only live once; you've only got one life to live and you all live it for God." Amen? But in this chapter, he says this, "You can fool around with foolishness if you want to but I want to tell you something, that being foolish is not just about being crazy and not just about losing your mind and not just about everybody laughing at you, being foolish is dangerous." And can I tell you, the most jeopardizing individual when you engage in foolishness is you. The biggest loser is you. The biggest danger comes to you and the devil never says, "Live foolishly and you'll be in danger." He never says, "Do wrong and you'll regret it." He'll never say, "Enter this door and on the other side is detriment and danger and all kinds of destruction." He never says that. He always makes sin look good. And by the way, parents, we'd better teach our children that sin never looks as good as the devil makes it look and, by the way, righteousness is never as bad as the devil makes it look. Could I tell you, it's still the best life living for God; still the best life living pure. I don't care how unpopular it becomes. I don't care how unorthodox it becomes. I don't care how old fashioned it becomes. And by the way, in a day and age when we listen to kids like this quote the word of God, I'd like to tell you, I'd rather them be standing up here quoting the Bible than singing some rap song.

Foolishness is dangerous. The revealed ways of a fool, we saw it. He continues with relevant warnings concerning the fool. We saw it last week, routine work. I mean, stuff

we know how to do, work we've been trained to do will be work that goes awry when we become fools. Please, ladies and gentleman, understand something, that fools are not people who bite off more than they can chew, fools are people who become the kind of character of people who are not incapable of doing things, no, it's not about their incapability, it's about their mindset and they begin to live a life that does not need God and when you cease to need God, you cease to be able to perform things that only God can enable.

So tonight I want to look at reckless words. Just a couple thoughts, just a few minutes on this. We'll not do all of it but reckless words. Here's a characteristic of a fool: words that are just off the chart; a mouth that's all over the place. Reckless words. You can find out a fool in not very long by how he uses his mouth. By the way, I'm amazed as I turn on television and I watch the news, I'm amazed at how many rich, powerful, prestigious, influential, supported, popular and engaging people are nothing more than loud-mouthed, popular, rich, educated fools. And I'm more amazed at how many fools support the fools. Yes, I said it, now you can go home and figure out which fool I'm talking about but if you're a fool, chances are you won't recognize a fool because both y'all are fools together.

Reckless words. Look at this first verse, "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious." You see, when it comes to reckless words, first of all there's what I call destructive content. Destructive content. Notice the pleasant distinction to destruction content. This is how a wise man talks, graciously. You remember in Ephesians 4 we were preaching Sunday night, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth but that which is good to the use of edifying." Corruption decays, edification builds up, and building up manifests itself this way: "that it may minister grace unto the hearers." By the way, "For by grace are you saved." What does that mean? God gave me good stuff when I didn't deserve it. And here's what a wise man understands: nobody has to treat me right to speak graciously because the words of a wise man are words that build people up regardless of who they are.

A wise man speaks graciously. There is a distinction about when a wise man opens his mouth and when a fool opens his mouth. You see, the wise man has a distinction of speaking graciously so this destructive content has a pleasant distinction on the wise man's part but then notice what this destructive content does for the fool, it's what I call a personal demise. Now, here's what a fool does: he talks in such a way that wants to destroy people and is so foolish that the destruction he speaks on other people ends up destroying him. You've got to be careful. It's one thing not to know what you're talking about, it's another thing to keep talking when you don't, and he said the fool goes condemning people, not realizing that the condemnation he's speaking on others is the condemnation that is indicting him.

David found himself in a flash of foolishness, didn't he? When he said to Nathan, "Kill the man that stole the one sheep from the guy that only had one, when the man himself was rich and had many sheep." And King David looked at the man of God and said, "Any man that's got a lot and steals a little from someone that doesn't have much should be killed." And Nathan looks at David and says, "Thou art the man." He said, "Be careful."

Sometimes we are announcing the sentence on others failing to realize we're sentencing ourselves.

But that the mark of a fool. Have you ever listened to someone talk and while the person was talking, everything the person was saying that he couldn't stand, that he detested, that she thought was absolutely ridiculous, you were saying to yourself, describes that person? And you were going, "How can that person not like that when that's how that person is? How can that person condemn that when that's what that person does every day?" Do you understand that the foolishness puts blinders over your eyes? Watch this now: this is why you don't want to engage in foolishness because you will find yourself condemning people, not realizing that you are condemning yourself. You will be speaking destruction. And by the way, that's why you never want to be a person who likes to destroy other people because your love for destructing other people will have you end up in self-destruction. It's never good to try to destroy people with your words.

2. Not only destructive content but what I call discussion craziness, and this is where we'll close tonight. "The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness and the end of his talk is mischievous madness." Here's what Solomon said, "Let me tell you how you know a fool, he'll make no sense when he talks." Watch this now, it doesn't take long to find out he doesn't make sense. As soon as he starts talking, you go, "What?" And by the time he finishes, it's worse than how it started. I didn't make it up. He said, "The beginning of his words is foolishness." Have you ever heard the beginning of a conversation and went, "Oh boy, oh boy, this is...the only good thing about this is that it ends quickly."

You've got to be careful. Here's the danger of foolishness: you will find yourself talking crazy and not knowing it. Now, here's what baffles me as a pastor and as a Christian: foolish people don't have to be people who have always been foolish. They can be people who were once wise dangling around in foolishness and all of a sudden went from sane to crazy. Have you ever come across someone later in life than when you knew them before and went, "What happened?" Have you ever seen somebody in the will of God and listened to them talk and then seeing the same person after they had fallen out of the will of God and listened to them talk? And you're trying to rationalize in your mind how the same person could be saying smart things one day and silly things the next. Can I tell you, foolishness will whack your mind.

Let me ask you a question: if foolishness causes a person, if you would, to begin with a ridiculous commencement, that means my conversation starts crazy, sometimes you know people aren't going to make much sense by the way they begin the statement. Sometimes the question is so silly that you know that the rest of the comments from that point are only going to become sillier. Here's the danger: the devil is such a liar, and he's such a murderer, and he's such a thief, and he's such a blinder, that the devil seems to do two things at one time, 1. puts the blinders over someone's eyes to keep him from seeing how foolish he is, while at the same time emboldening that fool. Listen to me: if I didn't know something about something, the last thing I'd want to do is talk a lot. But do you

know what I find out? Some of the most uninformed people talk the most and here's what Solomon is saying.

One more. Well, I said I would close there, didn't I? Pleasant distinction and personal demise. Here it is before we close. We said the fool starts off with foolishness, well, look at the end: mischievous madness. Do you know what mischief is? Trouble. Do you know what madness is? Insanity or terror. Have you ever seen a person become so foolish that they resort to madness? Can I ask you a question? How does a sane man beat his wife? How does a loving parent abuse his children? Listen to me. How does a family member kill another family member? How do good friends result to physical altercation? I'll tell you how: foolishness. Foolishness and they start off talking crazy and they end up acting crazy.

You see, I've been trying to tell you something: death and life are in the power of the tongue and that's why you've got to be careful in the Christian life of talking silly because the more you talk silly, the more you're going to do silly. Amen? That's why couples – listen to me – that's why couples who made a commitment to God don't need to start talking about divorce. Are you listening to me? Because once you start talking about it, eventually you're going to be closer to actually doing it. Watch it now. So you don't need to be talking about, "Well, I'm just thinking I'm just going. I'm just so fed up with this. I'm through." Watch it now. Watch it now. You see, the devil sows a seed in your mind of beginning with ridiculousness and ending with ruin. Are you listening to me?

I want to tell you why Amnon went from having wrongful thoughts to his sister to raping her because some fool cousin – watch out for your cousin. If somebody comes up to you and says, "Hey, cuz," you'd better watch out. The Bible says Amnon had the wrong kind of incestuous desire for his sister. That's bad. Do you know what that is? That's a runaway thought life. By the way, before you condemn Amnon, there are Christian people who've yet to live out deeds who have done some wicked things in their mind and the only thing stopping them from doing what they're thinking is a little more thinking. Amnon says, "I sure would like to be with my sister." But he knew it was wrong. But Jonadab said, "I'll figure out a way you can do it." So do you know what he did? He fed him an avenue to carry out thoughts that were already out of control in the first place. Listen. Do you know what that tells me? That Amnon not only had those thoughts, but he went and uttered them to his cousin because Jonadab wouldn't have had any reason to find a way for him to carry out those thoughts unless big mouth Amnon wasn't going around telling people the bad stuff he was doing. If you're struggling with sin, don't go around telling people about it, brag about them, "I'm telling you, I'm going through a lot. You got that problem too?" No, you need to talk to Jesus. And by the way, while I'm thinking about it, I'm trying to close but I'm thinking about it: the last thing a fool needs to do is get counsel from another fool. You talk to people and say, "I messed up. I fell into sin." You say, "Who did you tell?" Another faller. "Who have you confided in?" "My girlfriend over here. I'm having trouble losing weight." Who have you been getting counsel from? "The girl that works at Krispy Kreme." That's crazy. I mean, can the blind lead the blind? No. Thank you, Aidan. She said, "No." Third graders and fourth graders know that.

But before long Amnon goes, "Jonadab, man, I want to do this." I'm always amazed at people who are so sorry for their sin but yet they've told everybody about it. Especially guys, they're the worst. They go bragging about their sin they're so sorry about. You're not going to convince me you're sorry about it and blab about it. To get it right, because eventually the devil will not only send you bad thoughts but he'll send you an avenue to live them out, and you'll go from what began as ridiculous to what ends as ruin. Never, ever underestimate the danger of folly. You will wake up one day in a mess you never envisioned being in that all began with just a little bit of foolishness.

Our Father, thank you for your word and for the difference it makes. Help us, God. Help us. Help us. Help us not to play around with foolishness. It's nothing to play with. Please, God. We love you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let's stand together. Some are already on the altar and maybe you need to join them. God help us never to say, "Not me."