When We're Governed By Fools

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`[0:00]` Take out your Bibles with me this morning and turn to Ecclesiastes chapter 9. We'll be looking at the end of chapter 9, verse 13, through the end of chapter 10.

The people that decided where chapters end and divide don't necessarily know where the passage begins and ends. And Ecclesiastes is one of the most notoriously difficult texts in the Bible that's hard to determine where he's coming from and where he's going and what's his point.
We come to a text this morning in 9, 13, through 10, 20 that is very unusual. In a few ways. One, it's unusual because of the subject matter.
It's really about when we're governed by fools. It's like, where do you get that in the Bible?
That's right here. It's right here. Clearly. And secondly, he's a little different. He's a little more positive, at least, than we have grown to get used to.
`[1:25]` Remember, this writer of Ecclesiastes is a bit pessimistic. He, his mantra is kind of carpe diem, you know, get what you can now.

Live your life now. Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. You know, he talks about this under the sun kind of life, and that's all there is, it seems, to him.
And so we've always had to, and each section kind of add to what he has. He starts with something, and then his wisdom seems to be incomplete, and so then we add.
But here, here, he seems to be pretty on. So, you know, even the pessimists can get it right once in a while.
And in this subject, unless it's all tongue-in-cheek, in this subject, he seems to be spot on. Because as we compare his Proverbs to the Proverbs of Solomon and to the wisdom of the New Testament, it's spot on.
`[2:27]` So, here we go. Anybody have an experience with governors who are foolish? This is kind of a new idea to you. Don, anything? No? No? Okay.

All right. Just marriage. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. No, no And a great king came against it and besieged it, building great siege works against it.
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.
But I say that wisdom is better than might. Though the poor man's wisdom is despised and his words are not heard. The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.
Wisdom is better than weapons of war. But one sinner destroys much good. Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give off a stench.
`[4:12]` So a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor. A wise man's heart inclines him to the right, but a fool's heart to the left. Even when the fool walks on the road, he lacks sense.

And he says to everyone that he's a fool. So, if the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place.
For calmness will lay great sins to rest. There is an evil that I have seen under the sun.
As it were an error proceeding from the ruler. However, folly is set in many high places. The rich sit in a low place.
I have seen slaves on horses. And princes walking on the ground like slaves. He who digs a well, or he who digs a pit will fall into it.

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[5:16] And a serpent will bite him who breaks through a wall. He who quarries stones is hurt by them. He who splits logs is endangered by them. If the iron is blunt and he does not sharpen the edge, he must use more strength.

But wisdom helps one to succeed. If a serpent bites before it is charmed, there's no advantage to the charmer. The words of a wise man's mouth win him favor.
But the lips of a fool consume him. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness. And the end of his talk is evil madness. The fool multiplies words.
Though no man knows what is to be and who can tell him what will be after him. The toil of a fool wearies him. For he does not know the way to the city.
Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child. And your princes feast in the morning. Happy are you, O land, when your king is the son of the nobility.
[6:25] And your princes feast at the proper time. For strength and not for drunkenness. Through sloth, the roof sinks in.

Through indolence, the house leaks. Bread is made for laughter. Wine gladdens life. And money, money answers everything.
I don't think he means it that way. But we Americans like to read it. Money answers everything.
Point, application, verse 20. Even in your thoughts, do not curse the king.
Nor in your bedroom curse the rich. For a little birdie. Excuse me. For a bird of the air will carry your voice.
Or some winged creature will tell the matter. So it reads. Let's pray. Father, grant us insight.
[7:26] Help us to see how he connects things. It appears on first reading to be kind of all over the place. So grant us to see what he's doing.

To grapple with this kind of structure of wisdom. And Father, help us to hear from you. Not just him, but help us to hear from you.
Confirm the true wisdom that he gives. And help us to see how it relates to life. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated.
Amen. So I came across this story this week.
A new bank president just got the job. He is a younger man. And accepting the position for president, he felt that he lacked the qualifications.
[8:28] And so he wanted to meet with the former president who had been there for years and was very successful. And so he asked him, you know, give me some insights. Show me, you know, I'm new at this. I want to learn.

You've learned the ropes. What gave you success in this? And the man said, two words. Good decisions. Oh, how did you make good decisions?
One word. Experience. Oh, how did you get that experience? Two words. Bad decisions. The point is, he learned from his mistakes.
Bad decisions gives you experience to make better decisions. That's wisdom. Not every new boss is willing to learn that.
You, I'm sure, have never had a boss that you felt acted foolishly. Hmm? Always made wise choices, right? Never had that experience.
[9:31] This is what he's talking about. He's not just talking about a king or a ruler or princes who act foolishly. It applies to us as well, not only to our presidents, not only to our governors, even our mayors.

It doesn't apply just to that, but to our bosses, people in authority over us. So, he begins with a little story we see in verses 14 about this little city with few men and this great king that comes and then there's just this poor wise man that somehow delivers the city from this great king by his wisdom.
So, there's actually a story in the Bible that is very, very similar to this. It's in 2 Kings 18 and 19. It's when the great king of Assyria, his name is Sennacherib.
He's a big bully. He comes. He's already captured northern Israel. He's already, remember, he's already taking away all the Israelites from the northern ten tribes.
Now he's coming south and he comes to Jerusalem. And poor, lowly Hezekiah is king in Judah.
And so, Sennacherib comes knocking on his gate.
[10:52] And he taunts him. And he mocks Hezekiah's faith in God. He speaks of Hezekiah's puny, puny army.

And reasons with them to simply submit or I will take you away. Hey, what are you going to do?

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He's capturing everybody. He's the menace of the time. So, what does Hezekiah do? His response is obviously great fear.
But Hezekiah is a man of faith. He's a man that usually makes the best choices. And in this case, he puts on sackcloth.
He goes before God. He goes into the temple. And then he sends people to go to Isaiah. Yes, Isaiah. The prophet of the time. What a resource to have at the time.
[11:52] Isaiah. Isaiah was there through the... Anyway, he goes to Isaiah. And he tells Isaiah, we're in distress. And we're in disgrace. Look what this man has said.

Isaiah, pray for us. Plead with God for us. And so, Isaiah does. And Isaiah sends back word to Hezekiah. And he says, fear not. Fear not.
God's got this. Don't do anything. God will take care of this. And sure enough, God saves them. He distracts an acrob, takes them back north. And does some other things.
Saves the city. This city, this little city, Jerusalem, is saved from the great king by a poor little wise man named Isaiah.
Isaiah, who simply does not give earthly wisdom, but gives godly faith. And that delivers them.
[12:49] Well, you come to the next chapter in 2 Kings, to chapter 20, and things change. Hezekiah gets sick. Right? He's going to die. He prays.

God gives him another 15 years. You know, this weird shadow thing goes back and all this kind of weird stuff. And shortly after he gets better, envoys from Babylon.
Now, Babylon is not the yet world power they will be, but they're rising. They will take out Sennacherib. They will take out Assyria. They will become the next new bully.
But they're not there yet. So, they send envoys to Hezekiah to bring them a good, get well present. Right? And so, Hezekiah thinks, oh, I'm somebody.
Pretty cool. They like me. And he does something very foolish. He shows them all of his treasures.
[13:50] All of the temple. Gold, silver, bronze. Treasures, treasures, treasures. These guys go back to Babylon. Hmm.

Let's keep that in mind. So, then Hezekiah meets with Isaiah. Interesting. Isaiah pops up again. Isaiah says, who were those guys?
Oh, they're just nice guys coming, you know, from Babylon. Babylon, huh? What did you do? Showed him all the treasuries. What did you do?
Hmm. Behold, says the Lord God. Days are coming, Hezekiah. When you and your sons will be dragged away to Babylon.
When the people of Israel will be taken from their home. Hezekiah. First time, good decision.
[14:49] Go to Isaiah. Second time. It wasn't threatening. It was, you know, it's like Peter in the garden, right? And the little girl. It's like, right? It's like subtle.

It's not, you know, it's no big deal. It was a big deal to Isaiah. Hey, Hezekiah. I've been talking about Babylon. Hey, Hezekiah. Have you heard any of my sermons? Hey, Hezekiah.
Have you been listening? Oh, that Babylon. So here you have an example. What I'm saying is, do you learn from mistakes?
Do you, do you, where's the wisdom? Hezekiah acts wisely. Then he acts foolishly because he's forgotten. How easily wisdom's forgotten.
Ecclesiastes 9 and 10 gives us examples and advice for dealing with rulers who are foolish. So it gives us the anatomy of folly.
[15:48] The first thing that you notice that stands out as you read these verses is there's a contrast between wisdom and foolishness. Got it. Talks a lot about the wise versus the fool.

All right? So you got wise or wisdom appearing 11 times in the text. You have fool or foolish or folly appearing 10 times in the text. But then the other thing that you make a connection with is he begins with this story in 914 about this little city, great king.
Little against great. Little against great. And then there's a king. And then at the end, there's a king again.
And then the beginning of the next section, there's a ruler. And the end of that next section, there's a ruler again. The kings and rulers and princes also appear 10 times in this passage.
They just kind of slipped in there. It's kind of like a... I didn't notice it at first. I thought that was just an example. But he's really... If you pay attention through Ecclesiastes all the way through, he kind of has harps on the king.

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[17:00] Which is interesting because he claims to be the king of Israel. But he harps on these bad kings, these evil kings, these now foolish kings.

So we have this contrast of wisdom against foolishness. He's going to rattle off all kinds of Proverbs. At my count, 17 Proverbs.
On the advantages of wisdom over foolishness. But at the same time, he's going to show the limits of wisdom. Even though wisdom's better, it still gets forgotten and despised.
Even though wisdom's better, it still is unimpressive and unpopular. It's the rare road people choose.
It's better, but few choose it. So, the other thing I want you to notice, because this is key to understanding kind of where he's going, because as you just read it through, it just seems like it's all over the place.
[18:04] And then he's got these Proverbs that are kind of like, what's this about the quarry and the serpent and the what? What's he talking about? What's that have to do with anything?

Well, here's the structure that I think stands out. Look at chapter 9, verse 13. He says, I have seen. So he makes an observation. We always know he's beginning something new when he says, this I have seen under the sun.
Okay, he's making another observation, starting a new section. Okay, he does it there. He does it again in chapter 10, verse 5. There is an evil I have seen under the sun. So, he makes one observation in 9.13, another observation in 10.5.
So, 9.13 through 10.4 is one section. Here's what he makes an observation. And then, verses 14 and 15, he gives an example or a story, the king and the city.
And then, he's going to give off, he's going to rattle off a bunch of proverbs from 9.15 through 10.3.
[19:05] He's going to say all these proverbs, okay, about flies and folly, that kind of thing. And then, in 10.4, he ends the section with an application. Here's the point.

So, he gives this observation example, tells parables, excuse me, tells proverbs, and then 10.4. Now, here's the conclusion. Here's the application.
If the anger of the ruler, so it's dealing with a ruler there, if the anger of the ruler rises against you, so against you personally, here's what you do. Don't leave your place.
Don't run away. For calmness will lay great offenses, great sins to rest. Okay, so there's one section. Observation, example, proverbs, application.
Does it again, 10.5. Observation, 10.5. I've seen this, I've seen an evil under the sun. Here's the evil. Here's the example. It's error coming from the ruler.
[20:01] So, a ruler being foolish. A ruler making a mistake, a really bad mistake, because it leads to folly set in high places.

Fools are promoted. Fools are promoted. What does that do? Not good. So, he's going to give this example, and then he's going to tell a bunch of proverbs from chapter 10, verse 8, all the way down through 16, all these proverbs about the fool and the wise man.
And then he'll come to an application again in verse 20. Here's the application in chapter 20. Even in your thoughts, don't curse the king. So, notice, both applications have to do with a ruler.
So, in chapter 10.4, if the anger of the ruler is against you, here's what you do. Again, chapter 10, verse 20, the second application is, even in your thoughts, don't curse the king.
So, both of them are in regard to dealing with a ruler. And in this case, a foolish ruler. One who makes mistakes.
[21:14] One who is making unwise decisions. One who's rash. Okay, so that's the scenario. That's the section. That's how it works.

So, let's look at it. It's the anatomy of folly. How do we answer a fool? How do you respond to a foolish government?
How do you respond to a foolish boss? Actually, when the boss's anger is against you, and they've really created the problem themselves.
How do you respond? So, two responses. Based on the chapter 10, verse 4, the first response is calm wisdom.
Calm wisdom is always better. But, it's unpopular. Calm wisdom is always better.
[22:15] It's not natural. It's not easy. It's not the normal thing. It goes against our grain. Being calm when anger is against you is the best kind of wisdom.

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But, it's not popular. It's not what everybody does. It's not what most people do. It's not what people want to do. When anger comes against you, what do you want to do? Mwah. Mwah. Right?
So, then he's going to show in verses 13 through 10, 4, three limits of wisdom. Wisdom's better. Wisdom's better.
Wisdom's better. But, first of all, wisdom is undervalued. Because, even though this poor man saves the city, nobody remembers.
The people despise him and they don't listen. It's undervalued. Yeah, thanks for saving us. See you later. No, we don't want to live like you live. Just that. But, thanks for saving us.
[23:17] It's undervalued. And, then secondly, it's easily unraveled. Just a little bit of folly outweighs wisdom. And, all this wisdom that's built up through time and all of a sudden, just a little folly unravels the whole thing.

A fly in the ointment. And, finally, it's unimpressive. It's unimpressive. Because, if the anger of the king is against you, a little calm, that's not very impressive.
Kind of like God sending his son to earth to be killed. That's not impressive. God sending his son to thunder. That's impressive.
God sending his son to be humble. Meek. Conquer by dying. Power and weakness.
That's not impressive. But, that's the point. So, let's look at this. So, first of all, it's wisdom's undervalued. Chapter 9, verses 13 through.
[24:26] He gives this example. The little city against a great king. So, there's the comparison of little against great. And, it's a poor wise man. Not a rich man.

So, he doesn't do it through his riches. He's poor. So, all he has is wisdom. And, he uses his wisdom to save the city somehow. We're not told how. Somehow, maybe like Isaiah.
Praise the Lord. God takes care of it. Don't know how he does it. Maybe he talks to the king in wise words. We're not told. But, the wise response saves them from tragedy and ruin.
Overcomes the mighty. This poor wise man overcomes the mighty king. With a great army. With great siege works. Just this little guy.
The little against the big. He saves it. But, the striking thing. Verse 15. Is he's forgotten. He's forgotten.
[25:26] So, no one remembered that poor man. But, then he says. But, I say that wisdom is still better than might.

Even though the poor man's wisdom is despised. And, his words are not heard. Even though. He did save the city. Even though later they didn't appreciate it.
Didn't value it. Didn't remember it. And, later after he saved the city. Imagine. My imagination is. Is that. When they say. They despised and didn't hear.
That something must have happened after he saved the city. Maybe he said. Now, listen. Let's kind of get our heads together. And, let's live more wisely. Oh, no. No. No. No. No. We don't want that much of your wisdom.
Thanks for saving us. Keep your lifestyle choices to yourself. That's. Because they don't want to hear it.
[26:24] Thanks for saving us. Yeah. Thanks. But, now. We're not living like you. That's. Come on. We're going to live it up. We're going to have some fun. We're going to live it up. So.

But, he's still saying. It's still better. Even. Even though. It's disregarded. And, then he says. Verse 18. All right. 17 and 8.
Well, that's the next part. It unravels. So. So. Here's the second limit. It's not only under value. But, it's unraveled. It's easily undone. Wisdom is better.
But, a little folly. Destroys much good. Right. He says it in verse. 18. Wisdom's better than weapons of war. Look. He overcame the great king. But, one sinner destroys much good.
And, here's another nice parable about a dead fly. Dead flies make perfumers ointment give off a stench. No. Let's analyze.
[27:23] No. Obviously. You know. A fly in the ointment. Spoils it. Ruins it. A hair in my suit. Come on.

It ruins it. Does it? Yeah. It ruins it. I can't eat that now. Now. So, a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.
All that wisdom has done and built, a little folly outweighs it. David builds the kingdom. Establishes the kingdom.

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And, at a time when he's supposed to be at work and he stays home. And, he looks at a pretty little lady next door.
And, then he decides he wants that lady. And, then he takes the lady. And, you know the rest of the story. And, his life kind of falls apart.
[28:24] One sinner. One little bit of folly. Now, it wasn't a little. I mean, he did a bunch more. What do we count men? We counted a bunch of things that he did, right?

He's doing that. And, then he's covering it up. And, he's killing other people. And, he's making it worse and worse. Until, the prophet Nathan comes and says, you know, you're the guy. You took the little man's sheep.
Solomon. Solomon. Solomon. Solomon. All this great wisdom of Solomon. And, then at the very end of his life. We see in Kings chapter 10. That, all of a sudden he makes a turn.
Oh, Solomon loved women. And, so he just gathered them. And, gathered them. And, gathered them. And, they took his heart away. Just like the Lord said. If you gather women from other days. They'll take your heart away. Okay. A little folly outdoes all of that. Because of Solomon's sin. Then, then what? God said, okay.
[29:27] During your lifetime. I'm not going to do it. But, in your son's lifetime. Because of the honor of David. I'm going to not split up your kingdom. But, once your son starts ruling. And, by the way.

He's a fool too. The kingdom's over. I'm going to split it. And, then it's just going to fall apart. A little folly.
You've never seen that in your own life. Have you? You build things up. Right? Build a good life. And, then what? We make a. Why did I do that? Right?
So, it's vulnerable. It's easily undone. So, then finally. In chapter 10, verses 2 through 4. He shows that wisdom also is unimpressive.
It's not only undervalued. And, unraveled. But, it's unimpressive. It's not that big. It's not powerful. It's not glorious. Because, how do we overcome? He says. He gives a couple more proverbs.
[30:27] Verse 2. Wise man's heart goes one way. The fool's heart goes the other way. Then the fool. The fool walks on the road. He lacks sense. And, he says to everyone that he's a fool.

How do you know a fool? You know him by their acts. But, mostly you know him by their words. What did Mark Twain say? It's better to be thought a fool. And, open your mouth. Remove all doubt. Old Mark has a good way of saying it. I don't know if he stole that from somebody. But, I found it attributed to him. It's kind of what he's saying here. You know. He opens his mouth and everybody knows. He just rambles on and on and on and on.
Doesn't have anything to say. Thinks he's got a lot to say. But, doesn't really have anything to say. And, then he comes to the point. So, maybe your ruler is that person.
Right? Maybe your ruler. Maybe your boss is that person. That their little folly. Dissolves everything. Maybe they're the fool who walks on the road.
[31:29] And, he lacks sense. And, he. What everything he says is. Is foolish. Foolish. So, the point is. So, verse 4 is then. Okay. If that's. If the ruler is that fool.

And, then he gets angry at you. What do you do? Don't leave your place. Don't run away. For calmness will lay great offenses.
To rest. Great sins. So, it's implying the great offenses. The great sins. Are the rulers. Sins. Even though he's. Built the problem himself.
He's going to blame you. How do you respond? Calmness. God's got you there. Don't run away. Stand your ground like Daniel.
Like Daniel's three friends. Hat rack, haystack. And, under the bed you go. I think I got those names right. Didn't I? Right. They stood the ground. But, calmness.
[32:32] Calmness. Keep praying, Daniel. I'm going to throw you in lines then. Got to keep praying. Go ahead. Don't bow down to my image. Now, I don't know what their names are.

Hat rack, haystack. I'm going to throw you in the furnace of fire. What'd they say? What'd they say? Okay. We think God will save us.
But, even if he doesn't, we're not going to. We're not going to bow down to you. Gentle. Calm. Now, those are dramatic examples.
What's your example? You're at work or you're, you know. We have a government that's making foolish choices over and over and over. And leading to destruction of the economy and the nation.

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And what do we do? Calmness. Calmness. Calmness. Doesn't mean we don't answer it.
[33:35] Calmness. Soothe it. Don't stir up the fight. Soft answer. Solomon says, a soft answer turns away wrath.

Right? James says, be quick to anger. No, that's not it. What does James say? Be quick to. What? Fight? No. What does James say? James, what do you say? Be quick to. Hear. Slow to. Speak. Slow to anger. Therefore, the anger of man does not accomplish the things of God. See, God works a different way. Not through you getting big and strong.
Through you being weak and humble. Unimpressive. Unpopular. Wisdom is meek. It's gentle. It's calm.
[34:40] It's healing. It's soothing. It's gracious. Kind of like how God is with us. See, how does God respond to us? We're rebellious. We're foolish. We're doing stuff.

Right? We're wandering our own way. We're doing our own thing. And how does God draw us back? With thunder? Well, eventually, if nothing else happens.
But usually it's just gentle, isn't it? Don't you remember that his kindness leads you to repentance? Not his harshness.
What does he do? He sends his son. To be what? The powerful, show you what? To be, we're just saying, the son of God and son of man.
Veiled his flesh, his glory see. He sends his son to be meek, humble, gentle. To die.
[35:42] To conquer by dying. That's wisdom. It's not very impressive. It's not very, it's not popular. And then Jesus says, oh, you do the same thing. Follow me.

What does that mean? We get to, you know, have big pulpits and big, no. No, you follow me. That means people won't like you. That means you won't be popular.
It means you'll be misunderstood. You'll be mocked. Scorned. No, you follow me. That means you'll be weak instead of strong. Because through your weakness comes my power.
When Paul got the big head, what'd God do to him? Paul got the big head. I got to see glorious mysteries. I got to go to, you know, I got to talk to God. And the Lord says what?
Let's send a little Polly, a little thorn in the flesh. In fact, I'm going to have the devil deliver it. For all the good he did? Why does he get the thorn?
[36:41] So that my power is perfected in your weakness. You keep the thorn, Paul. Because I know you get a little arrogant sometimes. So you're going to burst that bubble with that little thorn that you're going to keep.

You're going to keep. And Paul says what? I thank God. Because you know what? It's not about me. It's about him. And his power gets displayed in my weakness.
So be it. So be it. That's my goal in the end anyway. If I got to hurt a little bit.
God's wisdom. God's wisdom is the gospel. The gospel is undervalued and unpopular. Look at how Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 1. He says, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom.
God never made it so that people would discover him through worldly wisdom. But it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.
[37:52] What's he saying? It pleased God through the folly of what we preach. What do we preach? We preach the gospel. What's the gospel? Folly to the world. It's foolishness to the world. A dead man saves you.

What? What? What? Four. Jews demand signs. Greeks seek wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified.
A stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. But to those who are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God. See, in that folly displays his power and the wisdom of God.
For the foolishness of God is wiser than men. The weakness of God is stronger than men. Consider your own calling, brothers. Think about yourself. Who are you?
Who are you? This is a real build-up self-esteem part of Paul's ministry. Oh, you're great. Consider your calling, brothers. Not many of you are wise.
[38:57] That means most of them were. Okay, not wise. According to worldly. What's he calling them? A really good way to build them up there, Paul. Paul's not about that.

Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful. Not many were noble. Who's in this current congregation? Bunch of losers, huh? Bunch of sick and foolish

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and weak and kind of like us, huh?
Hope you see yourself that way. Kind of a bunch of nobodies. But God chose what is foolish of the world, the shame the wise.
God chose what is weak in the world, the shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world. You know, you. Even things that are not to bring nothing, bring to nothing things that are. Why?
Why does he do it that way? So that no human being might boast in the presence of God. See, you got me. Thank you. God. Good for you. You got, chose the right person.
[40:03] And because of him, you are in Christ. Not because of you. Because of him, you're in Christ. Who became to us wisdom. Real wisdom.

From God. Righteousness and sanctification. Redemption. That. As it is written. Let no one boasts. Who boasts. Boasts. Let the one who boasts.
Boasts in the Lord. What's God's way to save a sinner? To save a fool? Send a son to be humble. Meek.
The gospel is a foolish message. Delivered by a foolish method. Preaching in that day was outdated.
And Paul was still doing it. Because it was God's method. Preaching in our day. Way out of date. But still his method. Because it doesn't credit the preacher.
[41:02] It credits God. Kind of like God wants to do it the hard way. So he gets all the credit. You know what I'm saying? Foolish message. Foolish method. And foolish means. It depends on the work of the Holy Spirit.

Not the manipulation of men's hearts. So calm wisdom is always better. It's just unpopular. And then go to 10.5.
We see the second observation. And the second response in 10.20. The second application is simply this. Whereas it was calm wisdom.
Now it's silent wisdom. There's time to be silent. Silent wisdom restrains self-destructive folly. Silent wisdom restrains self-destructive folly. But it's rare.
It's rare. So he's going to observe. In 10.5 he's going to observe. Here's another thing I've seen. And it's evil. It's terrible.
[42:00] What I've seen under the sun is a ruler. Who makes an error. An error proceeding from the ruler. A ruler pushing out great mistakes. How does he do it?

Verse 6. He sets folly in high places. He sets folly in high. Many high places.
So he's not just promoting fools. He's promoting a bunch of fools. The kind that he's going to describe later. As the princes who feast in the morning. To get drunk.
He's promoting a kind of management. A kind of government. That will destroy itself.
Because they're foolish. Because they're self-seeking. Because they're not about serving. They're about building themselves. And doing what they want.
[42:58] So he promotes fools. Who are senseless. And the whole idea of promoting somebody not qualified. Promoting somebody that is careless.

Somebody who's not experienced. Is absurd and dumb. And it leads to foolish disasters. So look at verse 8. What happens?
So when things are turned upside down. When folly is set in high places. Rich are put in the low place. People of influence are put in low place. So they can't make influence.
Slaves on horses. And princes on the ground. Like slaves. So he's reversed everything. The people that are qualified. Are put down. And the unqualified. Are lifted up. So what happens?
Well. It leads to foolish disasters. There's the wrong people. Are put in the job. So. Let's go to the quarry. Or let's go to. Where they're digging a pit.
[43:54] So if the person digs a pit. Falls into it. Why does that happen? Because he doesn't know what he's doing. If a serpent bites somebody. Who breaks through the wall.

Why does that happen? Now it can happen as an accident. But. If it happens. You've been. Kind of dumb. Because digging through walls in Israel.
You know there's snakes in there. That makes it kind of fun. Huh? And so you're a little bit more careful. When you dig through the. Walls. Because snakes might pop out. It was common.
And so if you get bit. It's on you. Okay. What about a quarry? He who quarries stones. Is hurt by them.

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Now. It can be a dangerous job. But if you know what you're doing. Right. How many days without an accident? Why is that? Because the right people are doing the job.
[44:53] Or he who splits. Logs. Is in danger by them. Now. If you split logs. Do you usually get in danger by splitting logs? If you do it in shorts. Right.

You do it. You know. It's like. What's this? Right. So. There's our. No. Petey.
Petey. Petey knows. Well. He puts on those. Chaps. I don't know. I heard about that. He knows what he's doing. He knows.
So. What else? Oh. Oh. Here's a good one. Here's verse 10. Now. What do you think about this? So if the iron is blunt. And one does not sharpen the edge. You must use more strength. So.
See. What do you think? What's going on there? It's going harder. Yeah. Oh. It's dull. I guess I got to hit it harder. Or wisdom helps.
[45:49] Sharpen the edge. Work smarter. Not harder. Huh? Right. So. See what he's getting at? See what he's making. He's making fun here. He's going.

Come on. This is unqualified. These are people who are careless. These are people who are not paying attention. These are people who shouldn't be doing the job. But sometimes the authority puts unqualified people in positions they shouldn't be in.
And then it becomes dangerous for others. I like this one. Verse 11. The serpent bites before it's charmed. No advantage to the charmer.
Yeah. No kidding. Okay. Who taught him how to do that? It's like. Isn't he supposed to know what he's doing? Okay. Then. Then. So we got foolish acts.
Then we get foolish words. Verse 12 through 14. He goes. He talks about foolish words. Verse 12. The words of the wise man mouth win him favor.
[46:51] But the lips of a fool consume him. The lips of a fool are self-destructive. The beginning of the words of his mouth are foolishness. The end of his talk is evil madness.

So it goes from bad to worse. It starts with foolishness and then it goes to just insanity. It just becomes totally irrational. The fool multiplies words.
Right. He just keeps talking. Though no man knows what is to be and who can tell him what will be after him. He reveals his own ignorance. That's how you know a fool.
Because they start. They keep talking and you know. Oh. They clearly don't know what they're talking about. They're just trying to act like they know what they're talking about. And then he adds another one.
Verse 15. The toil of a fool wearies him. For he does not know the way to the city. That's kind of an odd one. The toil of a fool wearies him. Oh hard work.
[47:45] Hard work. It's hard. He's so focused on the hard work. That he doesn't even know the way home. It's like he doesn't look ahead.

He doesn't know the point. He doesn't know the purpose. He doesn't know the goal. He's just focused on hard work. When we do hard work. If you're wise. If you're doing hard work. What keeps you at the hard work?
Knowing why you're doing it. Well. Okay. I get paid. Project gets done. Gets done wisely. Et cetera. Et cetera. The fool.
See. Doesn't pay attention to that. All he can think of is right now. And that's kind of hard. I'm already tired. I want to go home. Oh. I don't even know where I live.
See. See. You got a problem. Okay. So. Then. Then the conclusion. He comes to an application. In verses 16 through 20. At the end here. So. It starts with two scenarios.
[48:44] He's going to say. Woe to you O land. Verse 16. Woe to you O land. When your king is a child. And your prince's feast. In the morning. Woe to you. So. That's bad government. Your. Your. Your king.

Is a child. Doesn't. Not against children. But if there's somebody. Inexperienced. Immature. In leadership. Okay. That's not good. But that's not the. That's not the. The next part.
Is the real killer. Your princes are feasting. In the morning. They're. They're. They're getting drunk. In the morning. Why are they feasting.
In the morning. They don't have to feast. In the morning. They're supposed to be feasting. In the evening. When the work's done. They're feasting. Before the work is done. They're. Contrast. Verse 17. Happy are you O land. When your king.

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Is the son of nobility. He's got experience. He's got backbone. He knows what he's doing. And your princes feast. At the proper time. See that's how we understand. The first one. They feast.
[49:39] At the proper time. For strength. Not for drunkenness. Then. A couple proverbs. That relate. So. Relating to the first one.

The. The. The. The. The king is a child. And the priest is feasting. In the morning. Verse 18. Is. A. Proverb. To back that up. Through sloth. The roof sinks in. They're feasting in the morning.
They're not getting the work done. And things fall apart. Through sloth. The work. The roof falls in. And through indolence. Literally slackness of hands. Idleness.
The house leaks. So that's the people feasting in the morning. Not getting their work done. Not preparing. Not doing anything. On the other hand. Verse 17. The happy land. Is the one with the. The prince is feasting at the proper time. For strength. So nothing wrong with feasting. But do it at the proper time. So verse 19. Is backing that up. Bread is made for laughter. Wine.
[50:35] Gladdens. Gladdens life. That's good. Feast. Eat. Drink. And be merry. God has given us these gifts to enjoy. Right. So do them in the proper time. In the proper. Way. And by the way.

Money answers everything. Is that what he means? No. Just like. Bread. Bread. Is made. For. Where to go. For laughter.
Not too much bread. And just like. Wine. Gladdens the heart. Not too much wine. So money. Is an answer for things. Not too much. Can I get you in context?
Don't Americanize this. Don't read it as an American. Okay. Consumer. So then he gets to his point. Verse 20. So. Even in your thoughts.
Okay. Wow. Even in your thoughts. Don't curse the king. Now. I understand. Not cursing the king. To his presence. Because then it's like. Okay. My head's off. Don't. A little John the Baptist. Kind of thing going on.
[51:31] Now. If you're John the Baptist. You do that. Not everybody's. John the Baptist. But in your thoughts. Don't curse the king. And even in your bedroom.

Where you think nobody can hear you. Nobody. Nobody. You know. Your voice doesn't carry you. Don't curse. Why? Because. And this is weird.
Right? A bird of the air. Will carry your voice. Is that a mockingbird? Is that a. What kind of bird is that? Some winged creature. Will tell the matter.
You know. That's where this little phrase. Comes from. A little bird. How'd you find out? A little birdie told me. A little birdie. Walls have ears. Even in your private.
And then. But the more striking one is. Even in your thoughts. Which in Hebrew is your heart. So one of our. People in Sunday school. Pointed this out.
[52:30] It's not so much. Just a hold your tongue issue. It's a heart issue. Your attitude toward the king. Your attitude toward your boss. Your attitude toward authority. Even if they're fools.

Is critical. What does the New Testament say? What does Jesus say about Caesar. By the way. He doesn't have a lot to say about Caesar.
Caesar. Oh. Give to Caesar what is Caesar's. But give to God what is God's. So he didn't have a lot. Wait a minute. You know what Caesar does. With my tax money. Yeah. Everybody knows what Caesar does.
With your tax money. God is still established government. And you will support it. Peter says honor the king. What if your king is Nero?
Honor the king. How do I honor the king? Maybe I keep my mouth shut. When I came to Caesar.
[53:30] When I came to Caesar. Jesus said. Give to Caesar what's Caesar's. We want to comment on his policies there Jesus. Just pay your taxes. But it goes deeper.

In your heart. In your thoughts. So if I'm to honor the king. No matter how bad he is. It's still the office. That God has established.
Right? No matter who the president is. It's still the office. That God has established. No matter who our governor is. And how much I might disrespect him.
God still establishes. The office. I'm to honor him. See the Christian way is higher than the worldly way.
So we have great examples of Joseph. And of Daniel. And of others who have done that. Even in a government that is ungodly evil.
[54:40] Right? And even still for Paul and Peter. It's going to mean. Nero is going to kill you either way. Right?

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They both died under Nero. So even if your ruler is a fool. He promotes fools. He's ignorant. He's lost. Wisdom is rare. Hold your tongue.
Wisdom of Solomon is the same. In responding in a godly way. I just want to read some other proverbs. From Solomon himself. Proverbs 15. A soft answer turns away wrath.
But a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise commends wisdom. But the mouth of fools. Pours out folly. The eyes of the Lord are in every place.
Keeping watch on the evil and the good. A gentle tongue is a tree of life. But perverseness. In it breaks the spirit. A fool despises his father's instruction.
[55:41] But whoever heeds reproof is prudent. Proverbs 18. A fool takes no pleasure in understanding. I like this one. A fool takes no pleasure in understanding.

I don't want to get it. I just want to express my opinion. A fool's lips walk into a fight. His mouth invites a beating. Have you ever seen that?
You ever been there? Yeah, I've been there. A fool's mouth is his ruin. His lips are a snare to his soul. The words of a whisperer.
What's a whisperer? A murmurer. A grumpler. A tale bearer. With a rebel's heart. The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels.
Oh, we love gospel. Hmm? They go down into the inner parts of the body. So when I receive the whisperer's gossip. Where do they go?
[56:42] Not in one ear and out the other. They go and they affect me. And then I gossip it and I spread the strife. Here's the New Testament response.

It's about the meekness of wisdom. It's the same that our Ecclesiastes person is doing. James says this. Contrast. Who is wise and understanding among you.
By his conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. Contrast. If you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts.
Do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above. But it's earthly. Unspiritual.
Demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist. There will be disorder in every useless practice.
[57:39] What is jealousy and selfish ambition? That's when we want our own way. I want to do it my way. I just want to react instead of respond. But the wisdom from above.

What's the wisdom from above? It's first pure. Unpeaceable. Gentle. Open to reason. Full of mercy. Full of mercy for the full. And good fruits.
It's impartial and sincere. It's hard to be a critic if you're impartial. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.
It's a peacemaker. Wisdom is peacemaker. Which doesn't mean keeping the peace. It means making the peace like Jesus did. And it's a little messy. A little harder. Sometimes you have to confront things.
So the Christian's call is a higher calling. It's not to respond as the world which is natural and easy. To react instead of respond. For the Christian, silent wisdom restrains self-destructive folly.
[58:46] Silent wisdom restrains self-destructive folly. But it's rare. Even James said that taming the tongue.

Pretty tough. How in the world do I do that? Well, not by self-control. My spirit control. Right? Like any other thing.
If I'm going to produce fruit of the spirit, it's got to be the spirit. Not me. So if I've got a problem with my tongue. If my tongue multiplies its words too much. If my tongue consumes my self.
Then I need to go to the Lord and get help with that. Lord, show me how. I can't. I can't. Show me how. Work with me.
Then it'll bring you in a lot of situations where you've got to answer things. It's really fun. Anyway. Jesus. Okay, I won't do that.
[59:50] Jesus is sitting next to Peter. Watch James. I'm going to give him a test here. Watch. We're called to follow Christ.

And when our rulers act foolishly. We are called to be like Christ. Humble. Meek. Gentle. Merciful. Let's pray.
Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for this unusual subject, Father. That we. I don't think we come across in the New Testament in this manner.

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But it's relevant. And so, Father, I pray for each one here. Not only our thoughts toward government. But our thoughts toward authority.
Our thoughts toward our jobs. Even our thoughts toward you. Father, teach us. Help us to walk the unpopular road.
[60:48] Help us to walk the rare road of wisdom. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

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