

## **Ecclesiastes Part 5**

Marshall Stiver, November 21, 2014

Well, hello everyone. Welcome to the midsection of the country. It's quite cold in the midsection. It probably seems colder because we were so warm for so long prior to the cold snap. It's good to be back with you.

In our last study in Ecclesiastes, we made it through chapters 8 and 9 and in this study we're just going to go through chapter 10. So this is going to be a slightly shorter study. But then next time we'll cover chapters 11 and 12 to complete the book and I say that we'll do that, that's God willing. That's the intention at this time.

But let's do a brief recap of chapters 1 through 9 before we begin because there's been a considerable lapse of time since the last study in Ecclesiastes.

Previously we saw that even though Solomon had been give great wisdom by God and had been able to accomplish amazing things that set him apart from all the rest of mankind during his lifetime and certainly apart from mankind in our day today and yet he came to a point where he said "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity"

His life had become empty; it had become meaningless. It was like grasping for the wind.

Through pride, he came to compromise, and it's well chronicled. We went through that in the first study. But he began to compromise with God's law and to accept sin in his life. Therefore he got farther and farther away from God.

He began, actually, to hate life. That's what he spoke of. He began to hate life, although he came to himself in his later years, thankfully so, but he proved with his life that there is no satisfaction in living apart from God. And of course he used his life's experiences as a platform through which he could teach others in his observances and so on.

He came to see and then taught that God has power over everything that we experience in life and that He uses life's experiences to humble us. He came to see that very, very clearly.

He taught that no one will find contentment until they fully believe that and accept it – the fact that God is in control of our lives and that He uses our lives, the circumstances in our lives, to humble us.

We saw that God's gift is to be able to enjoy life's good moments and to be able to be content in the trying times. That's part of God's gift because we do have both types of environment to live in.

We also saw that Solomon would state sound biblical conclusions and then turn around and relate observances that he saw in life that seem to contradict the biblical principle. And the things that he would bring up are things that you or I could bring up

today. Why is it that sometimes righteous men suffer? Why do, sometimes, wicked men live long? Things that we can easily relate to and he did it for the purpose of getting us to think deeply.

At the end of Chapter 9 we concluded (and this is kind of the moral of the story of chapter 9) that we must humbly listen to God's wisdom and then walk by faith.

That's how we're able to enjoy whatever blessings God allows us in the midst of the various trials that He uses in our life to perfect us.

Now chapter 10 then is full of proverbs that show wisdom's value and the things that can hinder wisdom's effectiveness. And so, each of these proverbs spurs the student on, to be diligent, to be aware, to be thinking, so bear that in mind as we go through chapter 10.

Let's begin in chapter 10 and in verse 1 of Ecclesiastes.

**Ecclesiastes 10:1 Dead flies putrefy the perfumer's ointment, And cause it to give off a foul odor; So does a little folly to one respected for wisdom and honor.**

You know, a dead fly isn't a very big creature, but mixed in with that delicate perfume that perfumers create it can wreck what would have otherwise been a delightful, pleasant aroma, or odor.

And a little sin can foul a reputation in the exact same way. We think of the Days of Unleavened Bread and a little leaven leavens the whole lump. It's the same kind of a concept.

It's interesting that Solomon used a fly or flies in this proverb to represent sin, because Beelzebub, which is one of Satan's names, literally means prince of flies, prince of flies. He's the prince of those things that destroy a good ointment or a good reputation.

We don't need to turn to 2 Samuel 12:14 concerning David's sin with Bathsheba. But, of course, we know the sin was adultery and of course it was followed by murder, the murder of Uriah. And of course, these are not small sins when we think of comparing it to flies. But these sins were small in terms of how David lived the majority of his life. These weren't his everyday occurrences and in that sense these were like small things.

His reputation prior to this wasn't one that would have caused God's enemies to blaspheme, but what he did with Bathsheba and Uriah did cause God's enemies to blaspheme. It gave God a 'black eye' so to speak.

But this unexpected sin in his life did do that, didn't it? It caused them to blaspheme. Solomon's point is to stay close to God every day. In other words, we have to be a zealot; we have to be a zealot for wisdom. What does a zealot for wisdom look like? That person, very simply, looks like an overcomer. An overcomer is a zealot.

You know, Mr. Orchard in his recent sermon titled "Put Off the Old Man" spoke about how there is an intellectual side to repentance, but also that there is an emotional side to it. I thought that was a very effective way to begin to understand this better.

By emotion we mean a keen desire that comes from deep in our inner part of our being as we come to see ourselves as God sees us. That's where that deep emotion comes from, and emotion is a powerful thing.

Carnal emotion drives us to foul the ointment, doesn't it? Carnal emotion can drive us to do all kinds of negative things, those things that wreck our reputation, those things that bring dishonor to the Church of God, to God's name.

But the gut-level emotion involved in deep repentance drives us to zealously follow the lead of the Holy Spirit. It drives us too, to do the right thing to follow that lead, to do those things that bring glory and that bring honor to our Father and to our Elder Brother.

Our reputation, each of us personally, will be put upon the Father and Christ whom we represent. So that zeal, born of gut-level repentance, must be our aim.

Verse 2 here:

**:2 A wise man's heart is at his right hand, But a fool's heart at his left. :3 Even when a fool walks along the way, He lacks wisdom, And he shows everyone that he is a fool.**

The terms "right and left" don't have the political implications that they come with today, at least probably not, and I say that jokingly, obviously. But it probably literally has to do with mental dexterity. You know, if a wise man happens to be right handed, he has good control of that right hand. He's very dexterous with it.

Similarly, a wise man has good control of his mind, and it's something that is visible to others. A person who is right handed and has good control of it, that's very visible and so is the mind of a wise man.

But a fool's mind is visibly clumsy. The point again is to be diligent, to become very dexterous, very capable, with your mind. That begins by each of us getting to know who we are and again, that's a huge subject that's been covered in a couple of recent sermons that have been very, very useful for us and very thought provoking. Solomon was a thought-provoking person. That's a huge subject but that's where it begins.

Let's go to verse 4.

**:4 If the spirit of the ruler rises against you, Do not leave your post; For conciliation pacifies great offenses.**

This verse could be viewed in a couple of ways. First of all, it sounds a lot like what Solomon wrote in chapter 8 and in verse 3 where he said, "**Do not be hasty to go from his presence.**" He was referring to the physical king's presence.

So, if the authority figure is angry with an individual, with us, we are not to panic. That's what he's telling us, don't panic, don't leave. Humbly remain before the authority. That's a very, very important thing to do.

In Proverbs 15, verse 1, Solomon wrote, "**A soft answer turns away wrath.**" - a very sound principle again.

You know, when we cause anger with the authority figure a “yes sir, that was my fault, please let me fix my mistake” that sort of answer can turn away wrath. It can pacify anger.

Humble diligence is the point here. In this chapter, you’re going to see diligence pointed out time after time after time. Humble diligence is the point.

There is another way to view this verse which is also useful. Some believe that the spirit of the ruler is the influence of Satan. I think this is a very useful way to look at this verse.

When we allow the spirit (‘that spirit’ and I’m speaking of the spirit of this world, Satan’s spirit) to rise up against us and we thereby give in to sin, we need to stay where we are, provided that we’ve come to our self, provided that we are aware and are sorry for what we’ve done. We need to stay where we are.

Don’t try to escape from God’s presence with your feelings of guilt or whatever the case, not just because it’s impossible, (because it **is** impossible to escape from God. We cannot go anywhere that He cannot find us.) But the reason to stay there is because there is no spiritual healing in trying to run.

John wrote in I John 1:9, **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**

And Paul wrote in Hebrews 4, verse 6, **“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”**

These are the things that we must do. We must stay where we are and seek the help that we need at that time, the forgiveness.

Spiritual success, the healing, comes through humble diligence.

Let’s go to verse 5.

**:5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun, As an error proceeding from the ruler:**

This verse is more easily understood when we see the word “as” replaced with “by reason of” in other words: “There is an evil I have seen under the sun, by reason of an error proceeding from the ruler:”

Verse 6:

**:6 Folly is set in great dignity, While the rich sit in a lowly place. :7 I have seen servants on horses, While princes walk on the ground like servants.**

Now again the ruler, as Solomon often uses in the book of Ecclesiastes, could relate to any authority figure and when we’re reading it and want to apply it in our lives, it could relate to any authority figure.

The error would result from what we’d understand or what we would call bad judgment and perhaps it was deliberate. Perhaps it was deliberate, but bad judgment none the less. In other words it’s foolishness.

Fools are sometimes put in positions of power and their views, then, are given credibility because of the office that they hold, because of the position that they've been given. This of course affects the living environment for those under them. It's something that we can very easily relate to today. It is a common evil in this world.

You know, maybe they set immoral standards. We can look back in our own lifetimes within our own country and we can see times when that's been the case, immoral standards have been set. Maybe they encourage laziness or maybe they pervert justice.

Any foolishness that arises from a ruler's error is going to do one thing. It is going to demand more of the wise if they are going to remain wise. It's going to require more of them because it's going to put a stress in their lives, without any question.

And so what Solomon's describing here is a society that has been turned upside down due to inept leadership, a society where the wealth generators are suppressed, in order to elevate those who don't have a clue how to manage successfully. And again, living in that kind of an environment creates a tremendous stress on everybody.

A generation ago, these verses would have been interesting. You know, they've always been interesting to read but today they are very telling, aren't they. They are very telling, they are very sobering.

There is indeed nothing new under the sun. But Solomon brought this up because it's real and true and it demands more of us and it is incredibly relevant to each of us today. We have to remain wise and in tune, spiritually in tune, in this type of an environment.

Verse 8 of Ecclesiastes 10:

**:8 He who digs a pit will fall into it, And whoever breaks through a wall will be bitten by a serpent. :9 He who quarries stones may be hurt by them, And he who splits wood may be endangered by it. :10 If the ax is dull, And one does not sharpen the edge, Then he must use more strength; But wisdom brings success.**

These are very helpful verses for thinking people, people who really want to apply something, want to understand something. These aren't just platitudes. You know what a platitude is? I looked it up because I thought I knew but I wanted to make sure. It means a dull truism; it means a dull truism. These are not platitudes.

The fact is that this world is full of recoil action. You know, if we do a particular thing there is a very real possibility that another action may take place as a result of that.

- It's very possible to fall into a pit that you've dug.
- it's very possible to get snake-bit if you're in an environment where snakes are.
- It's very possible to get hurt while you're working.

Now all we have to do is to insert our own present living environment or our working environment or whatever the case and the condition is the same. Danger and difficulty is potentially everywhere.

So the wise, figuratively, have to keep their ax sharp. That's the point here. We've got to work hard at staying physically, and especially spiritually, sharp because there is no causeless curse. Those who have the curse come upon them, oftentimes those things can be avoided. We have to stay sharp enough to see those things coming.

And this is one of the principles that the wise live by. Again Solomon's putting the prod on the reader to learn from this, to take it seriously.

Verse 11:

**:11 A serpent may bite when *it is* not charmed; The babbler is no different.**

Babblers, as we well know, are a part of the world we live in, and babbling is something that can be a part of us or is a part of us from time to time because we know it's true. We know it's true. It can be one of our own afflictions if we allow it.

And, of course, babbler is someone whose tongue is always wagging and that doesn't mean in the best sort of way. It's wagging in a negative sort of way, in an unseemly sort of a way.

James said that the tongue was a fire, a world of iniquity. It boasts great things or whispers secret things and it's full of deadly poison.

Let's turn back to Proverbs chapter 16, here and we'll take a look at verse 28. One of the effects of a babbler's poison is described in this verse.

**Proverbs 16:28 A perverse man sows strife, And a whisperer separates the best of friends.**

That's an incredible statement. You think about that, and actually I've seen this happen before. I've seen this happen before and unfortunately I saw the thing reversed. But friends can be separated; best friends can be separated by a babbler's poison. And you know, that is an incredible thing when you consider the fact that you only have one best friend. We can have many good friends, but you're only going to have one best friend.

And a babbler's bite is like a snake's bite. It can have poison in it.

There's one thing that my dad taught my siblings and I at a very early age, living out on the prairies of South Dakota, was that unless you have something with you that you can safely dispatch a rattle snake with, you know, something that you could use, then avoid that snake. Walk around it, back up get away from it but don't go where it is.

And we should do the very same with a chronic babbler, or if it's our habit we should remove ourselves from that habit.

The next 4 verses in Ecclesiastes 10 are carry-on thoughts to verse 11. Let's go to verse 12.

**Ecclesiastes 10:12 The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious, But the lips of a fool shall swallow him up; 13 The words of his mouth begin with foolishness, And the end of his talk is raving madness.**

How is the fool swallowed up? Let's go to Proverbs chapter 10 and in verse 8.

**Proverbs 10:8 The wise in heart will receive commands, But a prating fool will fall.**

In this particular contrast, as the Proverbs many of them do, they contrast two different things; we see the prating or babbling fool won't receive commandments. In other words, they reject God's will in their lives; they reject the right way to do things.

Drop down to verse 14. It says:

**14 Wise people store up knowledge, But the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.**

The fool is swallowed up (again we're talking about how a fool gets swallowed up) he's swallowed up because they don't store up knowledge, they don't store up the knowledge of God especially, more specifically they don't store up the facts, the principles of God's law that they need to have in their mind and therefore his mind is revealed by his speech because it's not there. God's law is not in there, the facts, the truth are not in there.

He's full of opinions that seem right to him. This is one of the dangers of a babbler, because they can be very, very confident-appearing people. If we're not on guard, some of their self-centered opinions could begin to actually make sense to us. And I think we can easily relate to this.

You know, in the right environment, in the right situation at the right time some babbler could say to you or to me or a babbling idea could come to our own mind for that matter, the idea is, "Don't just get mad, get even." Now, we've probably all heard that said by someone at some time. Maybe we've said it.

But, you know, unrighteous anger and vengeance have no part with the wise, but when something like that is babbled right at the right moment, at a weak moment, we might really feel like saying, "Yeah! We do need to get even."

The caution here is that a fool's poison can swallow us up too, if we allow it. That's the point of what Solomon's driving at here. We have to be diligent; we have to be on edge.

What we're fleshing out in Ecclesiastes 10:12 is very relevant to each one of us.

Let's go to verse 32 here in Proverbs. There are numerous other Proverbs we could go to. This is enough at this point. Verse 32:

**Proverbs 10:32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, But the mouth of the wicked what is perverse.**

The mind speaks out of the mouth, we understand that. That's very well established. Therefore, the righteous say acceptable things because they think through the principles of God's law. That's where acceptable things come from. When they come out of our mouth, it's because we've been thinking about God's law.

But the foolish say whatever carnally emotion drives them to say because they haven't stored up the principles of God's law, they haven't stored up those commandments. They haven't learned to think through those things in their mind. And they are swallowed up; they're swallowed up in their own misery.

Let's go back to Ecclesiastes 10 now and verse 14. It says:

**Ecclesiastes 10:14 A fool also multiplies words. No man knows what is to be; Who can tell him what will be after him?**

And again, a fool, someone who is very self confident, can speak very confidently of the future, simply because they rely on their own resources and they've been deceived to believe they really know, that they really do have power over their own destiny, or whatever the case, which is the common man's mind. There's no question about that.

That's what we have to war against in our own minds. But they can sound very convincing, can't they? They can sound incredibly convincing. That's how many of them get elected. And again I say that tongue-in-cheek but it's really true isn't it?

Let's go to James chapter 4. James talks about this very thing. He makes it very clear. Chapter 4, verse 13, he says:

**James 4:13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit";**

Now, when James writes, "Come now", it would be much better understood if it were rendered "Pay attention now!" He's making a statement at the beginning here to get our attention, "Pay attention!"

You know, the self confident say these things. Often times (I know it's true) we tend to admire people with that sort of self confidence because they often do go to a certain place and make money, and so on and so forth. They make money in their ventures and sometimes they don't, but sometimes they do.

But we have to be very wary of the attitude that drives that self confidence. We want to have confidence in God not self confidence.

In Deuteronomy 8, Moses warned Israel of getting self confident when they entered the Promised Land, we talked about that in one of the previous studies, because they would indeed prosper. God blessed them greatly.

But He warned that they might get proud with their abundance and then forget God altogether and, of course that is what they did. They trusted in their own abilities, their own ability to say, "Well, I'm going to do thus and such next year", and so on and so forth, and then they began to disbelieve God. They failed in their unbelief.

Again, what we're fleshing out in Ecclesiastes is vitally relevant to us today because there is nothing new under the sun. This is how our world operates. It operates on self-confident people who think they have answers to everything.

Verse 14 here in James:

**James 4:14 whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.**

James' view of tomorrow is exactly what we learned earlier in Ecclesiastes. God alone has the complete power over our destiny and He uses life's experiences to humble us. That is the fact.

Verse 15:



**15** Instead you *ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”

**16** But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

And, you know, I can recall growing up in the Church as a small child, one of the things I remember from one of the sermons or sermonettes way back then was this thing of saying “God willing” and then understanding why we say it. When we learn to say it and we mean it that is a good thing because it is according to God’s will. It is not according to our own. Any other boastful, arrogant attitude is evil. And that’s something that Solomon learned during his life, through his life’s experiences.

Back to Ecclesiastes chapter 10 and we’ll pick it up here in verse 15.

**Ecclesiastes 10:15 The labor of fools wearies them, For they do not even know how to go to the city!**

The foolish are confused by the wanderings of their own carnally-driven minds. In today’s vernacular, instead of saying that they don’t know how to go to the city, that was an expression that Solomon used that would have been well understood in his day. It’s not difficult to grasp today. Today we might say “they don’t have enough sense to come in out of the rain”. We might say “they don’t know which way is up”. That’s what Solomon was driving at. That is the mind of a fool.

But regardless, brethren, we must be on guard of their babbling because it covers the earth like waters cover the sea. That’s the environment that we live in! We live in a babblers’, in a fool’s environment. We’re immersed in it, so it’s not a joke. It is not a joke. And their poison can bite us if we allow it.

Let’s go to verse 16 here.

**Ecclesiastes 10:16 Woe to you, O land, when your king *is* a child, And your princes feast in the morning! 17 Blessed are you, O land, when your king *is* the son of nobles, And your princes feast at the proper time— For strength and not for drunkenness!**

We could take these two verses as simple statements of fact, which they are, no question about that. We could also read them as admonitions to the wise, which is, I believe, the way we should read them, the weightier way we should read them.

Solomon’s reference to a king being a child is not so much in regard to age as it is to their behavior, to their immature, childish behavior.

Children need to be taught to understand and then to rightly apply God’s truth. That’s why they have parents, that’s why we have teachers, et cetera.

But when the king is the one who needs to be taught, then we have problems, we have real problems. Then it’s woe to his subjects because justice is going to go out the door.

Let’s go to Jeremiah chapter 21. There was a time that justice was to be administered within Israel. Morning was a time for dispensing justice. It wasn’t a time for partying. Verse 12. Jeremiah 21 verse 12:

**Jeremiah 21:12 \_ O house of David! Thus says the LORD: “Execute judgment in the morning; And deliver *him who is plundered* Out of the hand of the oppressor, (This is what you’re supposed to be thinking about, delivering those who are oppressed.) **Lest My fury go forth like fire And burn so that no one can quench *it*, Because of the evil of your doings.****

And so, again, it’s to do justice. That’s the first order of business. That’s the thing that God requires. He’s the one who sets the priorities and that’s what He said to do. So the morning was for dispensing justice on the kingdom.

Now let’s turn to Isaiah chapter 5. We’ll begin in verse 11. And again, it’s woe to the land where there isn’t justice, where that isn’t the practice. Verse 11 of Isaiah 5: **Isaiah 5:11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning, *That they may follow intoxicating drink; Who continue until night, till wine inflames them!* 12 The harp and the strings, The tambourine and flute, And wine are in their feasts; But they do not regard the work of the LORD, (You know, they have no regard for what their responsibilities were.) **Nor consider the operation of His hands.****

See, this is what happens, brethren, if the leadership hasn’t stored up or isn’t working at storing up, God’s commandments and the principles of His law, God’s knowledge and instead they foolishly follow their own carnal will. This is what happens, then woe to them and to those they rule over. There is no other alternative. The land that is ruled in this way will become chaotic and this nation, the nation that does this thing, follows this course of action, it will lose its freedom.

Verse 13, he says:

**13 Therefore my people have gone into captivity, Because *they have no knowledge; Their honorable men are famished, And their multitude dried up with thirst.***

So the foolish are swallowed up into captivity when they fail to store up, when they fail to therefore to think through the law of God and through the principles of it. They fail to act on the knowledge of God.

Verse 17 of Ecclesiastes 10 tells us the land is blessed when the opposite conditions are in the leadership. And so verse 17 is an automatic admonition to the wise. It’s an admonition to those who have the Holy Spirit.

Solomon wrote in verse 17 again, he said:

**17 Blessed are you, O land, when your king *is the son of nobles, And your princes feast at the proper time— For strength and not for drunkenness!***

Wise leaders are a blessing to those whom they serve. And the important thing for us to grasp here, brethren, is we are those leaders, in training. We are those leaders, first of all by our Father’s choice through the call He gave us and then secondly by our own choice to follow and to accept the sacrifice of our Savior and to receive the Holy Spirit. You know, it was our choice then. Now we are responsible to think and to act, to learn to think and act as our Father and as our Elder Brother do.

We, of all people, should see more than simple facts in verses 16 and 17. These are admonitions to godly leaders. And of course, as future, as we hope to be, future kings and priests of God to the nations that Jesus Christ will soon be ruling on this earth, all of the nations.

We have to be storing up God's commandments at this very present time and the principles that support them. Right now we have to be storing up those things in our minds, using them in our daily lives.

When we've thought about them enough that that's what comes out of our mouths, that's the automatic thing that comes out of our mouth, then, brethren, we are beginning to prepare to dispense justice in the mornings.

When we think through it enough and we let it become a part of us enough, that that's what comes out of our mouth the first thing, that's a very good indicator, very good. We're then preparing to be able to come to righteous judgments that will bring a blessing to those in our care, not woe but a great blessing.

And of course, what are we talking about? We're talking about the basics, aren't we? Prayer, study, meditation, deep thought, these things should be the priorities of our day. Now, yes, we do have other priorities. We have to make a living. But these supersede those things.

You know, we live in a world that is submerged in the babbling of fools where everyone has got their own best idea. It is so true.

Solomon is admonishing us to be awake and to be active in what we store up in our minds so that the babbling poison doesn't wreck our potential, because we're immersed in this whether we like it or not. We're immersed in a culture that's foolish. And so we have to be on guard, we have to be on edge.

Let's go to verse 18 of Ecclesiastes 10 now.

**Ecclesiastes 10:18 Because of laziness the building decays, And through idleness of hands the house leaks.**

Now this verse and the next one, for that matter, could seem out of place or they could seem disjointed to the previous verses, and, even, actually some commentaries indicate that. But this verse very clearly relates to the previous context – it's just a continuation of the previous context.

There is a principle here and it is that through laziness there will be ruin, there will be loss. That is a living principle. If there's laziness, there will be loss, no question about it.

Princes that feast in the morning don't have their priorities right. Instead of doing their assigned task, they get lazy and they take life easy, they party. The result is what? It's loss to the land, to the people of the land, to those people they are supposed to be serving and helping.

Those who let the poison of a babbler's mouth inflict them so as to get them off course will eventually not know which way is up, spiritually speaking.

Instead of truth guiding them, they'll be driven, they'll be driven by the carnal emotion and emotion really is the driver isn't it, the emotion of philosophy or the emotion of theory. And so they will suffer loss because those things replace God, don't they.

Those who allow themselves to get spiritually drowsy because of lazy prayer or study habits will wind up with a fly in what had been once sweet-smelling ointment, a fly in what was once a good reputation. It will be ruined. Their reputation will suffer loss.

The spiritually lazy won't stay in God's presence when they stumble. Instead they'll try to escape. That means that they won't confess their sins directly before God's throne and thereby be forgiven so that they can again grow and develop. Instead they suffer loss.

The lazy don't keep their ax sharp in the physical and in the spiritual sense and so, what do they do? They fall into pits or they encounter unnecessary hardships in their day-to-day life. See this verse is just continuation of the verses in front of it. Verse 19: **19 A feast is made for laughter, And wine makes merry; But money answers everything.**

So, how does this verse fit?

Well, we know there's nothing wrong with laughter and there's nothing wrong with wine or money. You know laughter is actually a very good thing for us. It's very healthy for us. And wine in moderation is very good for us. And money is very necessary for us. But if those things supersede something that is far more important, they're wrong.

Go back to Ecclesiastes chapter 7 briefly. Again, Solomon has already addressed these things but let's just refresh our minds with them. We'll begin in verse 2 of chapter 7.

**Ecclesiastes 7:2 Better to go to the house of mourning Than to go to the house of feasting, For that *is* the end of all men; And the living will take *it* to heart. 3 Sorrow *is* better than laughter, For by a sad countenance the heart is made better. 4 The heart of the wise *is* in the house of mourning, But the heart of fools *is* in the house of mirth. 5 *It is* better to hear the rebuke of the wise Than for a man to hear the song of fools. 6 For like the crackling of thorns under a pot, So *is* the laughter of the fool. This also is vanity.**

You know, mourning and sorrow produce a particular thing in an over-comer. It produces something very, very good. A humbled mind that will repent, you know it will come to abhor itself so that it can zealously change. This is something again we've begun to understand at a deeper level and this is a wonderful thing. So it really brings to light Solomon's wisdom here, doesn't it?

But that's what the babblers lack, and that's what a corrupt prince lacks.

There's nothing wrong with wine or laughter unless it's dulling our ax so that we can't stay spiritually sharp. That's when it's wrong.

So again, Solomon is spurring us on. He's spurring us on to think about it, to get our lives in order.

In Chapter 10 and verse 19 he also said “**But money answers everything**”. And so money is a really big deal. If laughter and wine is of high importance to a babbling prince, then money would rank as that person’s god, without a question. The idea that money solves everything is a great pit to fall into, a great pit.

Let’s go to Matthew chapter 19 and verses 21 and 22. You know, Christ talks about this about the danger of money and what it can do.

**Matthew 19:21 Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.**

This young man (we know the story well) he wanted to know how to attain eternal life, how could he have eternal life.

And he affirmed to Christ that indeed (Christ told him to keep thus and such of the commandments) and so he affirmed he had certainly kept the last 6 commandments, concerning his fellow man. But his love of money had become a false god; it had become a god with a little “g” instead of with a big.

So Solomon is spurring his students to think deeply, to really get to know ourselves so that we won’t come to ruin. And again, that’s a huge subject and it’s just good that we have the relevance of the previous sermons we’ve been hearing to add to this.

Let’s go back to Ecclesiastes now in chapter 10 and in verse 20. Solomon writes: **20 Do not curse the king, even in your thought; Do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom; For a bird of the air may carry your voice, And a bird in flight may tell the matter.**

One reading of this verse is to conclude that it’s unwise to say anything against, that is to curse or say anything contrary to those over us, to say something that shouldn’t be said because there might be repercussions if it’s found out. And that’s a valid reading of it.

But again, let’s go back to chapter 7 of Ecclesiastes here and we’ll read verses 21 and 22 because this relates to what Solomon has just said here in verse 20.

**Ecclesiastes 7:21 Also do not take to heart everything people say, Lest you hear your servant cursing you. 22 For many times, also, your own heart has known That even you have cursed others.**

People, you know all of us who are imperfect, which means all people, will say things about others. It certainly should not be our habit. It should be a slippage on our part, a moment of weakness.

There are times it’ll be directed to each of us and it could come from someone over us, it could be from our neighbor, it could be from our servant. This is a valid understanding here as well.

But the greatest commonality between these verses and verse 20 in chapter 10 goes a little deeper than just reading it casually.

Here Solomon says, don't take it to heart. In other words, don't take yourselves too seriously. In other words, don't be too proud of yourself, don't be too thin skinned because when we're proud of ourselves we are thinned skinned and we want to retaliate.

But what does that involve? Here's where we have to get off of auto pilot and begin to think.

Let's go back to Luke chapter 6 and in verses 35 and 36. Now Christ here again is speaking and it involves consciously developing the ability to think as God thinks. That is what we have to do. Christ says in verse 35:

**Luke 6:35 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. 36 Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.**

We, as Solomon pointed out, have done evil things toward others through our tongues, through things that we've said, and we all know it's true.

But then on the other hand, God, who does no evil of any kind, is merciful to the evil ones who give him no thanks in return. Brethren, that's got to become our way of thinking.

You know, God doesn't offend anybody and yet He is merciful to those who are thankless toward Him. That's got to become our way of thinking as well.

You know, God doesn't compromise with sin but He's very patient with us. His standards never change but He's incredibly patient with us. He cuts us slack, doesn't he, as we're in the process of overcoming.

That's how we're to consciously train ourselves to think toward others as well, to cut them slack, to control our thoughts, to begin to think as Jesus Christ and as our Father think.

Let's go to Romans chapter 15. Here is what practical application looks like in terms of this. Let's begin in verse 1 of chapter 15.

**Romans 15:1 We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.**

We all have to strive, through the power of the Holy Spirit in us, to be strong and to be patient with those who are weak at the moment, because we all know what it's like to be weak at the moment. And so we must strive diligently through the power of the Spirit to be strong and to be patient.

To carnally retaliate for what someone else has said at a weak moment might please us but only in a carnal sense, only in the wrong sense.

That is one of the babblers's philosophies, isn't it? It's a pit. And again, we're not talking about compromise. We're talking about patience and kindness.

If there's an immediate need to communicate, then we do that. If we've already been patient and there's a need to communicate we do that but we don't to get back. We do it to help.

Verse 2:

**2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.** (That's how God thinks.) **3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me."** **4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.** **5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another,**

In other words to think as God thinks, the way that Christ and the Father interact between each other, there are thoughts between each other – that's what He wants between each of us as His people. Let's begin verse 5 again.

**5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

So the purpose of training ourselves to think like God is so that we can all become like minded and we can have one mind and one mouth and thereby glorify our Father.

That is the purpose of it and that takes us back to what Solomon said in Ecclesiastes chapter 10 and in verse 20. He said "**Don't curse the king even in your thoughts.**" Don't even think about it.

It's the thought process that has to be changed. If we think it, it'll come out of our mouths, because that's what Christ said. Whatever is in there will come out. And so the concept is, to change our thinking process.

If our thoughts are pure, only the right words will come out for the occasion. That's what will be there. So we have to learn to think through God's word and the principles of it, instead of thinking through the whimsical mind of a babbler.

Solomon's words in Chapter 10 are intended, brethren, to spur us on because we live in a babbler's society. We live in a foolish world, a world that rejects God. And so Solomon is spurring us on in thought and action to a successful God-centered life.