

# The Way of Wisdom

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] The book of Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes 9, and we pick up the reading in verse 13, and we'll read on through chapter 10.

I also saw under the sun this example of wisdom that greatly impressed me. There was once a small city with only a few people in it, and a powerful king came against it.

Surrounded it, and built huge siege works against it. Now there lived in that city a man poor but wise, and he saved the city by his wisdom.

But nobody remembered that poor man. So I said, wisdom is better than strength. But the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are no longer heeded.

The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools. Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

[1:10] As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor. The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of a fool to the left.

Even as he walks along the road, the fool lacks sense and shows everyone how stupid he is. If a ruler's anger rises against you, do not leave your post.

Calmness can lay great airs to rest. There is an evil I have seen under the sun, the sort of error that arises from a ruler.

Fools are put in many high positions, while the rich occupy the low ones. I have seen slaves on horseback, while princes go on foot like slaves.

Whoever digs a pit may fall into it. Whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake.

Whoever quarries stones may be injured by them.

[2:18] Whoever splits logs may be endangered by them. If the axe is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed. But skill will bring success.

If a snake bites before it is charmed, there's no profit for the charmer. Words from a wise man's mouth are gracious. But a fool is consumed by his own lips.

At the beginning, his words are folly. At the end, they are wicked madness. And the fool multiplies words. No one knows what is coming.

Who can tell him what will happen after him? A fool's work wearies him. He does not know the way to town. Woe to you, O land, whose king was a servant, and whose princes feast in the morning.

Blessed are you, O land, whose king is of noble birth, and whose princes eat at a proper time for strength and not for drunkenness.

[3:26] If a man is lazy, the rafters sag. If his hands are idle, the house leaks. A feast is made for laughter, and wine makes life merry.

But money is the answer for everything. Do not revile the king, even in your thoughts, or curse the rich in your bedroom, because a bird of the air may carry your words, and a bird on the wing may report what you say.

Are you a Christian here today? If you are, then you are a son of a king, or a daughter of the king. And in ancient Israel, it was the privilege of the princes and the princesses, especially the princes, those who would be responsible to rule.

They would receive extra teaching. They would receive the best wisdom the land could offer to understand, to help them understand how they should rule, how they should live.

And that's the part that wisdom plays for you and I. We are sons and daughters of the king. We are living in a land, in a world, that does not appreciate God's wisdom.

[4:42] And it's a very foolish world. And we need to learn and know how to live in it. And so we come into the classroom, and Coleth is our teacher, and we sit around.

And today he's going to teach like an old Israelite sage would teach in Proverbs. So this evening we have a bunch of loosely related observations and stories that teach us how to live in an unfair, unjust, frustrating world.

Coleth is going to teach us how to live in a world where everything is upside down, where the fools outnumber the wise. And the biggest fools often congregate like mountain goats to the pinnacles of power where they rule, where we choose to buy MasterCard, because Peyton Manning tells us to. And it's foolishness, but we have to live in this world. So how do you live in a world that doesn't appreciate wisdom? Coleth is going to teach us that tonight.

We can discern two major points from the section that I had read to you. The first is this, that wisdom has its drawbacks. And the second is that wisdom is still better than folly.

[5:59] Despite that, wisdom is still better than folly. So use wisdom. First, he's going to tell us about wisdom's drawbacks. Coleth never hides the fact that wisdom does have its drawbacks, that it's not the end all and be all of everything.

It helps us to navigate the world, but it is not our savior. And as he said in chapter one, for with much wisdom comes much sorrow.

So if you have a lot of wisdom, it actually compiles and adds to the frustration. And so remember that if you're looking at the big picture of Ecclesiastes, the whole book is pointing us forward to Jesus.

And it does it very obscurely. It does it in silence by saying, you know what, we need something better than what we have. We need something else. Wisdom is good, but we need a savior.

And Jesus is that savior. Well, Coleth begins his exposition of wisdom's drawbacks with a little story. So let's look at chapter nine, verse 13.

[7:07] I also saw under the sun this example of wisdom that greatly impressed me. There was once a small city with only a few people in it, and a powerful king came against it, surrounded it, and built huge siege works against it.

So do you have the picture? We have a small city, a few people, a great king, and huge siege works. We don't know if Coleth is actually talking about an actual city, an actual event, or just something that happens, an event that happens from time to time.

It really doesn't matter. The lesson that he's teaching us matters. So, small city, big king. What happens? Verse 15. Now there lived in that city a poor man, but wise.

And he saved the city by his wisdom. So, the small city had a superhero, and they didn't even know it. He wasn't rich. So he wasn't like Bruce Wayne, a.k.a.

Batman, who has billions of dollars, who saves Gotham City with brute force, and the Batmobile, and lots of money. He wasn't your typical superhero at all.

[8:19] He was wise man. He was poor. And his costume was blue jeans and a t-shirt. And yet, he rescued the city against great odds.

And how did he do it? He did it with wisdom. So wise man saves the tiny city against the great king. Yay, wisdom is great. But we didn't finish verse 15.

But nobody remembered that poor man. So there was no parade. There was no statue. There was no monument in his honor. There were no TV interviews or book deals.

They forgot the wise man. They forgot him. And I told you at the beginning of this whole series that Cole likes to kiss us in the face and then punch us in the stomach.

And this is another place where he does this. You're expecting him to join the cheer squad on wisdom and say how great wisdom is. But he simply says, but nobody remembered that poor man.

[9:22] So what should we think about that incident? What should we think about that situation?

Verse 16 tells us, So I said, wisdom is better than strength. But the poor man's wisdom is despised and his words are no longer heeded.

Yes, brains are better than brawn. We have that saying and it's true. But you know what? This world still worships the athlete. Now, do you know who won the Nobel Prize for medicine this past year?

Very important award. Very significant. Her name was Elizabeth Blackburn. And she discovered how chromosomes can actually divide inside the cell without falling apart.

It's a lot more complicated than that. But she discovered how this works. And this is really important to know how to treat cancers, how to do that kind of research.

So she's important. But no one really knows who Elizabeth Blackburn is. Now, who won? And maybe some of you don't even know this, but I had to come up with something. Who knows who

won the NBA championship last year?

[10:31] And it might take a little thinking, but you could probably come up with, it was the Lakers. They won in seven games and it was a big deal. And everyone remembers that. But no one remembers Elizabeth.

Wisdom is better than strength. Yet wisdom is despised in this world. And see, that's wisdom's first drawback. It's unpopular. It's unpopular.

So young people, don't expect to go to school and have your friends and your peers respect you if you're wise. If you respect your teachers and act responsibly.

Don't expect them to think that you're really cool. If you shun evil and you fear the Lord, it's not going to happen. Wisdom has never won a popularity contest in this world.

But, you know what? Wisdom is still better than folly. It's unpopular, but it's still better. Coeth goes on in verse 17. The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools.

[11:35] Now, this is a very typical Proverbs-like proverb. You could, it sounds like it could come right out of that book. The wise use quiet words, but politicians, they bluster.

People should listen to the words, the quiet words of the wise. But do they? No. Did you catch what the king was called? He was called the ruler of fools.

He's not only a fool, but he rules over fools. And so, he blusters, and he shouts, and he uses empty language, and with lots of flair, and with no substance, and his people like it that way.

Sounds like us, huh? We like our politicians to be loud and boisterous, and we vote for fools because we are fools. And the quiet words of the wise are better, but the blustering, incessant words of the politician usually drowned out the wise man's words.

So wisdom is, he goes on, wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good. So here, Colette does it to us again.

[12:51] Yes, wisdom is stronger than the strength of nations, but there's a stinger in the tail. It only takes one bungler, one fool, to mess up a lot of good.

So wisdom, for all of its strength, and all of its power, is vulnerable to one fool. So think of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon.

His father, Solomon, gave him a great kingdom. It was very wealthy. It was very organized. It was a military power.

It had, it was at peace with its neighbors. But what happened? Well, it fell apart in Rehoboam's hands. The kingdom was stripped from him, and we know God's reasons behind that.

It was, he was judging Solomon. But how, from the human perspective, did that happen? Was it a military defeat? No, no, it wasn't that.

[13:51] Was it an economic disaster that swamped the land and debt? No, it wasn't that. It was a wisdom problem. There was a lack of wisdom. So Rehoboam, he listened to his foolish young counselors instead of the wise old counselors.

He lacked wisdom, and because of that, he destroyed his father's work. All of Solomon's wisdom was undone by one fool. Well, Coeth, he's going on.

He's telling us the drawbacks of wisdom. As dead flies give perfume, a bad smell. So little folly outweighs wisdom and honor. So wisdom isn't, it's unpopular.

He's already said that. One fool can destroy wisdom's work. Even one of the wisest men can have their work destroyed by a fool. Those are external problems.

They come from the outside. But this one tells us of an internal, a personal problem that comes about because you're wise. So if you are a wise man, your little folly is a lot more noticeable than the fool's little folly.

[15:07] So just like the little gnats, that's the word, gnats, little flies, they get into the giant vat of perfume and they can cause that perfume to go rancid, to ferment, to stink.

And so in the same way, the little folly that the wise man has, just a little bit, it can totally ruin his reputation. So think about it this way.

If you're a fool and you have a little bit of folly in one area, does anyone notice? No, no one notices. I mean, it's like ketchup on a red shirt. It's not a big deal. But if you're a wise man, your little bit of folly is like ketchup on a white shirt.

It could just be a little stain. And yet everyone sees it. So do you get the picture? Do you see the problem? If you are wise, it's harder for you.

Everyone is expecting more. It makes it harder on you. There's a proverb that says, the biggest trees gather the most wind. If you are a wise man, you're going to get a lot more bluster from the fools just for your little folly.

[16:18] So you have to be extra careful because one little slip and your reputation will be ruined. Every eye is on you. And no one cuts you any slack.

So, that's called less advertisement for wisdom. How does that sound for appealing? Do you want to be unpopular? Do you want your work to be very vulnerable?

Do you want so no one cuts you any slack in your life? Then be wise today. Wisdom has its drawbacks.

And he's just pointing them out to us. Now, the rest of the chapter, the rest of chapter 10, Coeth is going to say, you know what? Despite those drawbacks, despite those problems that they bring you, wisdom is still better than folly.

So use wisdom. The drawbacks of wisdom, they're significant. You have to think about them and you have to deal with them. But whatever the drawbacks might be, wisdom is still so much better than folly.

[17:22] So use wisdom. Now, I've organized these proverbs into five major headings. And these aren't perfect categories by any means. If you don't like them, I don't like them any more than you do.

But hopefully, they'll help you organize, help us organize our thoughts as we kind of go through. There is a loose structure to all these proverbs. But as soon as, like, I nailed down some categories that you could put them in, there was one proverb that stuck out like a sore thumb.

So these are just some things to go off of. First, why is wisdom better than folly? Well, because wisdom guides you in the way to go. Wisdom guides you in the way to go.

So look at verse 2. The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left. First notice, where does wisdom begin? It begins in the heart.

Proverbs 4.23, Above all else, above everything else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Parents, are you teaching your children that?

[18:27] It's important for them to know. Children, your life begins in your heart. Your heart is going to make you or break you. And that's where wisdom begins.

So the heart of the wise inclines to the right and the fool to the left. Well, what does that mean? Well, it's referring metaphorically to the right hand and the left hand.

The right hand or the left hand. He's saying the wise use their right hand. The fools use their left hand. Now, for all you lefties out there, this is written from a right-handed world's perspective, okay? And you know that, that this is a right-handed world, whether you like it or not. So, from our perspective, from us righties' perspective, the right hand is the hand of strength and the left hand is the hand of weakness.

And so, the right hand's strong, the left hand's weak. Now, when I shoot a basketball, let me see, with my left hand, it's really terrible. You know that, you know what it's like to throw a baseball, shoot a basketball, if you're right-handed with your left hand.

[19:36] It's terrible. But, when I shoot a basketball with my right hand, I'm still terrible, but I'm not, I'm not as terrible. I can at least show some nice form.

It's going to look like a nice arch instead of a shot put kind of thing. So, all you know, all you righties know that. If you're right with your left hand, it looks like you need to go back to second grade.

It looks like you never got past that point. So, do you get the picture? The wise man, his heart inclines him to strength, to grace, to ability.

But the left hand, the fool, he goes to the left hand. He goes the awkward way, the ungraceful way, the weak way. The wise choose the best way to do something.

And the fool, on the other hand, if they can find a worse way to doing something, they'll find it. They want the most awkward, the least graceful, the most harmful way of doing something.

[20:37] If there's a worse way to do it, they'll find it. So, there's the fool. His heart inclines him in that direction. And the result is that his folly is obvious to everyone.

Look at verse 3. Even as he walks along the road, the fool lacks sense and shows everyone how stupid he is. The fool is so stupid that he can't walk down the street without broadcasting to everyone how stupid he is.

And so, you've heard this proverb, better to remain silent and to be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt. And that's true. That's true.

But what Koholeth is saying is there are some times that fools don't even need to open their mouths. And everyone knows what a fool they are. All they have to do is walk down the road to the grocery store and everyone will see it.

But wisdom, on the other hand, it guides you in the way to go. And verse 4 is an example. It gives us an example of how wisdom guides you. If a ruler's anger arises against you, do not leave your post.

[21:46] Calmness can lay great errors to rest. So, here's the scenario. You're the assistant to the vice, whatever, the vice president.

You're the assistant to the branch manager and you make a really big mistake. Now, what does the fool do? I mean, the manager's angry. The manager is yelling and screaming.

So, what does the fool do? The fool flies, right? I mean, he pulls the door off the airplane and he slides down and he's out of there. But, what does the wise man do?

He stays put. He remains calm. And his wisdom directs his heart in the way that he should go. And what is the result?

Well, bygones become bygones and great errors are laid to rest. His errors, his big mistake is forgotten. And, surprisingly enough, what happens is if he is wise, his stock in the company actually goes up.

[22:51] He becomes more important. Wisdom is better than folly because it will guide you in the way you should go. Now, in verse 5, Coleth gives us a second reason why wisdom is so much better than folly.

Verse 5, there is an evil I have seen under the sun, the sort of error that arises from a ruler. Fools are put in many high positions while the rich occupy the low ones.

I have seen slaves on horseback while princes go on foot like slaves. Now, here is the second reason is that folly destroys society. It destroys society.

Coleth says, I have seen an evil under the sun. It comes from presidents. It comes from kings. It comes from congressmen. And, what is the evil? It is putting fools in positions of power and influence and influence.

And, it is putting the rich, the skilled in low positions. It is leaving the people with skill in the places where they will just rot away doing hardly any good. And, the basic mistake is acting like everyone is equal.

[23:57] Everyone, there is no difference between people. It is acting like anyone can do any job. It is egalitarianism is the word. And, egalitarianism says we should treat everyone, we should act like everyone is equal.

Society, we should roll a paver over and just level it. And, for maybe for some things that is okay. And, it is probably right.

But, when it comes to organizing society, to ruling over people, to putting people in power, Coleth calls it an evil. Douglas Wilson hit it on the head when he said this, but, though all men stand before the judgment seat of Christ on the same footing, and although our courts of justice should reflect that same impartiality, the fact remains that some men and women are superior to other men and women.

Some are noble and some are not. Some are intelligent and some are not. While all bear the image of God, it is not the case that everyone has the same gifts or abilities.

It is a particular or a peculiar folly of some nobles to deny the obvious and to seek to enthrone the common man in all of the name of the people.

[25:17] In its modern manifestation, we call it democracy. And, in its ancient garb, Solomon called it foolishness. It's foolish to think that everyone should have an equal say in how things should be done.

It's foolish for Congress, and this is what I mean, it's foolish for Congress to rule on the basis of opinion polls, to ask the massive amount of people what they think they should do.

So, Warren Buffett, the investor, the second or third richest man in the world, he does not ask me, he doesn't take an opinion poll and ask us what we think and how he should invest his money.

And, Bill Gates doesn't come to my house and ask me what I should do with, or what he should do with computers and his business. Why? Because I'm a fool in those areas.

And it would be foolish for him to ask. And, it's foolish for our leaders to legislate based on opinion polls. When they don't use wisdom, instead they use opinion, the public opinion of men, that's their folly.

[26:26] And the very fact that we want them to do that is our folly. Wisdom is better than folly.

Well, what happens when you put the wise in low positions, the rich in low positions, and you put slaves on horseback and princes are walking on foot? Well, society's order is destroyed.

God's wisdom falls in the street. God's order is flipped on its head and foolishness reigns. So, what's the point of all this?

Wisdom has its drawbacks. Yes. But, wisdom is still better than folly. And, brothers and sisters, when we think about politics, and we all should, and we all do, we should use wisdom.

We can't be caught up in this world's particular brand of folly that's current today. We have to listen to God's word and be wise.

[27:30] The third reason wisdom is better than folly is found in verses 8 through 11, and it's this. Wisdom brings success. Wisdom brings success. In verses 8 and 9, he gives four illustrations of everyday work and the everyday dangers of work.

Whoever digs a pit may fall into it. Moreover, whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake. Whoever quarries stones may be injured by them.

Whoever splits logs may be endangered by them. The point is, the wise man goes to work and he gives his work some thought. He says, you know what, if I break through this wall, if I'm moving this wall and I'm breaking through it, there might be a snake in there and I might, I should probably take care so it doesn't bite me.

Well, the fool, he doesn't think about that. He just breaks through the wall, he gets bit by the snake and then he curses the snake for biting him. And then the wise men and the fool go out chopping trees or quarrying stone or whatever the danger might be and there they are chopping down trees and the wise man thinks, you know what, one of these trees might fall on me.

One of these stones might fall on me. I better be careful. But the fool doesn't think about that. So he chops down the tree and it falls on top of him and he curses the tree for falling on him and it's folly.

[28:57] A little thoughtfulness, the point is, is a little thoughtfulness, just a little forethought will keep you safe. It will give you success in your work. Wisdom brings success.

Verse 10, if the axe is dull and the edge unsharpened, more strength is needed, but skill will bring success. So there we are out in the forest again and the fool is chopping down this tree.

But he hasn't taken any time, he hasn't taken a little bit of time to sharpen his axe. And so, you know, he's really, he has to go at it. He has to go to town to just bring down one tree. But the wise man, he takes 10 minutes and he sharpens his axe and his work goes much better.

What is he saying? Young people, a little thoughtfulness will save you a lot of energy. So change the oil in your car, men.

And when the leak is small, that's when you fix it. You don't wait until it's big and then you have to tear out your whole floor. A little thought will save you a lot of energy.

[30:05] So teenagers, think about this. Prepare now for the rest of your life. Sharpen your minds before you go to work. You don't want to go through life with this dull axe where everything is so hard because you haven't thought about it.

Use wisdom and it will save you a lot of heartache and a lot of hardship later on. And that kind of seems to be the next point with the next proverb.

If a snake bites you before its charm, there is no profit for the charmer. And the point is if you're in a hurry to make some money off of your snake charming business and you have the snake and you go out there without it properly charmed, don't be surprised when it bites you.

And don't be surprised when people don't want to pay you for watching you get bit by a snake. It's... It is supposed to be comical. If you rush into things, if that's how you do life, you're rushing into things, don't be surprised when things turn on you and they bite you and you're left worse for the effort.

Take your time. Think and things will go better. Wisdom brings success. Folly doesn't. So use wisdom.

[31:23] So Koloeth gives us the fourth reason wisdom is better than folly. Wisdom gives you self-control. It gives you self-control self-control. And the first place we see it is self-control in your speech.

Look at verse 12. Words from a wise man are gracious. Or probably better, I think the ESV has it translated as it wins them favor. So the wise man thinks about his words, he gives some thought to it, and then his words do him good.

They win him favor. But look at the fool. The fool is not so. A fool is consumed by his own lips. At the beginning, his words are folly, and at the end, they're wicked madness, and the fool multiplies words.

So the fool has no control over his lips. He's always talking. He's always eating. And what is he eating? You see it there, he's eating himself.

He's consuming his own life with all of these words. And he goes from bad to worse. He's not satisfied with being where he has to get in a worse situation. And so it begins his folly, and then it ends up into wicked madness, into insanity.

[32 : 38] So the fool multiplies words. And he loves to talk about things that no one knows about, especially him. And that's the point of verse 14. No one knows what is coming, and who can tell what will happen after him.

The answer is, what's the answer to that question? Only God can do those things. Only God knows the future. But here is the fool, and he thinks he's God.

He thinks he knows what's going to happen in the future. And so there he is, talking, talking, talking. The fool disagrees with God, and he thinks he knows as much as God does. The fool always knows what will happen.

The fool can predict the future. And he loves to talk about things that no one knows about, especially him. And the fool just can't stop himself.

He has no self-control. He just goes on and on until he wears himself out. A fool's work, that's all his talking, wearies him.

[33 : 38] He does not know the way to town. So he puts in a good day's work at talking. But the reality is that he doesn't even know the way to town.

And that's the old Israelite way of saying he's not smart enough to come in out of the rain. Maybe you've heard of that. See, for all of his words, the fool is dumb.

That's the point. He's dumb. He's dumb as a box of rocks, and no amount of talking can cover it up. And that's what the fool thinks. He gets himself into trouble, and he thinks he can talk his way out of it.

So he talks and talks and talks, and he goes from bad to worse, and his folly becomes evident to everyone. James says, be slow to speak and quick to listen.

So is that you? Or are you a fortune teller? Talking a lot about things that you don't know about, talking a lot about things that aren't important, aren't necessary.

[34 : 40] We would be much wiser if we made our words go through those three sieves. Is it true? Is it kind?

Is it necessary? Let your words percolate through those three sieves. If we don't, aren't we just multiplying words like a fool? Most of the time we are.

Well, wisdom also teaches self control to rulers and teaches them how to rule. Woe to you, O land. Verse 16, woe to you, O land, whose king was a servant and whose princes feast in the morning.

Coalesces, woe to the land who has an untrained, unprepared king. He's a servant who was a servant, so he didn't have any education, he wasn't ready for the job, he somehow got it, and there he is, and he puts in princes who live for physical pleasures, that's the point, and the land's cursed. Why? Because the king doesn't know what he's doing, and all of his princes, they are so drunk, they're living for physical pleasures, they're ruling for themselves, they're not ruling for the good of the people, they're not ruling for the good of the land.

[35 : 56] And that's probably more like our nation than we would want to know, isn't it? But wisdom brings blessing. Wisdom brings blessing. Blessed are you, O land, whose king is of noble birth, and whose princes eat at proper time for strength, and not for drunkenness.

See, when a king had a noble birth, he had been prepared to rule. He understood what rule was all about. He was prepared from birth for that position.

And so the king's princes are different. They're eating and drinking in a self-controlled way. They're doing it for strength, not for drunkenness. So they use their eating and drinking for the right reasons to help them rule.

Now, fools eat and they drink for the wrong reasons. And that's why so many people will read Ecclesiastes and become all excited when the fact is because they think that it's opening the door to eating and drinking as much as you want.

And that's not the case. Yes, eat your food with gladness, drink your wine with a joyful heart, but never to gluttony, never to drunkenness because that's folly. It's foolish.

[37 : 14] And so use wisdom instead. Now, the fifth reason, this is the last reason. Why is wisdom better than folly? Because wisdom helps you to enjoy life.

It helps you to enjoy life. If a man is lazy, the rafters sag. If his hands are idle, the house leaks. See, the lazy are never in a position to enjoy life because their house, their life, is always falling down on top of them, falling apart over them.

And it's literal, it's metaphorical, you can take it either way. They don't put the time and the energy into their life, into their house, to their family, and what happens?

Their relationships fall apart. They can't enjoy life because their life is a mess. So if you want to enjoy life, it's going to take energy.

Men, you can't sit on the couch and fade into the fabric and expect to have a happy wife, a happy relationship, a happy marriage. And you can't mindlessly surf the internet for hours or waste your time for hours on end doing who knows what, and expect your children to love and respect you, to have an enjoyable family life, because enjoying life takes work, and wisdom understands that.

[38 : 39] Well, verse 19 looks at it in a different way. A feast is made for laughter, and wine makes life merry, but money is the answer for everything. Now, there's a life verse for you, and you can put those in your wallet.

Now, so many people try to come in, so many preachers and commentators, they try to come in and rescue Cole from himself, rescue, or, like, he's made this grave mistake by putting this here, or they kill this proverb with a thousand clarifications.

So they're saying, you know, he doesn't mean this, and you know, money really isn't the answer for everything, and it can't save you, and it can't make you happy, and on and on and on they go, they kill it with a thousand, it doesn't mean this, it doesn't mean this, but of course, I think if you've read Ecclesiastes, of course it doesn't mean those things.

It can't make you happy, and no one who's read Ecclesiastes 5 and 6, which talk about this rich man who is miserable, and it would have been better for him never to have been born, that they could ever think that money can make you happy.

That's not his point. So let's not kill it with a thousand clarifications, and simply ask, what does it mean? Well, I think if we look at this, and I think it helps understand that in that little phrase, but money, and the third phrase, but money, is the answer for everything, that word but can easily, just as easily be translated, and money.

[40 : 20] So this isn't necessarily a contradiction, the first two things, and then the third. This is basically saying, you know what, feasting is good, wine is good, and money answers those desires.

If you want to have some food to enjoy, you're going to need money. If you're going to want to sit on the porch with your sweetie, with a glass of wine, you're going to need some money.

to buy the wine. If you want to enjoy life, money helps. And that's all it's saying. If you're going to enjoy life, it's going to take work.

You're going to have to go and leave the cave and kill something and bring it home to eat if you want something to eat. If you want to go on dates with your wife that cost some money, then you're going to need some money saved up for it.

You're going to have to be careful. And that doesn't sound spiritual. It doesn't. Maybe it doesn't. But that's the way God's world works, whether we like it or not.

[41 : 25] And wisdom sees that. And wisdom says, now think about that. If you want to eat and drink and enjoy your life, you're going to need some money.

Now this final proverb tells us not to stick our foot in our mouth. Do not revile the king even in your thoughts or curse the rich in your bedroom because a bird of the air may carry your words and a bird on the wing may report what you say.

Now this comes at the very end because this is probably the greatest temptation that the wise have and it's to complain about the foolishness of the rich.

It's to complain about the foolishness of those who are in charge. And so he says be careful. I mean it's so obvious sometimes when fools are foolish.

I mean he's already said all they have to do is walk down the road and you can see how foolish they are and so it becomes really easy to complain. And so there you are at work and your manager is a fool and it is so easy to turn to your buddy and to say something to complain about him.

[42:42] coalesce just says don't do it. Don't do it. Don't even think about doing it. Don't let it enter your mind. Don't even whisper it to a co-worker because a bird of the air will pass by as sure as can be and the manager will hear, the boss will hear, they'll pass the complaint along and you'll be in hot water.

And it's hard to enjoy life when you've made enemies with those who are in charge by your foolish talk. someone once said, if you want to let everyone in the whole world know your secret, what do you do?

You take your best friend out into the field with no one around, you swear him to secrecy, and then you whisper in his ear your secret. And by the time you get home, everyone will know.

And it's true. Because you never know when a little birdie might fly by and take your secret. it. So what do we do with our frustrations?

Who can we talk about? Or who can we talk to about our frustrations? Our exasperated hearts.

Because if we're going to live as wise men in a foolish world, it's going to lead to frustration.

[43:59] It's going to lead to exasperation. So where do we go? Well, we can talk to Jesus about it. And this isn't just tacked on here at the end.

How are we going to keep our sanity in this world if we can't talk to Jesus about the things that we've seen, the frustrations that we've had, the foolishness that we've had to live through?

Well, we talk to Jesus because he understands the frustrations that we face because he was here.

And he was the wisest of all men. And he was confronted with the greatest amount of foolishness.

And he was the poor, wise man that saved people, that saved a city, and then was forgotten. So they celebrated him as he came into Jerusalem.

And the fickle crowds turned, and they crucified him by the end of the week. week. And so Jesus understands what it is to be forgotten, to have your wisdom scorned, and he can help us.

[45:11] So, brothers and sisters, when you're frustrated with just the sheer stupidity of the world, think of Jesus who suffered through it, and who overcame it. Who overcame it.

He has grace for you. He has wisdom for you. Because he was able to perfectly answer all of the people that talked to him. All the foolish comments he received, he was able to talk to.

He has grace, he has wisdom. And James said at the very last, or we're going to come here, and he says this, if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

So as you're looking at this passage, and you say, I need wisdom. I talk too much at work. I need wisdom. Ask God, and he will give it to you without finding fault.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we do feel ourselves to be children needing to be taught. And what a privilege it is to be able to sit at your feet and hear words of wisdom from you.

[46:22] And thank you that this wisdom is not theoretical. practical. It's not something that we can relate to, but it is so practical for living in this world.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you are the vine and we are the branches, and that if we abide in you and you abide in us, then we will bear much fruit. And so we ask that we would bear the fruit of wisdom in our lives.

Wisdom in the face of frustration, wisdom in the face of sin and folly. And we thank you most of all that the Lord Jesus is coming back, that he overcame this world, that he is now ruling on high, and he is coming back to put an end to all folly and all foolishness, all the sinful government of men, and that we will rule and reign with him.

Thank you that you are preparing for us an eternal weight of glory that we can't even think of, imagine, or understand. Thank you that you have promised it, and it is yes and amen in Jesus Christ.

So I pray that you would keep giving us hope, sustain our faith as we walk through this world. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.