



ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

Ecclesiastes
7:1-10

Pastor's Notes

Chapters 7 through 12 are much more rapid moving. As we will see, there will be pithy phrases of wisdom—back to back.

V. 1a This is the 8th Commandment, is it not?

V. 1b Death is better than birth? That seems backwards. However, birth marks the beginning of pain, sin, and toil. However, death marks the end of pain, sin, and toil.

V. 2 Funerals are better than parties. Why? Well, generally speaking, funerals are grounded in reality, whereas parties are not. This is why it is good for children to go to funerals—funerals help children and youth understand the realities of life. As stated by Bollhagen, "Parents are not doing their children any favors when they protect them from funerals and other hard times in life." Funerals are healthy events to teach children and youth. They sober mankind up.

V. 3 Let's think of this verse this way: why do bad things happen to good people? Or, why do good things happen to bad people? The latter is much more grounded in reality. Life is tough; therefore, when small good things happen, it can only give us a smile.

V. 4 Placing death in the mind, helps keep everything in perspective. It not only keeps us humble but keeps us longing for grace and the hope of Christ. However, always wanting to be entertained is foolish—it is like putting a head in the sand toward the realities of life.

V. 5 See Proverbs 27:6. A wise person will say 'thank you' to a wise rebuke.

V. 6 Fools make useless noise. Ever seen a foolish movie, heard a silly song, or been in a useless conversation of fools? Sound and noise come forth, but nothing is being said. Yada, yada, yada.

V. 7 Want to become a fool? Extort people—take from them, and you will become a fool. Reception

of a bribe corrupts the heart too. Isn't this what we are learning from Solomon? When we go the easy way of sin, we become fools. However, when we remain steadfast and do things with integrity, we become wise. Pain has a way of making a person wise, whereas, ease has a way of making them a fool.

V. 8 The proud spirit always leads to problems; however, the patient spirit is slow to anger, slow to make triggered responses, and slow to jump to conclusions.

V. 9 From Bollhagen, "A Christian can look at life realistically and not be too quick to get angry or frustrated because he can anticipate that sinful people [- that includes Christians—] will do nasty things. [In other words,] it is hard to fly off the handle over words and actions [when] one has come to expect [it] . . . Acknowledgment of one's sins and total inadequacy before God is the only way to honest dialog, confession, absolution, and resolution. Acknowledgment that the world is every bit as bad as Ecclesiastes says will help to replace anger with sympathy toward fellow human beings because they have to endure the same hard world. An attitude that conveys 'we're in this together goes a long way under the grace of God. By God's power, enslavement to human reaction can give way to loving action."

V. 10 From Bollhagen, again, "Hope and promises about the future, the dreams that everything will be better for the next generation do not correspond with reality. [Indeed,] some say the past was better, others say the future will be better, but both schools of thoughts share a common idea: they both assume that today is the worst of all possible days. After all, it is strangely therapeutic to be able to say, 'I have suffered more than anyone ever has or will.' . . . [However,] people suffered in the past, and they will suffer in the future—just like you. A wise person [though] is less prone to belabor his tough life. He is freed from the pressing urge to compare operations with fellow human beings because he counts his God-given blessings. He fears his God and knows that God's mercy makes today the best of all days."