

The End of the Matter – Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:20

“Good and bad kings” – December 8, 2019



Introduction

What does a wise leader look like? The world has its own version of wisdom, but in the end it proves to be *earthly, unspiritual, and demonic* (see [James 3:15](#)). But wisdom from above, wisdom from God is *true* wisdom because this is *His* world and He alone is good. We need to know how to relate with leaders, choose leaders and be a wise leader. Thankfully, the Preacher helps us know what to look for (and strive for) in a wise leader.

Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response. To help, use [Psalm 119:33-40](#) as a prayer for God to open His word up to you.

Sermon Outline

- I. A wise leader chooses wisdom (*the fear of God*) over muscle (9:13-10:7)
- II. A wise leader values humility over applause (10:8-15)
- III. A wise leader opts for maturity over childish expectations (10:16-20)

Read & Discuss

1) Read [Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:7](#)

In Scripture, a fool is someone who lives as if God doesn't matter or doesn't exist ([Psalm 14:1](#)). That's not to say fools are unintelligent (there are brilliant fools), it is rather to highlight that wisdom is not just IQ, pedigree, or education; wisdom is a matter of the heart. The choices we make and paths we walk down in life stem from our heart – the source of what we value, are committed to and schedule our life around. In Romans 1, Paul shows that though God reveals Himself to us in creation, humanity *suppresses* the truth about Him in an effort to be in control of their lives. We try to be wise on our own, but, “Claiming to be wise, they became fools,” (Romans 1:22). The world often basis its assessment of someone on what they can see ([1 Samuel 16:7](#)). After telling a story of a poor wise man who saves a city, the Preacher shows that wisdom is better than might. What makes it difficult for us to believe this? Why would we choose power over wisdom? When you look at Jesus in the New Testament, how does He show us what true strength looks like?

Additional Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

2) Read [Ecclesiastes 10:8-15](#)

Here, the Preacher shows a wise leader valuing humility both in self-assessment (vv8-11) and in their speech (vv12-15). Do you find it difficult to accept the limitations that come with being a created being (and not the Creator)? Where is your axe dull right now (see v10) and

in need of some sharpening? Or think about your speech (in what you say, communicate online, etc.): do you use words to put the spotlight on yourself, or on God? Is the aim of your speech to benefit only yourself or to serve those who you have influence over? A wise leader values humility over applause!

Additional Reading: Proverbs 12:15, 13:3, John 5:44

3) Read [Ecclesiastes 10:16-20](#)

In this last section we see the childish nature of a leader who doesn't care about the 'proper time' for an activity. When desire or craving hits, they want gratification immediately. The problem is, the duties of the leader get neglected and everyone suffers ([10:18](#)). One of the fruits of the Spirit is self-control ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)), the ability to wait patiently for the proper time for something and make wise plans that are mindful of the big picture.

What do we do when we're left *looking* for a wise leader but can't find one? We ended our study with three applications:

1) Stay calm, don't panic ([10:4](#)). We don't need to panic because even when the world goes crazy, God is in charge. That's been the refrain in Ecclesiastes: even when life is painful or doesn't make sense, God is running the show, He sets the seasons and determines the times. One day, the foolish leader who made life difficult will answer to God and God will make it right.

2) Don't badmouth imperfect leaders, pray for them ([10:20](#)). As 1 Peter 2:17 reminds us, we're to fear God and honor the king. One way we can do that is by praying for our leaders in our home, schools, churches or nation ([1 Timothy 2:1-2](#)).

3) Wait in confident hope King Jesus, the wise King.

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand*, *believe*, *desire*, or *do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

*Next week's sermon text: we turn to Isaiah 9:1-7 "A King who's coming"
