

Wisdom

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[0 : 00] And this evening we are going to continue this series on Ecclesiastic. What a particular book, what a special book that we have impression through all this Sunday evening.

Give me a wee sec. So today I want to talk about wisdom in Ecclesiastic.

About knowledge, what is the knowledge, what is the wisdom of God. And I think that the world where we live has been never so exposed to so much information that in this very moment for example.

We just need to see our mobile phones and in 30 seconds you will know what is going on in every country in the world. We have access to get information about everything.

However, this high amount of information competes with misinformation or the use that we give to that knowledge.

[1 : 08] So we have a lot quantity of information but at the same time what is the use that we are given to that information. It seems that we know about everything but in reality and sometimes the reality show us the opposite.

So the question arises, how are we going to live with this picture that we have drawn? And when we talk about this, how should we live?

Wisdom starts to appear in this picture. Wisdom is what the world really needs but not only people outside, not only the person who is next to you right now, but you and I need wisdom.

In fact, if you say, no, I don't need wisdom, that's a clear sign that you and I would need wisdom.

But here it seems that the preacher or the author of Ecclesiastes talks about wisdom, but he does it in two ways, namely on the one hand in an uncomfortable way, and on the other hand in a nice and maybe in a better way.

So for example, in chapter 1 verse 13, 15 and 18, the author here says, the preacher says, and I apply my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven.

[2 : 54] It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. What is crooked cannot be made straight. Verse 18, for much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

After reading this, who wants to get some wisdom? But the Bible calls us to get and seek wisdom. Just read the book of Proverbs.

So in the same way, Ecclesiastes chapter 2 verse 13 highlights that there is more gain in wisdom than in folly, as there is more gain in light than in darkness. Or in chapter 7 verse 19, wisdom gives strength to the wise man more than 10 rulers who are in the city.

So having considered all this, why does Ecclesiastes refer to wisdom in these ways? As something heavy, as a heavy task on the one hand, and on the other hand, as something good and necessary for our lives.

Because the author here, Ecclesiastes, displays his understanding of wisdom, considering the reality of a fallen world. What is crooked cannot be made straight.

[4 : 24] Chapter 7 verse 20, surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins. 3 is 16, moreover I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, here it is, even there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness.

Finally in verse 18 from chapter 3, I said in my heart with regard to the children of man that God is testing them, that they may see that they themselves are but beasts.

Such a horrible picture we have here. People living as animals instead of living according to their calling or their creation purpose.

So the big problem is not what is going on outside on the streets or political parties or society, but it's in the very core of every human being.

What we see, the awful things that we watch or read on the news are the result of man's problem. And it's really sad that we don't have the wisdom to discern that.

[5 : 48] Therefore the big problem is that we don't see that the big problem of our heart is the sin which reigns in our heart.

And because of sin, we don't like to call sin as sin. We prefer to call it errors or mistakes or failures, but we don't like to talk about the sinfulness of sin.

But here lies another problem. If we don't recognize how serious sin is, we will not be able to appreciate the beauty of the gospel.

Without considering the reality of a rebellion against God, we will not be able to preach and apply the riches of God's grace and wisdom.

So considering that life is a veil in Hebrew, in Spanish, vapor, or in English, vapor, how are we going to live in a world full of this injustice, meaningless, considering that life is so short, how are we going to live?

[7 : 04] And the Bible describes two ways or two people, two kinds of people, the full and the wise. Wisdom, literature, literature talks about that. And as we have seen, Ecclesiastes talks about the meaningless of life.

And in that context, it also refers to the full and the wise. There's not a middle way, there's not a third way, it's not to be like a half wise and half full, no.

So here the question arises, how are you living? How are we living? Even as Christians, knowing that the time is so short, I would like to talk about three things in order to answer this question.

The first one that I want to talk is about the difference between the full and the wise. The second point is the similarities between the full and the wise. And finally, the third point is the foundation of the wise man, that is, God's wisdom.

So first point, the difference between the full and the wise. What is the treasure of the wise? What is the treasure of the full man?

[8 : 28] And the second point is the difference between the wise and the full. And the full lies a significant difference.

The wise treasures wisdom and the full treasures madness or folly. The biblical difference between the wise and the full is their view of God and their relationship with God.

And in the face in his heart, there is no God. And because there is no God for him, he lives without God.

In fact, he becomes his own God because he rejects God's law and he creates his own law. And I think here we can smell like a kind of legalism in the full man.

On the other hand, for the wise, there is a God. However, it is not just a vague or merely intellectual idea about God, but rather he fears God.

[9 : 36] Proverbs tells us the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom or knowledge. So the meaning here of Lord, it is the God of the covenant.

He who establishes an intimate fellowship with his people. So the wise fears God, adores God because God is his treasure.

That's the point. God is his heritage. So he lives in that way. He thinks in that way knowing that he belongs to God and God, he is his treasure.

So there is a difference between the wise and the full. But before you continue, we should answer the question, what is wisdom? According to the Bible, wisdom is rooted in God.

It is an attribute of God. But with humans, wisdom is not equal to knowledge or information. We can have intellectual knowledge and be a full man.

[10 : 44] So for the Old Testament, wisdom is practical. It presupposes knowledge, but doesn't stop there. From theory, it moves to practical.

So knowing what is our chief end in life. So these are very good moments for parents in their houses to ask to their children, what's the chief end of man, what is the purpose of life?

And we should reply, man's chief end is too. That's right, to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

So how are we going to live knowing this if we know the gospel? So knowing what is our chief end in life, or knowing what is the purpose of our creation and redemption, how are we going to live?

That is the question that I want to think about that in this moment. How are we living according to what we know? According to what we know from the Bible or the gospel?

[12 : 00] So if we know the gospel, how real is the gospel in our life reality? How real is the gospel in our families, in difficult times, in times of COVID-19, in good times, bad times?

How real is the gospel in our temptations when we are alone, when nobody sees us? How real is the gospel?

That is the point. So we can define wisdom as the art of living for God's glory. Moving forward, the difference between the wise and the fool also lies in their way of life.

It is not just about who governs the heart, but also in their talk, in their daily walk. Ecclesiastes chapter 10, from verse 12 to 13, 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 words of the wise are gracious because they flow from a heart full of God's grace.

[13 : 29] That's the point. We are talking, we are dealing in every moment in our life according to what we have in our hearts.

What is the treasure of our hearts? But on the other hand, the lips of the fool will destroy him. The fool's speech doesn't bring edification, but destruction.

His own destruction, I mean his own speech brings death. Actually, the word here is the lips of the fool will swallow up himself.

It's very hard, this. So, you can think about how can I destroy myself with my own speech or talk?

It's because think about what are you preaching to yourself? Are you preaching the gospel to your own heart or are you preaching a kind of legalism, a kind of, I don't know, anti-nominism, liberalism?

[14 : 42] I don't know, what are you preaching right now to your own heart? So, this is how a person thinks, lives and talks without God.

Try to live without God. And this is the result, destruction. So, how are we living in this life that is like vapor?

We as Christians, do we live fearing God or do we live as there is not God at all? And this is very important because we can think, oh no, no, I am not an atheist.

I believe in God, but the question is, it is a saving knowledge, it is a real knowledge in your heart, in your life?

You can say, I am not an atheist, but how do we live? Ah, it is so terrible, my friends, to live knowing that there is a God, but living as there is not God at all, calling ourselves Christians and living as a practical atheist, doing things, thinking things, talking about stuff, but with no reference, a reverence, sorry, to God.

[16 : 15] We don't fear God. Actually, to talk about the fear of God is like, no, we don't like to talk about that, we prefer to talk about the grace of God, but because we talk about, and because we preach about the grace of God, we need to preach and we need to live fearing God, because fear means to recognize who God is, is to live with this awe, to live knowing that the Almighty God, the Creator of the universe, is here right now, it is in your house right now, it is in your flat, it is in the midst of your relationship, it is, God is there, God is here.

Some churches in Latin America, because it's October, some of them are celebrating the Reformation month, October. Martin Luther, Calvin and all that idea that we need to remember that, and we need to study and think about the Reformation, a continuous Reformation in our life, but when we think about this, when we think about Martin Luther or Calvin or here, just three minutes ago, from this place, John Knox and the old martyrs, the old covenanters, the old preachers of the gospel, the Puritans, I don't know, but there's a phrase, there's a word that they used to talk about, and it is to live, *codam veal*, that's it, it's Latin, and that is to live in the presence of God, before the face of God.

So think about that for a moment, when you're being tempted to fall into sin, or when you are having problems, or if you are in your deathbed, or if you are celebrating something really nice in your life, and that's okay, but think that God is there, God is here.

How do we should think? How do we should live considering that reality? We should repent of living a practical atheism.

So those are the difference between the fool and the wise. Now let's go to the second point quickly, the similarities between the fool and the wise, and I hope to be brief at this point.

[18 : 40] Chapter 2 verse 16 says, how the wise dies just like the fool. Chapter 3 verse 20, all go to one place, all are from the dust, and to the dust all return.

So both have the same fate, the grave, the wise and the fool dies, and that's it. In one sense, everything ends for both the wise and the fool.

Death seals the moment where vapor disappears, or savings, or degrees, or dreams, everything ends.

Although this vapor disappears from the sight of all people, there is someone who will bring everything to memory.

Actually, that's the way of how this book ends. The last verse of the very last chapter is, for God will bring every deed into judgment with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

[20 : 02] Let's stop here for a moment. 100 years from now, and nobody will be here. Nobody.

While we know that the grave is the fate for both the wise and the fool, the moment of death reveals the great difference between the wise and the fool, and that is eternity.

Eternity. And think about this in a practical way. We as Christians, we need to live, think and meditate upon the eternity.

Jonathan Edwards used to say, stamp the eternity in my eyes. That, thinking about the eternity, it doesn't mean to, oh yeah, let's think about heaven and be like, and do nothing here because we are going to heaven.

No, that's not, that's a foolish way to think about that eternity. No, it's because I know that there's an eternity. It's because I know that I will be in front before the God Almighty.

[21 : 19] I live in a wise way with wisdom. Being faithful to my calling here on earth. People who are really thinking on eternity are people who really think about the vocation, the vocatio, the calling here on earth, as Christians, as mothers, as fathers, as daughter, sons, I don't know, in your office, in your work, in your job, in your marriage, in your bad moments, in your very special and beautiful moments.

We live knowing that we will be before the throne of God.

But not fearing in a bad way like, oh, I'm so scared about that thought. No, it's because the God Almighty who is calling you right now to live in this way because he loves you.

That's the reason of why we fear God and we love God and we adore his name. So, while, as I said, the grave is not the end of a story.

In fact, it is the beginning of what both the wise and the fool have solved. It is the beginning, death.

Here it is. It is the beginning of a consummation of a life with or without God.

[22 : 58] In the very moment when we close our eyes and pass into eternity, it is the beginning of a life full of joy and delight in heaven because Christ is there, or Savior is there.

That's the reason of why heaven is heaven, because our Savior, the God-man is there, the most beautiful man, the God-man is there.

So, it is the beginning of a life full of joy and delight in heaven, or of a life full of pain and torment in hell forever.

So, where lies the big similarities between the wise and the fool and this? And please hear this. Both need God's wisdom.

And where lies the big difference between the wise and the fool? The relationship with God's wisdom. Both the fool and the wise born as fool or sinners. That's our nature when we need our fallen nature.

[24 : 13] So, how can we, as sinners, as fool people, became wise? And this is very important to consider this. Not by our own efforts or good deeds, not by getting nowhere and more nowhere every day, not by getting degrees.

Here it is in God's name. It is only by the sovereign work of the Almighty God who brings life to death people, who brings life to death families, to bring life to your heart, to my heart. It is passing, it is passing from death to life.

It is because God Himself, the wisdom of God, comes to our heart. And this is the final point and third point. The foundation of the wise. What is the foundation? What is the ground of the wise man?

And that is God's wisdom. We can see God's wisdom in the works of creation and providence.

Yeah, we see injustice, awful things outside.

But at the same time, we can see the beauty of nature, the beauty of the highlands, of the sky. Such a beautiful island.

[25 : 38] We can see the beauty in the south of Chile or in every country, in the universe, in this planet. But also we can see God's wisdom in providence. In providence that in this moment you are hearing the word of God.

But, however, God's wisdom is displayed in an indescribable way in the Gospel. Therefore, God's wisdom is the Gospel.

What do we deserve for our sins? What do we deserve for our hypocrisy? As a couple of sentences ago, that sermon about the Pharisees and hypocrisy is a very hard text.

But what do we deserve for living in that way? What do we deserve for living two lives in one person? Being a Christian here, but then at home, we live as animals, maybe as Ecclesiastes describes.

What do we deserve for that? What do we deserve for our practical atheism? The justice of God cries out for satisfaction.

[27 : 02] On the other hand, God's goodness cries out for recovering our fellowship with God. So how can we understand God's justice and God's mercy at the same time?

And that is in God's wisdom. In the Gospel of God, Psalm 85 verse 10, it says, instead of love and faithfulness, meet righteousness and peace.

Kiss each other. That kiss between righteousness and peace. That kiss is God's wisdom.

This is God's wisdom. God in Christ took a human nature to live in representing the foolish people. Christ lived a life that feared God and kept the law.

He loved and he loves God with all his heart. I love and love his people with all his heart. Christ also died for what we as sinners and foolish people who reject God's wisdom deserves.

[28 : 17] The wrath of God. In this way, the wise one, the incarnate wisdom, experience of death in order to bring life to the fool.

That is God's wisdom. Both the wise and the fool experience death. Can you imagine?

Can you meditate about this? That God who is life himself, he took a human nature and died in your place, in my place, to bring life, real life, to bring joy and delight in his presence.

God's wisdom is applied in the heart of those who are destroying themselves through self-righteousness, false morality and immorality.

That is God's wisdom. We know that we deserve death. And God, he also knows that, but to bring life to your heart, to your family, to bring life when you fall into sin and you're desperate and you don't know what to do and you're not failing in the same sin like every single day.

[29 : 56] But God, he experienced this. I don't have words to describe this, but in God's wisdom, he became flesh and died for you to give you life.

If you ask Christian, if you have received this life, how are you living? Why we should continue living for all fallen dreams?

Why we should continue living for our self-righteousness? When? When are we going to live for God?

Wisdom, because wisdom is in our heart. So this is God's wisdom, and this is why it's so close to the preaching of the gospel.

So let me finish with this, reading this. 1 Corinthians chapter 1 from verse 21, For since in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom.

[31 : 15] It pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand science and Greek wisdom.

Maybe you are looking for science for something spectacular. Maybe you are waiting for a voice of an angel telling you, hey, wake up.

Or maybe you are just seeking wisdom for the sake of wisdom itself, but no. Verse 23, But we preach Christ crucified.

And that is God's wisdom, and that is what we need as Christians, as church, as inner families. We need to preach every day. We need to preach to ourselves.

We need to preach to our families, to our wives, to our children, to our children, to our children. And he is right now at the right hand of the Father, and from that place he will come one day, as the Apostles Creed said.

[32 : 24] We need to preach Christ crucified. We don't need to continue preaching about good stuff, about I don't know what society wants to know more about that, know what creation needs.

Is the Creator who is the Redeemer. That is God's wisdom. That is what we need. That is what you need right now.

But for that, we need to love this, the Word of God. We need the Holy Spirit, and I finished with this. Sorry. But two Fridays ago I was sharing a word in the Friday morning devotional about the Holy Spirit and God's wisdom.

And we should pray for this, for the Holy Spirit. This brings the wisdom of our Triune Heart, of the Triune God.

We need to ask for the Holy Spirit who knows the depths of God. We need to pray for the Holy Spirit to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to really live according to God's wisdom.

[33 : 47] That is the gospel. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your holy wisdom that you gave your own son for us.

To become your sons and daughters. Thank you for the cross.

Lead us to every day remember this precious gospel. Because this is what we need now. And this is what we are going to need in the very moment of our death.

It is to know Christ and Christ crucified. Help us to be faithful in our calling as fathers, mothers, children.

Guide us to be men and women of God who fears your name.

[35 : 16] Father, we ask for this for a sense of who you are to live with all in your presence.

Thank you for this moment. Thank you for this day. Thank you because Christ bore the growth of God.

And now we are really free. Free to live according to God's wisdom. Free to fear you and love your law.

That is to love you with all our hearts and love our neighbor. In your precious name we pray. Amen. Amen.