

You Better Wise Up | Week 4: “Watch Your Mouth”

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

1. Introduction: What We’ve Covered So Far...

1. Ecclesiastes 1 - **Week 1: We Must Rely On God's Strength.**
 1. Leverage / powerlessness / "under the sun"
 2. David Goldberg, CEO SurveyMonkey; husband of Sheryl Sandberg, COO of FB
2. Ecclesiastes 3 - **Week 2: We Trust God's Wisdom.**
 1. Time and a Season
 2. Everything fits into God’s plan.
 3. Trust / joyfully do good, eat/drink, enjoy toil
3. Ecclesiastes 4 - **Week 3: We Must Open Our Hearts To God's People.**
 1. What about *injustice* and *death*?
 2. We need communal care (“A three-fold cord...”)

2. Chapter 5: But what happens when we become jaded by pain?

1. **We become reckless in our relationships with each other (verses 1-3).**
2. **We become reckless in our relationship with God (verses 4-7).**

3. Part 1, vs. 1-3: How Are We Reckless With Each Other?

[1] Guard your steps when you go to the house of God [reverence; respect]. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools [fools don't listen], for they do not know that they are doing evil [no self-reflection]. [2] Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few [in contrast with the self-oblivious fool]. [3] For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words. [busy, cluttered mind; no room for reflection, contemplation...repentance]

1. New Testament approach?
 1. Solomon built the temple - the crown jewel of his reign
 2. Temple represents God’s special people that he has gathered to serve him.

3. The church is the fulfillment of the Temple. Note 1 Peter 2:5: “you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”
2. Distinctives of the church:
 1. Jesus is uniquely present in gatherings. Note Matthew 18:20: “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” (Context: relational maintenance)
 2. God’s presence is not to be tampered with - something we take for granted on this side of the cross...
 1. Solomon knew 2 Samuel 6: Uzzah struck down
 1. Stumbling over this?
 2. Will God judge us if we have sinned?
 3. Remember the gospel!
 2. Grace doesn't mean we don't fear God
 1. Check out Hebrews 12:18, 22-24: "For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest...[22] But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, [23] and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, [24] and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel."
 2. In other words:
 - **We are God's holy mountain, the seat of his presence.**
 - **We are God's bright and shining city.**
 - **We are his chosen heavenly family.**
 - **We are celebrated by innumerable angelic beings feasting in our honor.**

- **We are God's firstborn children, heirs of his perfection.**
- **Our names are forever written in heaven.**
- **We are unified with the saints who are deceased.**
- **We are one with Jesus, the only one who could make all this possible!**

4. So how do we recklessly use our mouths in the midst of God's people?

1. Verse 1 & 2: "Guard your steps when you go to the house of God...Be not rash with your mouth..." **We don't reflect on our words before saying them.** (James 1:19: "let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak...")
2. **We make uncharitable judgments about people and share those judgments with others.** Tarnishes other people's character.
3. **We monopolize conversations. We don't get to know people's hearts.** Learn to listen; investigate a person's heart. We'd rather inform and educate rather than know. Howard Patterson: "Talk with your heart, not your head."
4. **We can be passive-aggressive with others.**
 1. We say condescending things that are meant to shame others in to changing their behavior. "I would never allow my children to attend public school." "I can't believe they allow their children to watch that on TV." "Did you see what she was wearing?"
 2. This is self-righteous and shows that we think we're more committed or more righteous.
 3. Totally anti-gospel

5. Not trying to shame you -- why do we do these things?

1. Injustice & death under the sun (ch. 4) make us cynical, steal our hope
2. "I have hope"
3. Hope is evidenced by engagement, not withdrawal.
4. All these behaviors are defense mechanisms designed to push people away from us or to punish them.
5. **God is inviting us to lay down our weapons and to trust him.**

6. Part 2, vs. 4-7: How Are We Reckless With God?

[4] When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools [fools make promises to God they don't keep -- lack of reflection]. Pay what you vow. [5] It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. [6] Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake [the messenger is the priest before whom an ancient worshiper would make a vow]. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands? [7] For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity [dreams again...business of mind and heart disrupt self-reflection/repentance]; but God is the one you must fear.

1. What vows have we made to God that we aren't serious about fulfilling?
2. Remember, we are in grace, so *when* we fail, we are forgiven. I'm talking about a careless use of words in which we make big commitments and have small strategies on fulfilling them.
 1. **Reckless Prayers:** Committing your life to Christ, but continuing to pursue a lifestyle that is decidedly not Christian. Or tolerating compromise in your life.
 2. **Reckless Songs:** Have you considered the gravity of the lyrics that you sing when we gather to worship? What about our weekly confessions?
 3. **Reckless Communion:** When you partake of the Lord's Body and Blood at communion, do you do so with reverence and humility?
 4. **Reckless Commitments:** "God, I'll never, ever do _____ again."
3. Vow-making often points to self-reliance.
 1. Making pious vows quickly relieves nagging feelings of guilt.
 2. We inform God of our vows, but we're really depending on our own strength.
 3. Willpower is a virtue in our society, but it's the opposite of God-dependence. It may be as devious as the "worst" sins.
7. **Trust God. Depend on God. Need God. Seek God.**