

**STUDIES IN ECCLESIASTES (22)**  
**Some Better Things (2)**  
**Ecclesiastes 7:1-10**

In our study tonight we want to continue our study in the book of Ecclesiastes. A few weeks ago, we examined the first part of Ecclesiastes 7:1-10 where Solomon some better things. In fact, in these verses we find 8 “better” things. Previously we noted 4 of them, associated with a good name being preferred over riches AND how going to the house of mourning is better than the house of feasting. Tonight, we want to notice the other 4.

**I. Better to hear rebuke from the wise, than the song of fools (5-7)**

- a. ***The song of fools*** - Some equate the “song of fools” here with the “house of mirth” (feasting) in the previous verse.

Often times, a party is not a good place to get life advice. Especially from the “entertainment” trying to make you laugh or just have a good time. Especially when you tie this to vs. 6 where it is noted that the laughter of a fool is like the crackling of thorns under a pot – the point – they may START a fire and make noise, but how quickly they will burn out. We live in a society where our celebrities, especially our comedians, are given too much credibility. They are entertainers who spin their observations to get a laugh. PLEASE seek your wisdom from more than that!

- b. ***The rebuke of the wise*** -

Clearly rebuke is not pleasant. It is chastisement and noting that which is wrong. We don’t like to be chastised and corrected. That’s the point of Hebrews 12:5-11 which speaks of the chastening of the Lord. Vs. 11 notes that chastening is not pleasant, but yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness. The rebuke of the wise may include:

- i. The doctor who tells you to change your habits.
- ii. Parents who lovingly chasten their children for their poor choices – Ephesians 6:4
- iii. The elderly who have lived a good life and see you about to make some major mistake – Job 12:12-13 says, “*Wisdom is with aged men, and with length of days, understanding; With Him are wisdom and strength, He has counsel and understanding...*”
- iv. An elder or preacher who tells you the truth, even when it is unpleasant – cf. Galatians 4:16, Hebrews 13:17, etc.
- v. This could also apply in the house of mourning, where you will hear about the uncertainties of life and possibly encouragement to make yourself right with God.

- c. ***Vs. 7 – The oppression of the wise destroys their reason.***

- i. Is this a reference to a wise man who is oppressing others and thus his reasoning is invalidated, or is it a wise man who is oppressed by others? I believe it to be the latter, because a truly wise person will not oppress – he seeks the betterment of people and uses his wisdom toward that end.
- ii. I also think of those with closed hearts and minds who simply refuse to consider the other side of a situation. One of the things troubling me about what we are seeing in our society today is a closed mind mentality – “You believe like do, or you are ... (insert your label).” I am not opposed to one having convictions – the wise will also speak with conviction. In fact, we BETTER have conviction, but it will be reasoned and delivered with humility. When one is driven by emotions such as anger and hatred, he will NOT consider that he may be wrong, or even give audience to those who disagree or challenge their views. This was the abhorrent behavior of the enemies of Jesus, Paul and Stephen. And it is divisive and troublesome.

- d. ***And a bribe debases the heart*** – equally tragic is when greed and selfish ambitions cloud out truth and rebuke. Bribes are always wrong and they can corrupt, even the wise. They can cause the wise to be silent, or even worse. Again, Jesus was betrayed with a bribe, by one of His own apostles. Proverbs 17:23, *A wicked man accepts a bribe behind the back To pervert the ways of justice.*
- e. Proverbs 15:31-33 says, *The ear that hears the rebukes of life Will abide among the wise. He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding. The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility.*

## II. **The end of a thing is better than the beginning (8a)**

- a. Throughout this context, we have been addressing the wisdom at funerals over parties. Here is yet another observation that can be related to that.
- b. However, this expression is broader than that. This is a generalization that is true in many situations:
  - i. The wisdom of age
  - ii. When a crop is planted, and we finally reap the harvest (spiritually as well).
  - iii. The completion of a job or task is often rewarding and a time of relief.
  - iv. Some see this as related to dealing with patience tying it to the latter part of this verse. Be patient until what your task is complete.  
Or humility, where one boasts about what he plans to do, but often he fails to complete the task. E.g. 1 Kings 20:11, *So the king of Israel answered and said, "Tell him, 'Let not the one who puts on his armor boast like the one who takes it off.' "*
  - v. Also after something is completed, you typically have a better understanding of what is going on (wisdom). We know the results and can determine if we made the right decision or not, what the purpose of something was, etc.
  - vi. Think spiritually, when one is prepared as Paul was – 2 Timothy 4:6-8. Note Matthew 10:22 where Jesus said, "He who endures to the end will be saved..."
  - vii. NOTE: These are good outcomes, and are the result of a good start. Realize that the opposite is equally true. When one's intentions are evil, the end will be worse.

## III. **The patient in spirit is better than the proud (8b-9)**

- a. The Bible continually emphasizes the importance of patience. It is better to be patient than proud or boastful.  
IT is a quality of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and Christian love (1 Corinthians 13:4-5) – long-suffering.  
Luke 21:13, "By your patience possess your souls." In a text where Jesus warns that they not give up in spite of what they might face.  
James 5:7-11 - it was a characteristic of the prophets, including Job, and it is to be a quality in us.
- b. On the contrary, the prideful or arrogant are despised by God – it is a work of the ungodly – Romans 1:29-30; 2 Timothy 3:2, etc.  
1 Peter 5:5 tells us that God resists the proud, but give grace to the humble. Proverbs 6:16-17 – the proud look, etc.
- c. How many speak up before they know what they are talking about? James 1:19 warns against this AND enters into the next phrase
- d. Solomon further elaborates noting in vs. 9, that we should not hasten to be angry. We addressed this last Sunday morning, as Jesus warned against murder and anger as we pursue true righteousness (Matthew 5:21-22). Ephesians 4:26-27 – be angry and do not sin; Vs. 31 – put anger away, along with bitterness, clamor and evil speaking...  
Anger rests in the bosom of fools – it brings out foolish and quickly regretted actions and consequences.

**IV. Living for now is better than living in the past (10)**

- a. Finally, we note a connection with the previous 2 verses. Especially vs. 8, "The end is better..." Here the warning is to not dwell on the past.
- b. Do NOT say, "Why were the former days better?" IT is NOT a wise thing.
- c. WE sometimes look to "the good old days", and in some instances there is something to be said about that. But we are living in times with so much more opportunities to do good because of technology. We understand more how the world works. We are able to communicate by this means - something not possible in "the good old days".
- d. But here's the point, suppose the "good old days" were better? Well they are gone! We have to move on and accept where we are. Jesus alluded to this as He spoke about seeking first God's kingdom – Matthew 6:33-34. He notes, "Sufficient for the day is its own troubles" So don't dwell on the past, which you CANNOT change, OR the future, which you do not know.
- e. NOTE: It is not wrong to remember the past. It can be a good thing, but here the point is DON'T dwell on it!

So we can see that some things are better than others. Let us be among those that choose the better things that lead to life eternal. Think about it!