People Who Cut Wood With Blunt Axes November 20, 2022

*Ecclesiastes 10:1-20 Series: Israel’s Greatest Philosopher*

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting a tomato in a fruit salad. – Miles Kington

Intro: Stolen credit card

1. A fly in the ointment: a little foolishness goes a long way
2. A little foolishness stinks

v. 1 *Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give off a stench; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.*

v. 2 *A wise man's heart inclines him to the right, but a fool's heart to the left.*

Matthew 25:33 *And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.*

v. 3 *Even when the fool walks on the road, he lacks sense, and he says to everyone that he is a fool.*

1. Fools are full of information but empty on wisdom

Proverbs 1:7 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

Proverbs 14:1 *The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”*

Romans 1:21 *although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened*

Proverbs 3:13 *Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding …*

* What are some examples of the ways that people broadcast their foolishness? How can you see a person’s wisdom?
* If you really cared about wisdom, what would you do differently? How would it affect your faith?
1. A snake in the wall: a little foolishness invites danger
2. Wisdom gives you the self-control to avoid hijacking your career

v. 4 *If the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for calmness will lay great offenses to rest.*

v. 5 *There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, as it were an error proceeding from the ruler …*

Proverbs 15:1 *A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

Proverbs 25:15 *With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone.*

Matthew 5:5 *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

1. Wisdom gives you the caution to avoid hijacking your health

v. 8 *He who digs a pit will fall into it, and a serpent will bite him who breaks through a wall.*

v. 9 *He who quarries stones is hurt by them, and he who splits logs is endangered by them.*

v. 11 *If the serpent bites before it is charmed, there is no advantage to the charmer.*

v. 10 *If the iron is blunt, and one does not sharpen the edge, he must use more strength, but wisdom helps one to succeed.*

Abraham Lincoln: Give me six hours to chop down a tree, and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.

Isaiah 40:29 *He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.*

* How could anger highjack a person’s career?
* What are some of the ways that we cut with blunt axes?
* What would it mean for you to sharpen the blade?
* How does a pursuit of wisdom help a person grow in effectiveness?
1. A bird in the air: A little foolishness gets a loudspeaker
2. Thoughts become words, and the walls have ears

v. 20 *Even in your thoughts, do not curse the king, nor in your bedroom curse the rich, for a bird of the air will carry your voice, or some winged creature tell the matter.*

Matthew 12:34 *How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*

Luke 12:2-3 *Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.*

1. Your mouth can ruin all you’ve worked for

v. 12 *The words of a wise man's mouth win him favor, but the lips of a fool consume him.*

v. 13 *The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is evil madness.*

1. Wisdom stops you talking about things you don’t understand

v. 14 *A fool multiplies words, though no man knows what is to be, and who can tell him what will be after him?*

v. 15 *The toil of a fool wearies him, for he does not know the way to the city.*

Proverbs 10:19 *When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.*

* Why does Scripture warn of even thinking evil about someone in authority over us (v. 20)?
* What are some examples of ways that things “whispered in private rooms” are “proclaimed on the housetops”?
* How does wisdom help us to restrain our words?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Ecclesiastes 11:1-12

Notes