

## Ecclesiastes 5:1-6

We continue our study today in the book of Ecclesiastes Chapter 5. I believe the objectives in studying this chapter are as follows: first, to reflect upon the preacher's observations gleaned from his search for the purpose of life and, then, to notice the proper way to approach God in worship and the danger of foolish vows. I also believe it's to appreciate the limitations of riches. In other words, Solomon is giving us these things that we need to be looking at, the limitation of riches we need to appreciate and how the ability to enjoy them is a gift from God. I've noticed as we've studied through the book of Ecclesiastes that everything comes from God, according to this book, and we get everything from God and, also, we are given the ability to enjoy these things, and it is a gift of God that we're able to do that.

Notice with me, first of all, in verses 1-3 in Ecclesiastes Chapter 5 the worship of God. First of all, we see in verse 1, it says: *<sup>1</sup>Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.* I believe this first thing that we're looking at here in verse 1 would be meaning to walk carefully. When you go to the house of God, draw near to hear, be ready to hear the Word, not some fanciful tickling of the ears. The fool goes to church to be entertained. Don't go to church to be entertained, but be ready to hear the Word of God, to worship God.

John 4:24 says, *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.* It doesn't say that we're to worship Him in every way that we feel good about. We're to worship Him in spirit and in truth. I'm not saying it's wrong to have music or

singing in a local church. What I'm saying is this. We should not place anything above the preaching of the Word of God. Why? Because it is the Word of God.

Notice secondly here what I see in verses 2 and 3. Not only in verse 1 are we told to walk carefully, but we're also to talk cautiously, according to verses 2-3. It says there: *<sup>2</sup>Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. <sup>3</sup>For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.*

I believe what we're seeing here and we're told here is to talk cautiously. Be careful of what you say, according to the first part of verse 2. Think before you speak. I don't know about you, but I have to remind myself of that constantly. I need to think before I say something.

And then I see it says don't be impetuous, in a hurry, to say anything you really mean in the presence of God. We need to stop and think even as we're praying and talking with our Heavenly Father. Why? Remember who you are. God is exalted in Heaven, and the Bible teaches us that we're lowly. We're lowly on the Earth. We're human beings, according to the next part of verse 2 there, and I believe this could also refer to promises a person makes. Be careful about making promises to God or anyone else. Because of verse 2, we see that. Do not overdo it with words. In James 5:12, the Bible speaks of this, that we're not to overdo things with our words. Be careful of what we say.

Then, in verse 3, dreams are misleading is what this is saying. They come through much activity of work and our daily activities. Some people try to interpret the dreams that we have, but it's simply a compilation of things that we've seen, heard, and things possibly we've done in the past and maybe even some of the things that we've wanted to do or that we want to do. Don't put too much stock into saying that these things are from God. We need to be cautious.

Then I see that a fool is recognized by his many words, according to verse 3. Matthew 6:7 says, *But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.* In other words, don't try to impress people and don't even try to impress God when you're praying. We need to get down to business. We need to get down to worshiping God in spirit and in truth, and we need to say what's on our heart, and we need to uphold one another in prayer and then we need to bring our needs to God, and we need to pray to Him. Trust Him. Ask Him to take care of the things that we're asking Him for.

Notice with me verses 4-7 now. I believe this is talking about the taking of vows. Verse 4 says, *When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.* <sup>5</sup>*Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.*

Once again, think before you speak even when you go to God. Don't promise God something that you can't deliver, and that's the same way it is with people. Don't speak before you think about it. I believe verse 4 and verse 5 are speaking of fulfilling vows. Fulfill your vows. Don't shun to do what you've said to do. Sometimes we make a vow and we promise something and we say, "Oh, I sure wish I

hadn't made that vow. I sure wish I hadn't made that promise." Well, if you've made it, you need to carry through with it. No matter how hard it is for you, you need to continue on and you need to do what you said you're going to do.

Psalm 50:14 says, *Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High.* It's recorded in the book of Acts Chapter 18 and verse 18 that Paul had evidently made a vow to God as a Jew, and although the vow was possibly a Jewish vow, Paul had made the vow to God and he kept the vow. Some people would criticize Paul for carrying out a Jewish vow that he had made, but Paul had made a promise and he carried that vow out. Acts 18:18 says this: *And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.* In other words, when you make a promise, you need to keep that promise. You need to do what you've promised to do. And then, it's better for you not to make a vow to God if you do not do what you promised, according to verse 5. Don't do it. Don't make a promise unless you intend to carry it through.

Then in verse 6, it says, *Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error... in other words, "I made a mistake"... wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?*

In other words, watch your mouth. Watch what you're saying. We see other verses that go along with this and I'll read those in just a moment, but you notice the word "angel" there. Who is the messenger, or the angel, in this verse? Potential identifications include the angel of the Lord, or it could be a prophet;

it could be a priest or a priest's messenger. In Haggai 1:13, it speaks of this. *Then spake Haggai the LORD'S messenger in the LORD'S message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD.* An angel is a messenger, according to the Word of God. And Malachi 2:7 says, *For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.* In other words, it could be a number of individuals that's spoken of here in verse 6. It could be a prophet, a priest, or a priest's messenger.

In ancient Israel believers would inform the priests of their vows and the priests or priests' agents would remind the individual and even receive any sacrifices that had been promised. In this situation a person tells the messenger that it was all a mistake in verse 5. "It was all a mistake. I didn't mean what I said, and it was an inadvertent error."

Leviticus 4:22-35 and Numbers 15:22-31 speak of vows and you need to be careful. Vows should be intentional, not unintentional. Don't do it in the spur of the moment or on a whim, but we need to, once again, pray about anything we do like this. God finds no pleasure in foolish promises. Claiming an error in such a situation is tantamount to admitting that the vow was made in haste. The results? When God judges or disciplines such a foolish people can be catastrophic, even resulting in the destruction of the work of one's hands, according to the Scriptures.

Now notice with me Ecclesiastes 5:7. *For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God.* I believe what this is simply saying is fear. It's talking about fearing. Many dreams and many words fall into the category of empty things and vanities. All is vanity. In other words, it amounts to nothing, things

with no purpose, no value, or no meaning. Vows made on the basis of such dreams and words result in purposeless, empty prayer.

Most Christians find it difficult to describe what "fear God" means. Does it mean to be afraid? To have reverential awe? Or to mortify the flesh or crucify self? If we cannot define it, how can we exercise it? Since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, according to Proverbs 1:7, our knowledge faces a severe deficit without the fear of God. No wisdom exists apart from the fear of the Lord, according to the book of Psalms. Notice with me in Psalm 115:11. *Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield.*

There are many other verses that go along with this, and in addition to Scripture, it associates the blessings with the fear of God in the Scriptures. In Psalm 112:1, it says, *Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.*

We keep reading in these Scriptures and it tells us that everything comes from God and we're to give God all the glory in everything that we have. We are able to enjoy that because of God. Everything is of God, and without the fear of God, therefore, an individual lacks knowledge, wisdom, and blessing, according to the Scriptures. God reveals in His Word exactly what comprises the fear of the Lord. Biblically, the fear of God includes everything that I've just mentioned, plus other things, and as we think of this, in Proverbs 8:13, it talks about hating evil. It says, *The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*

Do you know the Lord today? Ask Him to come into your heart, and receive Him. If

you do know Him, you need to be living for Him and trusting Him completely in your life to lead you into the right way of thinking by fearing him, reverentially fearing God.

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