

2129 - WISDOM & FOLLY & RULERS - Ecc 10.1-20

Sol has been talking about the **mystery of Providence** and that there is **no guarantee** of success, even although you are a good Xn! *time and chance happens to them all* [9:11] *Sol **jumps** from one subject to another and then returns to them, particularly in this chapter so...

RECOGNISING WISDOM & FOLLY [1-4 +11 + 18-20]

Have you noticed how children **love** ‘knocking things down’, destroying things! tearing newspapers, pushing over building blocks, smashing sandcastles, breaking windows! That is because it is **EASIER** to destroy than to **build**. You do not need **skill** to destroy - just force - maybe even just brute force! You don’t need to **plan**, or **organise** to destroy! But to **CREATE** something you need special gifts! You will need some thought and some training. But a **little** thing can ruin a **big** thing! One silly move can destroy a whole lifetime of labour, one silly remark by a defense counsel can destroy the whole argument! *Dead flies makes the perfumer’s ointment give off a stench; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honour* [1]

Every person can say ‘**If only** I didn’t have that extra drink, if I hadn’t decided to go....if I had stayed at home how different things would be tonight!’ etc, etc Even to **say** things in **private** can be folly. Ask President Nixon about bugging at the Watergate Hotel! That is why Sol says *Even in your thought, do not curse the rich, for a bird of the air will carry your voice or some winged creature tell the matter* [20]! Look at all the various ‘winged creatures’ nowadays on **microphones** getting **sporting reporters** losing their jobs!!

These two Sports Reporters some time ago found out that you cannot **withdraw** the spoken word! Once you have said something - you can’t withdraw it. Sometimes it is **TOO LATE** to **apologise** - as they know to their cost! And that is why Sol says *there is no advantage* in calling a charmer **after** *the serpent bites!!*[11]

To be **careless** and **unwatchful** can have a heavy **cost**! Through **laziness**, or **slothfulness** great damage can be done as Sol says *Through sloth the roof sinks in and through indolence the house leaks* [18] and a greater cost will eventually have to be paid.

*Another indication of a **foolish** man is **pride!** Very often, important people in high positions, **can do very foolish things!** They can go in the **huff** very simply! I have seen intelligent people do very foolish things in order to ‘get their own back’ on someone - to spite someone at a **cost** to themselves! I have known someone to **resign their lucrative post** in order to spite their employer!! I think that is what Sol is saying *If the **anger** of the ruler rises **against** you, **do not leave your place**, for **calmness** will lay great offenses to rest* [4] Some people just **refuse** to **acknowledge** their **mistakes** and rather than admit it, take steps that are harmful to themselves and their families!

Its when we **counter** accusations a fight begins! It is the **second blow** that starts the fight! *calmness will lay great offenses to rest!!*[4] If you **agree** with your critics, it takes the ‘wind out of their sails’ and they cannot do much more - for its a **fight** they were looking for!

*Sometimes you can spot a **fool** a mile away. A fool can disguise his true self for a **time** but it won’t be too long before he makes himself known! As Sol says the fool *says to **everyone** that he is a **fool*** [5] - he says it **in all types of ways** - even when walking *on the road, he lacks sense* [3a] There **are** wise fools of course - those who say ‘I am not going to open my mouth and inform people of my stupidity! As Sol wrote elsewhere *Even a **fool** who keeps **silent** is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent* [Pro 17:28]

In **Hebrew culture** the **right hand** meant the **correct** hand and the left hand was known as the foolish and wrong hand, thus *A wise man’s heart inclines him to the **right** but a fool’s heart is to the **left***[2] To be **left-handed** was a great problem for the Jews - and some say that is why **Scripture** gives examples of **good deeds** being done by **left-handed** people such as *Ehud a left-handed man* [Jud 3:15] and fat King Eglon **unsuspectingly** having his sword on the ‘other’ side!!

ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN - to the INDUSTRIOUS [8-10]

Sol now **encourages** people to **continue** doing a **good** thing despite **injuries** and **obstacles!** There are those who hold back from doing something good, because of the **possibility** of danger or trouble. But Sol reminds us that, If we *dig a pit*, we **will fall into it**, if we are

going to break *through a wall* a **serpent** reclining there **will bite us** [8] If we are going to **quarry stones**, we **will hurt by them**, and if we are going to **split logs** remember we could be **endangered by them**[9]

Chain-saws are dangerous, even although you may be doing a great work! Sol is saying ‘Don’t let one mistake, or an injury stop good work from continuing. You see, ‘The man that never got injured or never made a mistake, never made anything’! There is not a **carpenter/plumber/electrician** who cannot tell of some accident or electric shock he got. There **are** some people who are so **afraid** they will make a mistake or get hurt, they do not do anything!!

It is only those who **work** and **take risks** that *helps one to succeed* [10b] You have to **keep on trying** and using your **head** and some **wisdom**. *wisdom helps one to succeed* [10b] If the iron is blunt and one does not sharpen the edge, he must use **more strength** [10] It is hard work and wisdom that makes success, ‘success’!!

If you are going to do something good, you **will** have **set-backs!** Be assured of it - but do **not stop!** The whole point Sol is making here is to **persevere!** **90%** of failures is due to people **quitting too soon!**

Wisdom helps one to succeed [10b] Yes, all agree - but wisdom is **also necessary** to ‘**handle**’ success! Many people have success for ‘hours’ then do something foolish! **Temptation** comes and the foolish submit to it! Even among the godly in Scripture, some saints ruined themselves by being unable to handle success - witness **Lot!** Witness **Esau!** Witness **Samson!** Witness **Absalom!** Witness **Sol!!**

The FOOLISH BABBLER [12-15]

We have all met the fellow who speaks **loudly** at the table next to you in a restaurant, making predictions, and showing off his knowledge. He likes to hear his voice and loves when people are listening to **his** ‘wisdom’! But Sol says a **FOOL multiplies words** - and Sol adds **no man knows what is to be** and **no one can tell him what will be after him** [14] The man who **publicly criticises** the **councillors** and the **government** and the **young** will be found to put his foot in it before long! *The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness and the end of his talk is evil madness* [13]

In my young days there were ‘**tea-breaks**’ when everyone **stopped** and we gathered round and chatted and there were always those who ‘held the floor’ and controlled the topics for discussion! I used to enjoy all the foolish things that were said. There was **Gambling Bob** telling us which horse would win - but next day we found that horse was **last** in the race! Or Wee Jock showing off his knowledge and trying to expose the young apprentices ignorance of history! Each person trying to **make himself look good** amongst others!

But you know, everyone knows who are the **really** humble and **wise** ones! *The words of a wise man’s mouth win him favour but the lips of a fool consume him* [12] The wise man does not need to tell others he is wise - he is **recognised** without stating it himself!

RULERS SITTING in JUDGMENT [5-7 + 16,17]

One of the biggest mistakes politicians can make is to appoint unsuitable **successors!** It is an *error proceeding from the ruler* [5] Sol says *I have seen slaves on horses and princes walking on the ground like slaves* [7] and *Woe to you O land when your king is a child* [16a]! Obviously **not** a child in years but in **experience**, in **ignorance!** Someone is in power who is **untried** and **unknown**. We live in an age when children rule! I remember as **Chaplain** in schools been told by the Headmaster, that we should listen to the children, **because** they had as much wisdom as we had!!

It has amazed me how many **parents** and **leaders** in other groups and how much ‘the powers that be’, suggest that the young and inexperienced should be allowed to make important decisions. On **School Boards**, headmasters and rectors wanting the children to lead and make large contributions to important decisions! ‘Let them chose for themselves - they have every right to choose what they want!!

Oh my!! We parents and leaders are here **TO lead** and **TO guide** the young and ignorant! What parent, watching his children grow up, has not been reminded of their **own mistakes** and folly? We must prepare and educate and warn children about the lessons we ave learned. **Jesus Christ is the real/perfect example. He is Wisdom and Righteousness! His words and ways, his life and death are the prime example for all that we will have to face in life.**