



Ecclesiastes 10:12-20

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Anaheim Hills, CA | RockCC.com

Transcript

27:44

Before we get to the book of Ecclesiastes where we have been marching along faithfully months for months, I want to just set it up this morning by sharing a passage with you that I love from 2 Peter chapter 1, these are verses 19 through 21 where the Word of God says and we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed and this is a phrase it is referring to the entirety of Scripture, we have the Word of God.

28:13

Then he goes on to say, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns, in the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this, first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

28:40

For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man. But men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. I love this passage and remember this phrase here translated as "carried along" to have been used elsewhere where the idea was that wind would come along and it would carry through the sail of a ship so that the ship would be moved and carried along.

29:10

And so the word of God is describing this process by which God did work through men to bring us His words, but that they were carried along by the Holy Spirit so that what was produced in this book is the word of God.

29:28

When the Bible speaks, church, who speaks? God speaks. We would do well to remember that every time we come in here on a Saturday or a Sunday or whenever it is throughout the week. These are God's words to us.

29:45

And because they are God's words, Peter reminded his audience nearly 2000 years ago, and I remind you as my brothers and sisters in Christ this morning, you will do well to pay attention to what God has said.

30:00

Are you ready to do that with me this morning? All right, I believe it. So turn with me if you're not already there in your Bibles to Ecclesiastes chapter 10. We're going to be looking at verses 12 through 20 this morning, verses 12 through 20.

30:18

And when God gave us wisdom literature, which very clearly includes the book of Ecclesiastes that we're in, he saw fit to revisit certain themes over and over again. And as my daughter Madeline told me a couple weeks ago when she was coming home from the 180 Youth Ministry here at the church, dad, did you know that the Bible sometimes repeats things?

30:44

And I'm like, yeah, you're right, honey, it does. And you know what it means when it repeats things, it means what is being said is very important. And God wants to be sure we hear these things.

30:55

And I'm going, you're absolutely right. Well, some of what we're going to look at this morning, God has told us again and again. And you know why he does that? Come on. It's important. And he wants us to hear them.

31:09

It's almost like we can sometimes read God's words or hear certain things and then forget them. Or we've heard it so much that somehow they lose to really... or that they cease to sink through and reach our hearts in the way that it should.

31:27

So God wants us to hear these things. And so if I could give you just in a way that I hope is helpful, a little outline of the verses we're gonna be looking at this morning, I wanna suggest this that in verses 12 through 14, we'll see that wise people are good stewards of their words.

31:47

Did you know that the word of God has much to say to us about what comes out of our mouths? You know that, right? For me and for you, God has much to say to us about that. Then when we get to verse 15, we'll see that wise people are good stewards of their work.

32:07

And then when we get to verses 16 through 20, I wanna just suggest this is a interesting little portion of scripture here within wisdom literature. And sometimes as pastors, we like to be able to wrap everything up with a nice little bow and present it in some way that perfectly captures whatever that thought is. I wanna just suggest to you, and you'll better understand when we get there, that we're gonna call verses 16 through 20, we're gonna say that wise people perform due diligence.

32:39

And we'll go into detail a little bit more about that later. Ecclesiastes chapter 10, verses 12 through 14, follow along with me church. These are God's words to us. The words of a wise man's mouth win him favor, but the lips of a fool consume him.

33:03

The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is evil madness. A fool multiplies words, though no man knows what is to be. And who can tell him what will be after him?

33:27

We're gonna stop there and just focus on verses 12 through 14. In the original language, this verse literally says this, "words of a wise man's mouth are grace." Words of a wise man's mouth are grace. Brothers and sisters, I wanna ask you this morning, are your words regularly seasoned with grace?

33:56

Gracious words. After being blessed to know Jesus for maybe the last 35 years or so of my life, I've become convinced that the more clearly someone understands and appreciates this extent to which God extended his grace toward them, the more inclined they will be to extend grace to who?

34:25

to other people, one of the clearest ways you and I can demonstrate that the grace of God has impacted and transformed our lives is for us to speak words that are gracious to other people. Stay with me on this now.

34:48

The Bible teaches that your debt before a holy God, the debt that we owed because of our sin was infinitely greater than anything you and I could ever repay. And at the same time, any debt that someone else might owe you is infinitely less than the debt that you owed to God.

35:15

Praise God, what did he do? In Ephesians chapter two, verses four through five, see this. But God being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses and sin, made us alive together with Christ by what? Grace you have been saved.

35:41

He goes on to say just a few verses later in eight and nine, for it is by grace you have been saved through faith that it's a gift of God, not of works, so that none of us could brag about it. It's a gift of God. Grace is from God. And it makes sense that when people come into contact with people who know him, that grace is something that God's people are characterized by. RockCC family, let your words be seasoned with grace.

36:17

But what does that even mean? I mean, it sounds nice, right? Seasoned with grace, hey, that's cool. I want my words to be that. In his commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes, Walter Kaiser Jr. noted that the type of grace -filled words that God has in mind here include the following, words that are gracious in content, the things that we choose to talk about and speak about, the content of our conversations should be gracious.

36:48

Our words should be winsome in spirit, affectionate, in appeal and compliant and affable in tone. Did you know the way that you speak to the very tone of your voice communicates something to people? Does it not?

37:05

It does. Not only the content of our words, and by the way, I've known people who, they want to say things that are absolutely true and they should and God bless them. But when they say them, they sound like they just picked up a phone book and hit you over the head with it.

37:23

That's not speaking in a way that's gracious, right? Luke chapter four tells of a time when Jesus was given the scroll at the synagogue and he read from the prophet of Isaiah and it's amazing passage because he reads from it and then he hands back the scroll and he explains to them that God's word, this prophecy has been fulfilled in their very presence in this hearing as he read to them.

37:50

But I wanna focus on what they said after Jesus spoke. Look at what verse 22 says, or I'll just read it to you. You don't have to flip there. All spoke well of him and they marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth.

38:10

How could we not hear this and ask, when was the last time someone marveled at the gracious words coming out of our mouths? Does that ever happen? This was true of Jesus. Proverbs 22:11 says this, he who loves purity of heart and whose speech is what?

38:33

Gracious will have the king as his friend. Not because he's a smooth talker, trying to get in there with the right crowd, but because his words are gracious. And not surprisingly, it says that in verse 12, these type of words win favor, the word of God says.

38:55

They win favor. On the other hand, conversely, the lips of a fool consume him. Quite literally, they swallow him up. I think of the word of God in the book of Jonah, where Jonah is running from God, gets thrown off the ship into the sea and the word of God tells us that a great fish came and swallowed him up.

39:22

Or as my kids would say when they were little, they gulped him. It gulped him. That's what foolish words do. They gulp us, they consume us. They swallow us up. So if the wise man's gracious words result in favor, you might expect the consequence of foolish words to produce the opposite, and they do.

39:48

Foolish, non-gracious words tend to do this. They don't give favor, they alienate. They divide. Instead of building bridges, they burn bridges. Have you ever said something so careless? Something so unkind that it felt like your words put up a wall between you and the person that you were speaking to?

40:20

You know why it felt that way it's because our words can do that. They can put up walls. God help us to be people who speak words that are saturated with grace. Words that unite and bring people together not divide.

40:39

Words that encourage and not words that discourage, build walls, and divide. This can happen in our homes. It can happen in the church. It happens in the world around us all the time. Moms and dads is you're blessed to be raising little people.

41:07

Lord willing, future if not present disciples and followers of Christ let your words be seasoned with grace. Husbands to your wives. Wives to your husbands. May your words win favor as they're communicated in a spirit of grace and not be words that separate, divide, and put up walls between one another.

41:36

Let us remember the grace that God has extended to each one of us in Jesus Christ. And may our words reflect that very same grace and give glory back to our God, amen. Sadly, from start to finish, the fool's words tell on him.

41:56

They tell on him, look at verse 13. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness. And the end of his talk is evil madness. I read this and I think of this. It's like

out of the gates with foolish words approaching on the final lap, turning the corner headed towards the finish line with evil madness.

42:19

I wanna ask you something. When foolish words are spoken, do things tend to escalate or deescalate? They got a way of escalating really quick, don't they? They do. Whether they're being spoken toward us or we're speaking them towards someone else.

42:40

I think about this and it's like a snowball being pushed downhill that picks up steam as it accelerates, right? And it runs over and picks up any unfortunate thing that's laying on the ground in front of it.

42:56

Look out, cause here it comes, man. And our words can be like that at times. The words of a fool can be just this. The beginning of his words are foolishness. The end of his talk is evil madness. You'd think it would be nice if the fool would just close his trap.

43:22

And sometimes we would do well to do that, right? Said last night, I can't remember if it was Bambi's mom or Thumper with the famous, "if you can't say something nice. Don't say nothing at all," right?

43:36

You remember that? The fool would be wise to shut up. And I can't tell you for sure if it was Abraham Lincoln or Mark Twain who said this, because there are people who attribute this quote to both, but I love this. One of them said, better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt. Look at the first part of verse 14 with me and we'll see that the fool doesn't take that counsel. He just keeps speaking.

44:13

What's it say? A fool does what? Verse 14, multiplies words. You ever seen one of those little graphics where they show the population of the earth and the numbers are ticking and it gets gradually larger and larger?

44:26

This kind of comes to my mind that a fool's words, if you could just do a word count on them, they multiply, they build. And you might think the fact that no man, including the fool, knows what is to be.

44:41

In other words, he can't predict the future. You might think that that would humble the fool and cause him to close his mouth, but it doesn't. Instead, he multiplies words. Why? Because foolish people always, they think they know.

45:00

They've got it. They've got it under control. They understand. They know what's really going on, whether there's any weight or legitimacy or truth to their words or not, they got something to say. Church family, don't let this be us.

45:20

Don't let this be us. We would do well, as Peter said, to pay attention to Jesus' words here. In Matthew 12:36-37, he said this, I tell you, on the day of judgment, people will give account for every careless word they speak.

45:44

That's one of those things that we've probably all heard. But if we could really grasp that and really wrap our mind around that, that one day we will give an account to God for every careless word that's spoken.

45:58

That's a frightening thought. Did you know that our holy God takes sin so seriously that he's not willing to overlook any infraction, even a careless word spoken or something you said that you thought nobody heard?

46:19

But here's the good news, as frightening as that is. God sent his one and only son, and his words were seasoned with grace that our words often were not. Word of God tells us that he did not sin as you and I have and do, and that he came to take our sin and to pay the penalty that was rightfully deserved for that sin.

46:50

You know, the word of God says that the wages of sin is what? Is death. And that Christ on the cross took our sin upon himself. All the careless words spoken that you and I have ever uttered or will utter.

47:08

And he paid the penalty for them for us on the cross. He died there, he was buried, and he rose again. And the word of God says that our God is willing to look to what Jesus did for us on the cross when Jesus paid the penalty for our sins and he's willing to credit the righteousness of his perfect son, Christ, whose words were perfect and whose deeds were perfect, who kept God's law perfectly.

47:36

He's willing to credit the righteousness of his perfect son to our account, not if we would never sin again for the rest of our life, but if we would turn from our sin and put our trust in Jesus Christ who was without sin, recognize that we need what can only be offered in Christ and receive him as our Lord and Savior.

47:57

That's good news, is it not? That's good news. The preacher's attention now turns from how the wise are good stewards of their words to in verse 15, in an indirect sense, how the wise are good stewards of their work.

48:15

Look at verse 15 with me. The toil of a fool wearies him, for he does not know the way to the city. What an interesting picture here. The fool is so exhausted by his work that apparently he can't even figure out how to get to the city nearby.

48:40

This is not the same as when you and I sometimes walk into Costco or Target, come out and can't remember where we parked our car. That's a different thing. In this case, the fool appears to be what some of my family would say back in the day, plumb tuckered out by his labor.

49:03

He's tired and I think there's a very good chance that he says he's this tired because fools are often what? They're often lazy. Another theme that's revisited and wisdom literature. Proverbs 6:10 says it this way, a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest and poverty will come upon you like a robber.

49:40

Brothers and sisters, we would do well to pay attention to the fact that God despises idleness, laziness, and he esteems hard work. Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do it all to the glory of God.

50:09

Wherever God has blessed you with the job that he has given you if you're here today and you're blessed to have a job- work as unto the Lord. Earlier in this same book, the author said it this way in a way that can't help but grab your attention.

50:29

This is chapter four, verse five. The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh. Now, is that a word picture or what? The idea here appears to be, not that the fool's a cannibal,

but that people who become comfortable with idleness and unfamiliar altogether with hard work ultimately torment or do damage to themselves.

50:59

And if the exhausted, lazy fool can't even find his way to the city that's right by him, how will he ever find God? Pastor Drew reminded us last week in Psalm 14:1 that the word of God says the fool says in his heart, what, there is no God.

51:23

So the foolish individual doesn't have the sense of urgency that you and I might feel to wanna honor our God. He doesn't even believe there is one. So his words are characterized by foolishness. His work may be characterized by laziness or idleness.

51:48

God values and esteems work that honors Him. By the way, wherever God has placed you, dear people, you don't have to be in the church serving as a staff member of a church, whatever God has called you to.

52:04

Work as unto the Lord and know that He has placed you there to represent Him in the workplace. And may God be glorified in how you serve Him in that place. Whether you're excited as all get out when you arrive or you don't want to be there when you go, may He be at work in our hearts to be producing this in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

52:28

We're gonna move on to verses 16 through 20 now, and these are some really interesting verses. And I felt like they presented us with an opportunity to take the heart of what they're communicating and then step to the side from that and just say, how might what's clearly said in these verses impact how we think through some things right now in this day and age?

52:52

Verses 16 through 17 have been referred to as an oracle of woe and blessing, an oracle of woe and blessing. And the first one's gonna be bad in verse 16. In verse 17, it's gonna be good. And I want you to notice something really important here that's gonna help set up or help you understand why I say the words I'm about to say in the moments to come.

53:17

But there is a shift that's now going on in this little portion of chapter 10, where the author's focus moves from the individual and his focus becomes more national. It becomes more national. And the implication in these verses appear to be this, that the destiny of a nation can either go the way of an absolute train wreck or it can go towards the way that honors God and is blessed, largely as a result of the people leading it.

53:51

Look at these two verses with me, verses 16 and 17. Woe to you, not individual, but O land, when your king is a child, and your princes feast in the morning. There's the oracle of woe, and now the oracle of blessing.

54:14

Happy are you, O land, when your king is the son of the nobility, and your princes feast at the proper time, for strength and not for drunkenness. Let me start by stating the really obvious here. All nations, just like the nation of Israel in this passage, when this was written, are governed by a person or people.

54:42

And the preacher has just given us a picture of two very different governing bodies or rulers over a nation. In the first part of it, verse 16, the people are inevitably in bad shape because the ones governing them are inexperienced, immature, irresponsible, based on what's said in that verse alone.

55:11

Every day appears to be a party for them. It says your princes feast in the morning. How many of you have been or known somebody that it's happy hour from the time they get out of bed and put their feet on the ground in the morning.

55:32

This is a characteristic of the fool and a foolish leadership or a foolish nation. Proverbs 31:4-5 says it this way, it is not for kings to drink wine or for rulers to take strong drink. Why?

55:53

Lest they drink and forget what has been decreed and pervert the rights of all the afflicted. This is kind of a no-brainer as well, but it is God's desire that nations be ruled over by responsible, mature, experienced, and Lord willing God-fearing leaders.

56:24

I don't know if you're going to agree with me or not, but I want to say sadly, we rarely, if ever, see this taking place. And I find this fascinating and allow you to take this however you want, draw whatever conclusion you may or may not want to draw from it, but I wanted to point this out, and you can check it out later.

56:45

I'm going to summarize this. This is from Isaiah 3:1-5. Scripture actually records how God chose to pour out His judgment upon His own people, the people of Judah and Jerusalem. And what did God do exactly when He poured out His judgment upon this nation?

57:07

This may shock you, but you know what He did? He removed the mature, honorable, experienced leaders and replaced them according to Isaiah 3:1-5 with boys and went on to say, infants shall rule over them and the people will oppress one another.

57:28

The youth will be insolent to the elder and the despised to the honorable. Part of God's judgment upon the nation of Israel was quite literally to take away any sign of good leadership and allow it to be ran by a bunch of inexperienced fools.

57:53

That was part of His judgment. Brothers and sisters, one way you can be certain God's judgment is being poured out upon a nation is when you take a look at it and it's clear that it's being led by immature, dishonorable, irresponsible leaders who don't fear God.

58:12

Some of you might be thinking now, oh good, Pastor Ron's going to support whatever view I have of politics or not, and I'm not up here to do that today. I'm trying to give you some guiding principles.

58:24

to think through how we should think through about these sort of things. God's word speaks to the type of people who are to be in positions of authority and leadership and what they should be characterized, what they shouldn't be characterized, even what happens to a nation when those things are in place or aren't in place.

58:45

I am thankful, I'm gonna say this before I share a few more things that I am a staff member at a church that is very determined that politics doesn't go out in front and our faith come behind it somewhere.

59:01

That's not right and that happens far too often and you know what, it gets kinda sneaky and we don't even realize it's happening at times. And I'm not just talking to liberals or to conservatives, I'm talking to everybody in this room right now.

59:18

It's Christ first. It's Christ that we exist to exalt. It's Christ's name that we proclaim and we preach here at The Rock Community Church and that churches that wanna honor God should be doing throughout the world.

59:34

But guess what? We are also in a place where we have the privilege of being able to vote. Sometimes we have to wrestle with this type of stuff and it's not easy. If you're like me, I probably drove past 100 signs today telling me who to vote for in the midterm elections just to get to church.

59:51

Some of them big, some of them enormous on the sides of the street, all wanting to tell me who to vote for. And so I just thought this is a place where when we talk about the type of leaders that are to lead a nation and what we should be thinking about and looking for, especially as some elections are around the corner, I'm not gonna stand up here and tell you who to vote for.

01:00:10

I'm not gonna get mad at you. If you don't vote for whoever I think I'm gonna vote for, we are one in Christ. Here are some guiding principles that I think that are important to keep in mind. One, wise people should care about who leads their nation and how it's governed.

01:00:27

Two, at the same time, I can't emphasize enough, our hope is in Jesus Christ in the gospel alone and definitely not in the Republican or Democratic party. I hope you can say amen to that. Third, it's our privilege and responsibility as temporary citizens of the nation that God has placed us with.

01:00:51

And if you're like me here today, you are a citizen of the United States of America. I wanna say this and I want you to hear me say all of this. I am proud to be an American. It doesn't mean I'm proud of everything that happens in America.

01:01:06

And I recognize when I say I'm proud of America, what I'm really thinking is this, is that in the providence of God, out of all the places he could have chosen to have me born in this world, I am thankful that I was born into a nation where I'm given freedoms and opportunities that many other nations of the world don't experience.

01:01:24

I'm thankful for the people who have even fought in and stood in the gap for us to be able to maintain those freedoms and those opportunities that come to us. I'm grateful for all of those things.

01:01:38

I also don't look down upon or think that I'm better than someone who's born in another country of the world because I tell you what just like me you out there you didn't have anything to do with where you were born.

01:01:53

Every good and perfect gift these benefits I'm talking about right now being born in America James says in James 1:17 every good and perfect gift comes from above. Those are things to give glory back to God for not to beat our chest and say go us about.

01:02:12

And so that that just gives you a little idea of how I think about those things. By the way I've arranged for security to escort me out after the service today. It's our privilege and responsibility as temporary citizens of the nation God has placed us in.

01:02:33

By the way, our ultimate citizenship is in heaven. We're just passing through down here. May we make an impact for Jesus as we're here, but it's our responsibility and privilege to vote for who we'd believe to be the most honorable, mature, experienced, and were forgiven that opportunity, truly godly leaders, or policies to be put into place in our nation.

01:03:01

For no matter who you vote for, if you belong to Jesus, you are my brother and sister in Christ and we are one here in Christ and in the church throughout the world. Five, as God has shown us this morning, it's important as you talk about any of these things that your words are seasoned with what? Grace.

01:03:26

That they're seasoned with grace and I can't tell you how often I may even find myself around people that agree with things I would agree with, but the people hearing them don't even want to hear what they have to say because of the way that those things come out of their mouth.

01:03:44

And by the way, I'm not telling you don't stand for certain things. Don't believe for things, believe things that we should be believing. Get to know people. It is a scary thing I've learned to look around and recognize all the people we tend to hang around are just like us.

01:04:05

This is a big world, guys. There's a lot of people out there who think differently and who have different views than us and part of loving people involves listening and seeking to understand and that's not the same as just being open -minded to everything. I want to tell you something. God has given us minds. He's given us His word to direct and guide how we think. There are many things my mind is closed to. And I'm not ashamed to say that.

01:04:36

Because when God speaks to something clearly, our mind should be closed to those things. But recognize there are a lot of people that grew up in a way that's different. They were raised differently than us. They look differently than we do. They came from a different place. And they have things to say that are of value that we can learn from. And sometimes the truth is we don't even listen to any of them.

01:05:02

Apart from the Bible, apart from the Word of God, if somebody and they have asked me before, name some books that have greatly impacted your life. This little book would be the first on my list. This book is called The Grace and Truth Paradox written by a man named Randy Alcorn.

01:05:19

And I love this book because I'm regularly challenged by this, that at the beginning of the book of John, the Word of God says that Jesus came from the Father full of, who knows, grace and truth. And here's what we often do, sometimes we're people that are so strong on the side of truth, man, we want what's right.

01:05:42

We got to stand up and say what we believe in and that sort of thing. And that's all good and true. But you know what, sometimes when we're not yielded to be God, we can be some incredibly ungracious people.

01:05:54

And then on the other side, you've got the people who God blessed them and we need them. They care about grace and mercy and compassion. And sometimes it's such a challenge to them that they can't even get around to saying what's true because they're afraid they might hurt somebody's feelings or they're embarrassed about how it might be received.

01:06:12

And they need to be able to speak what's true. But I thank God for those people as well. Here's the humbling part is that Jesus wasn't on one side or the other, the Word of God

says that He came from the Father full of grace and truth, not 50 -50, 100% grace and 100% truth that challenges me daily and how I interact with people.

01:06:37

And this book is about that. I want to encourage you to check it out in this. It has a little statement here as it relates to politics. And it says political grace and truth. I realize I've dipped my toe out into dangerous territory and maybe I'm just going to go ankle deep right now.

01:06:58

So I'm going to use the words conservative and liberal. I'm going to use them because people use that. You know what I'm referring to and some of the thoughts or mindsets often associated with those sides.

01:07:11

And I would say strengths and weaknesses with both for sure. That's my personal opinion. But what do we do with all of this? Randy Alcorn writes, in, by the way, if the person's next to you, you see him clench in a fist or something, you might want to scoot over a seat.

01:07:29

As I read this, he says, often conservatives emphasize truth and morals, and liberals can be inclined to emphasize grace and compassion. Now, these are wide overarching statements. I understand that.

01:07:46

They're big general statements. We could talk about these forever, but I think there's value in how concise they are. And he goes on to say this, conservatives want to conserve what's right. Liberals want to liberate from what's wrong.

01:08:02

Liberals' commitment to fighting racism in the 60s was commendable. But sometimes liberals fight against true standards, like the belief that abortion, fornication, adultery, homosexual behavior, that they're wrong.

01:08:17

They embrace tolerance as a grace for substitute for grace, by the way, what the world says tolerance is and what it esteem is tolerance is not the same thing as what the Bible says grace is. The embrace tolerance is a grace substitute at times liberal Christians often end up being liberals first, Christian second.

01:08:42

So hold on, you know, I'm going to read the next part too, right? Conservatives want to restore lost values. They want to go back to the days when prayer was allowed in school, but they forget that the same schools that allowed prayer didn't allow black children.

01:09:00

By trying to conserve so many things, even things that were at times clearly wrong, conservative Christians have sometimes been conservatives first, Christians second. Why can't? Why should we have to choose between conservatism's emphasis on truth and liberalism's emphasis on grace?

01:09:21

Why can't we oppose injustice to minorities and to the unborn? Why can't we oppose greedy ruination of the environment and anti -industry new age environmentalism? Why can't we affirm the biblical right to the ownership of property and emphasize God's call to voluntarily share wealth with the needy?

01:09:49

Why can't we uphold God's condemnation of sexual immorality, including homosexual practices and reach out in love and compassion to those trapped in destructive lifestyles? We cannot do these things if we are first and foremost, either liberals or conservatives.

01:10:08

We can do these things only if we are first and foremost followers of Christ, who is full of grace and truth. Wow, powerful, powerful words. Martin Luther once said, Satan doesn't care which side of the horse you fall off on just as long as you don't stay in the saddle.

01:10:34

And I think about that when I think of Jesus being characterized by both grace and truth, he was able to be merciful and filled with compassion towards a woman who was being judged by a bunch of arrogant men.

01:10:47

And when they left and weren't able to cast a stone at her because they recognized they were sinful too, he was also able to say to her because he loved her, go and sin no more. He wasn't afraid to say what was true.

01:11:05

And his words were seasoned with compassion and mercy and so should ours be. I'm gonna move at warp speed through verses 18 and 20 because I wanted to feel like there was value in those things and that this passage provided us with an opportunity to talk about some things that I hope blessed and encouraged and caused you to think. By the way I've realized as I thought a lot about this that when you are characterized by both grace and truth the best way to know it is that there are times where you make people on either side of the spectrum a little bit uncomfortable.

01:11:46

If the people you hang around are always happy about whatever it is that you say you're probably way over to one side. Think about it. They loved embraced Jesus and one minute his words were gracious and they commended him for it and the next minute they were nailing him to a cross.

01:12:08

The Pharisees hated the things that he said. Verse 18 through sloth the roof sinks in and through indolence the house sleeps or house leaks having just pronounced woe upon the nation's leaders that are clearly led by unqualified leaders or by the nation led by them.

01:12:29

The idea here appears to be that when things are off track at the top there's a good chance they're gonna be off track all the way down and he gives the example of a citizen's home where neglect and idleness have wreaked havoc and he gives this picture of it's leaking and the the roof is sinking in.

01:12:48

I connect this description or this picture back to the the poor foolish leadership that comes before it and then he goes on again to contrast back with what's happening in the place where good leadership is in place.

01:13:02

He says in verse 19 bread is made for laughter and wine gladness life and wine gladdens life and money answers everything what an interesting statement. Now after pronouncing blessing upon nations led by qualified leaders The idea here appears to be that when things are on track at the top of the nation, there's a good chance they'll be on track all the way down.

01:13:27

Where in this example, individuals under that sort of leadership are able to enjoy things like financial prosperity even. Wine when it's consumed in an appropriate manner. Food in the same way. It's an interesting thing.

01:13:46

Don't let this fool you. Money answers everything. There are some who would take this is. It's almost a sarcastic response. We know from elsewhere in scripture that money is not the problem. It's the fact that we can love money.

01:14:00

It's a good thing to be able to be blessed and to have resources that we know come from God. He's called us to be a steward of those things. Money is not the problem. It becomes a problem when we make it in the place of God. And we have a tendency to do that where it becomes first in our life, but at the same time, when we're blessed to have money and resources and we love God, we can use them to do and accomplish good things.

01:14:24

That's how I would understand what he's saying here. Even in your thoughts, verse 20. Do not curse the king. Everybody see that? Now we just read a passage where they talked about some terrible leaders and some good ones.

01:14:44

So wait, Pastor Ron, which one's he talking about here? 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.

01:15:01

Word's gonna get around fast, it's foolish, and I would say ungodly to curse the king. I don't know about you, but it would have been a lot comfortable to me if this verse said don't openly curse the king when he's looking in case he might hear you, but that's not what it says.

01:15:20

Not even in your thoughts. That means whether it's really hard for you right now to not do this and it was a lot easier a few years ago or if it was really hard a few years ago and it's easier for you now, what does God have to say to you this morning?

01:15:36

Even in your thoughts, don't curse the king. This is radical stuff, but so is following Jesus. You know what our jobs is or what our job is? Forgive me for my terrible language there. First Timothy two, verses one and two.

01:15:56

First of all then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people, for kings and all who were in high positions that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life. Godly, and dignified in every way.

01:16:17

Brothers and sisters, I wanna ask you this morning, what did God speak to your heart about through his word? And what would you do well to pay attention to that he had to say to you this morning? I'm gonna invite our sister just to play a little something for us.

01:16:35

And what I wanna give you is just an opportunity for 30, 45 seconds or so, just to stop and not run out of here, grab a donut, shake hands and go home. But to say, God, did you have something I would do well to pay attention to as I heard your words this morning?

01:16:54

Let's go ahead and do that now. And then I'll close us in a word of prayer. And then I'll open it up for prayer. Father God, be doing a work in our hearts. Thank you that you loved us while we were yet sinners, your word tells us.

01:17:52

God, you loved us so much that you have seen fit to give us the Holy Spirit who's at work within us to be making us people who increasingly reflect Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. May the world around us be able to look to us and see people whose words are seasoned with grace.

01:18:17

May our homes be filled with gracious words, may our workplaces be filled with people who work as unto the Lord. Father, may the conversations we have and even how we think and talk about the people that are in leadership over our nation, our city, our counties now or in the years to come.

01:18:41

Lord, may we engage in praying for them and may your will be accomplished and all that takes place through them. Thank you you've given us a word that speaks to your heart, to our hearts. Thank you that you have recognized there are some things we need to hear again and again in order that we might put them into practice by the power of the Holy Spirit and that you would be glorified.

01:19:08

Lord, we love you. We ask your blessing on the remainder. remainder of this service, this day and the weeks to come, may we go out into this world and be a light for you and be blessed to be able to participate in pointing people towards Jesus. We love you, Lord, and we ask all of these things in his precious name, amen.