

Ecclesiastes 10:1-11 – Three More Desirable Things

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Just glancing at this passage you might think that this is simply a list of proverbs that have no relation to each other. But if you carefully look, you will see that Solomon is continuing to teach those who have entered into God's household how they should live and the good things they should desire as his children.

You will remember that Ecclesiastes was mostly autobiographical自传. Solomon strayed远离 from the Lord and tried other things to satisfy his life (wine, wives, entertainment, great building projects, knowledge, power). But he found them unfruitful and unsatisfying. He then returned to God and to God's household and he then began to desire to live a better life with better values. We will look at 3 more of those desirable things today.

Our headings are: **Desire to be Wise, Desire to be Submissive, and Desire to Wait for Justice.**

Our goals are: **That you will desire the better gifts that were earned for you through your restoration恢复 to your heavenly Father by his heavenly Son on the cross.**

Desire to Be Wise

1 Dead flies putrefy腐烂 the perfumer's ointment膏油. And cause it to give off a foul odor臭味. So does a little folly to one respected for wisdom and honor.

1. Some may accomplish great things...build great armies...feared by nations...accumulate囤积 wealth and help spread it, **but they may have one error...one area of weakness**... And that area of weakness could ruin them and everything else they accomplish. So many great men have fallen because of 1 sin.

2. Consider Solomon's illustration of how 1 area of weakness can ruin a good man. A perfumer's ointment, Solomon said, was precious...expensive...loved...but then one dead fly could get in and ruined the whole container. Who wants to rub dead flies on his face? And this was probably describing some of those horrible putrefying flies of eastern countries...that do stink发臭...not the common house flies – though they are dirty as well. I believe that this was a direct application from Solomon's own life. He was put in a position of eminency崇高 but soon envy moved in and caused him to want more. God had given him great wisdom. God had granted him favor of the people. God had granted him much wealth. God granted him peace with his neighbors. God granted him a wife...but that was where the trouble started. Through envy and lust, Solomon wanted more and more wives and money...He multiplied wives, the Bible says. Lust欲望 and envy嫉妒 ruined him. And he even abused his own people and over-worked them. These things were like a fly in his perfume. Jacob recognized that he was a stink to the people of Canaan by the one sin of his sons Simeon and Levi to the men of Shechem. Consider some other flies in perfume. Moses married an Ethiopian. Samson took a non-Christian wife. David took another man's wife. The thing to remember is that many eyes are on those in authority, just like a child might talk like his father, imitating模仿 his good and bad mistakes. Solomon forgot that he was to reflect映照 God to his people! He became a foolish king...who once was the wisest.

2 **A wise man's heart** is at his right hand, But a fool's heart at his left.

3. **But the wise man (unlike what Solomon did) is guided by his strength rather than by weakness. He knows how one mistake can ruin things...one area of weakness could destroy a life.** He doesn't take any chances, as we say – unnecessary risks. His heart takes the safe strong route路径 to do the job he is called to do. And doesn't this speak so much about Solomon who went to the weaker side? He ran after strange women. So brothers and sisters, learn to build on your strength. For example, if you are tempted by a weakness, like covetousness贪婪 for instance, wisdom requires that you be busy with something like reading – something that is a good thing for a Christian...or visit someone...or write an encouraging e-mail to someone...or help someone with their household chores, or baby. You see, if you are busy with good things, you won't have time to be distracted心烦意乱 by sinful things. Let your heart guide your right hand! And if your fly is not covetousness but lust, or stealing...you have to come up with replacement activities...putting off requires putting on. Don't ruin your Christian life by one area of weakness.

3 Even when a fool walks along the way, He lacks wisdom, And he shows everyone that he is a fool.

4. The one who is careless, and so not wise, evidences his carelessness to all. And what good is that life to the cause of Christ – whose you are by blood and baptism? Solomon knew how he appeared to the godly in Israel when he strayed.

Desire to Be Submissive

4 If the spirit of the ruler rises against you, **Do not leave your post;** For conciliation柔顺 pacifies能免

great offenses.

1. On the other side of the issue of Solomon's folly was the **folly of the people – his own people**. That folly seems to have been the fact that after the people became wealthy they became petulant 性急—complaining that things should go better. You see, even though they were wealthy, Solomon was abusive. So here in Verse 4, Solomon was good enough to say: “I confess I am bad, but you have to watch your own sins also.” This is important because sometimes because of consciousness 自觉 of your own sins, as a leader, you may be reluctant 不愿 to speak to others about their sins. Parents and elders understand this very well. But consciousness of your own sins must not stop you from your duty. Confess your own sins, but point out sins wherever they are committed.

2. **So Solomon urged healing (conciliation) of the relationship with the rulers.** He urged his people to keep doing their duty, in spite of what their leaders might do or not do. The “post” (position) of the citizenry is a post of submission. So take this as a warning not to rebel against the lawful authorities. There are very strict times when you may lawfully revolt 反抗 against the state...and that is only when your life (or your family's) is at stake innocently and you have no recourse even to run. It is often better to yield to a mean ruler than fight with him. Work to heal him...heal your leader's relationship with God. Remember Solomon's earlier warning!

Ecclesiastes 7:9 Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools.

5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun, As an error proceeding from the ruler: 6 Folly is set in great dignity, While the rich sit in a lowly place. 7 I have seen servants on horses, While princes walk on the ground like servants.

3. Yes, it is true that many leaders have scattered brains or misplaced loyalty. There may be leaders who were in places of great prominence, men like Manuel Noriega, who moved from being a president to being a prisoner. Nebuchadnezzar went from the lap of luxury, idol making, and feasting on lavishing 浪费 foods to feeding on the land...eating grass because of foolishness. The exiles in Babylon still had to obey him as far as was possible. Hosea spoke of the princes of Israel who moved landmarks in their greed. Ezekiel spoke of shepherds of Israel who plundered 掠夺 the sheep of Israel. You personally may have a boss or supervisor who is incompetent or stupid, but you are still obligated to working for their success. You may have a husband who is not as competent...or a father...but the answer remains the same...**you may not refuse to submit to them**. They are there by God's appointment and you must bow to the Lord and show that by submitting to those he has placed over you—even as the Jews bowed before Haman in Esther's day.

Desire to Wait for Justice

8 He who digs a pit will fall into it, And whoever breaks through a wall will be bitten by a serpent.

1. A third desire you must have today is to desire to live peaceably and **wait for justice instead of seeking personal revenge**. Solomon may have been pointing out that the reason you must live peaceably and wait for justice was that the wicked one, like he himself was in this case, would fall into a pit he has dug 挖掘. Maybe the bribe that he took came back to haunt him. Yes, the leader may even have been violent (breaking through a wall) but he is still bitten – by a serpent inside the wall that he broke down. (“Wall” means “hedge 障碍物” so he may have broken the hedge to enlarge his own territory. The idea is the same: the thief is bitten. This may be an allusion to the Garden of Eden where the Serpent broke in to steal from God's people. This resulted in his death.

2. Today, this may directly apply to the government which over-taxes you. It will have its own hand bitten in judgment. Or it may figuratively apply to the government by the fact that it may try to steal your right to raise you child the way God said. This week (July 12) one big funded research argued that children who are spanked by their parents 被父母打屁股 will more likely have mental problems. Will God not judge these wicked leaders? But what's the point for you? The point for

you is if you get too worked-up about being unfairly treated you will not be able to live peaceably with your leaders and you will not be able to wait for God's justice. **Revolution will be on your mind**...revolution against your civil leaders, your employers (strikes), your church leaders, and even your parents! But God wants better from you.

9 He who quarries stones采石的 may be hurt by them, And he who splits wood may be endangered by it.

3. Solomon then gave a 2nd illustration of why you must live peaceably and wait for God's justice. Your wicked leaders or others for that matter, may try to steal stones from your house (use your house as a quarry) but then the stones will fall on him. What about the 2nd part of verse 9? Leaders who try to steal...split what the other person has, will be hurt in the process. Splitting wood is a dangerous job. When you split wood it can fly. So live peaceably with others (not steal from them) knowing that they will be judged by God for their unfair treatment or robbery of you later.

10 If the ax is dull, And one does not sharpen the edge, Then he must use more strength : **But wisdom brings success.**

4. Then Solomon pointed out that it is actually better to wait for justice. Wait till the time is ripe and the blade is sharpened. A blunt钝blow is not sufficient. If the axe is sharpened when you strike it will not make a mess and justice will be sure and effective. Someone said: **You don't lose the time you spend sharpening your axe.** Solomon is trying to impress on his readers that they must be patient with their leaders. Wait for justice. Are you angry with bad leaders? Wait to vote...and think about how you will vote when elections are held. (Sharpen you axe.) Maybe you can mobilize others to be involved socially and politically – but don't rebel. But your best axe is the Gospel...so be properly sharpened with the Gospel to evangelize so men can come to their knees.

11 A serpent may bite when it is not charmed未行法杓的 The babbler is no different法杓未行去杓的人就毫无用处

5. Be nice to nasty people. Don't try to out-hiss a snake. You will lose. In other words, be careful when you speak to your leaders or others...especially if those leaders are not submitting to the Lord. They may hurt you...like Congolese dogs that bite and don't bark. Learn to pacify leaders and wait, when possible, even as Abigail pacified David who was out to perform murder on Nabal. Proverbs 25:15 By long forbearance a ruler is persuaded, And a gentle tongue breaks a bone.

Conclusion:

It is good warning to **be wise** in your dealings, especially when you are dealing with those God has placed in authority over you. You must submit to them as you would submit to the Lord...and even work for your leaders' good. It is also necessary to wait for God's justice over tyrants暴君 You must never try to hurry-up God's justice.

Brother and Sisters in Jesus Christ: These are 3 important gifts that you must desire. And all 3 are on offer for free. They are free for you, but they were not free它们本身不是免费的 Your Lord Jesus Christ gave his life to pay so you could be reconciled to God the Father and he is the great Father of all gifts. But these are not gifts to hoard储备用 These gifts, the more you use them, the greater blessing you get. What a contrast to worldly gifts that only last for a short time! Your wine...the taste goes from your mouth and is forgotten. Your husband...well he is not always warm and caring. Your car...it will start to rust... Your knowledge...Alzheimer's takes over and you forget...but not the gifts of God. Love them. Use them. And always remember what they cost! And always keep praying for these gifts.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, to obey the Lord you need have a change of heart and become his child. He does the operation for free. He will give you a new heart and new desires and strength to obey all his commands. May you ask the Lord to make you his child today!