

# *Welcome To Sunday Night Bible Fellowship*

*Every word inspired.*



*Every word proclaimed.*

***“We proclaim Him, warning every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man mature in Christ.” Col 1:28***

***“GOD’S HOUSE”***

***Eccl. 5:1-7***

May 17, 2020

HEBREW: ONE WHO GATHERS PEOPLE



"TEACHER"



## **Ecc1 5:1-7**

- 1 Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil.
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- Solomon now pivots to talk to believers and how worship can be vanity.
- Verses 1 and 2 contain a series of four commands: “Guard your steps” (1a), “draw near to listen” (1b), “Do not be hasty” in word or thought (2a), and “let your words be few” (2b).
- Solomon is quick to grab our attention at the beginning of chapter 5 – “Watch your step!”

**“Guard”** - שָׁמַר - shawmar – watch, guard, observe carefully, attend to, pay attention to.

- So before we enter the place Solomon is going to tell us, we must think about our steps. We must be careful. We must pay attention. We must be cautious.
- **“steps”** are important because they will lead us into something – it may be good, it may be bad, it may be dangerous, it may have serious consequences.
- When someone tells you to “watch your step” they are warning you of a potential danger just ahead that you had better pay very close attention to.

**Think about this –**

**If the high priest took a misstep in the Holy of Holies, he would die instantly.**

**Ex 28:35**

35 "It shall be on Aaron when he ministers; and its tinkling shall be heard when he enters and leaves the holy place before the Lord, so that he will not die.



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- So where are we going? Solomon tells us.
- “. . .to the house of God . . .”

# **“House of God”**

- In the OT when you were going to worship God, you went to the Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple was “God’s House.”
- In the Temple, sacrifices were offered, and the people were instructed about what they meant.
- In the Temple the Law was read.
- In the Temple God’s Word was taught and explained to the people of God.
- The temple was the only place in the land where people could learn these things about God.
- In our day “God’s House” is no longer a building.
- The transition in Acts, with the birth of the Church, moved the house of God from a building where God dwelt to people in whom God dwelt.
- So now in the Church age, wherever the people of God gather, there is “God’s House.”



- The men of the Old Testament made preparations for worship. At the first Passover, men were to select a perfect lamb, slaughter it, put its blood on the doorpost, roast the meat, and make sure the house was cleansed of leaven.
- So today what preparations do we make before we enter God's house? Do we spend as much time preparing for worship today? And what kind of preparation should be made? Do we get enough sleep? Do we think about the fact that this is the Lord's Day? What does that mean? Do we think about Scripture? Do we prepare our mind and heart to receive the Word? Do we confess sin? Do we put aside worry and anxiety? Do we perhaps sing?
- In other words, are we doing the things that get us in the right frame of mind for worship?
- Remember, this is between you and God. It does not matter what someone else is doing or what someone else thinks. This is your preparation for listening to God.
- ***Principle: Our preparation for worship must precede our participation in worship.***



## **1 Tim 3:15**

15 but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the **household** of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

## **1 Peter 4:17**

17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the **household** of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

# ***Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen . . .***

- Solomon is saying, “God’s house” is unlike any other house you enter.
- Before you go into God’s House, you must think. You must prepare your thoughts and your words. You must be careful.
- You will be approaching God.
- As you enter the Temple you will hear the OT priest teaching.
- What are you to do? “ . . . **draw near to listen . . .**”
- Solomon is saying that is primarily why you go to the God’s house – to listen. It’s not to talk. So it’s what goes into your ears, not what comes out of your mouth. . . primarily.
  - It is not “draw near” to sing louder.
  - It is not “draw near” so that you can pray longer.
  - It is not “draw near” so you can talk to your friends during the service .
  - No, it is “draw near” so that you can listen.
- The Church really doesn’t understand this. Teaching and preaching have become almost an afterthought in many churches. Music, drama, skits, and whatever else we can think of that is more exciting than the proclamation of God’s Word, becomes a substitute for what we need to do most – listen to the Word.

***“rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools;***

- The **“sacrifice of fools”** refers to speaking foolishly and think it is pleasing the Lord.
- The temple was to be a place for teaching and learning God’s Word which was more important than using it as a place for singing repetitious songs, praying repetitious prayers, and teaching with wordy stories, wordy illustrations, and extra biblical agendas, all as if it is pleasing to the King’s ear.
- Therefore if you have walked out of a church service not hearing from God then you have not worshiped. You have attended church but you have not worshiped.
- Worship can only occur when you hear from God.

## **John 4:19-25**

19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

20 "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

22 "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

23 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

***“ . . . for they do not know they are doing evil.”***

- They so lack in spiritual understanding that they actually think that they are doing something good and acceptable. They do not know that they are doing evil.
- So they are marching into the King’s presence, committing evil, and insulting the King. The reason it is insulting: It shows no respect.
- They have put in no preparation when coming into His presence. They are therefore not there to hear His words, but only to utter their own empty words.



“The picture of the fool is of someone who comes up to the palace of the great King and rather than listening carefully to the instruction of the priest about how to act in the house of the great King, he speaks and acts in a way that is contemptuous and insulting to the King. And even though they do not know this is evil it is still evil. What is the evil? In context it is robbing God of the reverence and honor that is due to Him.”

- Keith Krell

“Fruitful and acceptable worship begins before it begins.”

- Alexander Maclaren

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***“Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God.”***

Word and thought are the two areas of warning here - what we say and what we think.

**“hasty”** -  - bawhal – rash, quick, hasten anxiously.

**“hasty in word”** means speaking before thinking. They have their mouth in motion before having their brain in gear.

They are the ones that we may wonder if they are fools and then they open their mouths and remove all doubt.

One should never go into the house of God and start blabbering before thinking about what he is saying. In other words, one should think before he speaks.

## **Prov 10:8**

8 The wise of heart will receive commands,  
But a babbling fool will be ruined.

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**“impulsive”** - **מְהֵרָה** - mahar – hurried, without thought, quick, off the cuff.

**“impulsive in thought”** means “hurried in your mind.” In other words, you may think about it but you don’t really take enough time to think it through.

## **Applications:**

- Do not let your emotions or your sudden thoughts cause you to speak hastily. You are in God's house to learn, not to release your emotions or act impulsively.
- Therefore, you should control your outward actions and your inner feelings.
- Wild promises, unguarded commitments, vain repetition are all to be avoided.
- Self-control, measured speech and action should characterize the believer in God's house.
- Another thing - don't come making accusations against God, as though you are wise enough or high enough to judge his actions.

## **Example of Job -**

- Job was rash with his mouth.
- He presumed to judge the actions of God.
- He felt that, since he was a righteous man, God should not to punish him.
- And he felt he deserved an answer from God as to why things didn't work out that way.
- Since we can't understand everything, we should be careful about what we say to God.
- Why? Because God is God and we are not.



***“For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; . . .”***

- Solomon wants us to understand that God is not your “buddy next door,” He’s not the “man upstairs.”
- God is sovereign; God is in control; He is the infinite, eternal, unchangeable God who is full of all knowledge, all wisdom, all power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth and dwells in heaven.
- He hears the inaudible. He sees the invisible. He knows your thoughts. He knows everything that is happening in the world.
- In prayer therefore, you are not filling God in on something He does not already know.

## **Matt 6:8**

8 "So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

## **Ps 4:4**

Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still.

## **Ps 46:10**

10 Be still, and know that I am God;

## **Rom 8:26**

26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;

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- In prayer therefore, you are not filling God in on something He does not already know.
- He’s also a faithful friend and a caring Father.
- So we balance these two aspects of our relationship with Him.
- We are but dust, existing on a small seemingly insignificant planet in a vast universe. We are temporal; here today and gone tomorrow.
- We can come to God anytime and anywhere in prayer, but our prayer should be to the point, meaningful, and concise.
- We can remain calm and quiet knowing He is ruling from heaven.
- Therefore whenever we speak to God in prayer we should respect the Creator-creature distinction.

## **Neh 9:6**

6 "You alone are the Lord.  
You have made the heavens,  
The heaven of heavens with all their host,  
The earth and all that is on it,  
The seas and all that is in them.  
You give life to all of them  
And the heavenly host bows down before You.

## **Acts 4:14**

24 And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God  
with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is You who MADE THE  
HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN  
THEM,

***“therefore let your words be few.”***

- The flesh loves wordy prayers. A natural assumption for the flesh is that God is somehow impressed with our word count. He is not impressed. He would rather hear something from you that is well thought out, not just rambling on and on.
- Prayer is not a time to impress others.
- Speak to God directly. Be to the point. Do not fill in with repetitive phrases or superfluous talk.
- How do we therefore speak to such a King? **Briefly.**

## **Example:**

The priests of Baal prayed hard and long on Mount Carmel – 6 hrs.; Elijah prayed a short, to the point, packed with content (30 seconds) prayer, and he did it full of faith to the living God.

## **1 Kings 18:36-37**

36 "O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word.

37 "Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that You, O Lord, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again."

**\*\*It's not the length of your prayers but the knowledge of the One you are praying to.**

“Prayers at prayer meetings need to be brief and earnest prayers. When one prays in a meeting, for his first three minutes everyone prays *with* him. Should he continue a second three minutes, everyone prays *for* him. Should he continue for a third three minutes, the others start to pray *against* him.”

- J. Edwin Orr



## **Matt 6:5-13**

- 5 "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.
- 6 "But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.
- 7 "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.
- 8 "So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.
- 9 "Pray, then, in this way:
- 'Our Father who is in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.
- 10 'Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.
- 11 'Give us this day our daily bread.
- 12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
- 13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.']

## **Luke 6:12**

12 It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

## **1 Thess 5:17**

17 pray without ceasing;

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**“effort”** - עֵינָן - inyawn – work, travail.

- Too much time and effort goes into daydreaming (fantasizing) which is a waste of time, meaningless, and accomplishes nothing.
- Too many words spoken in prayer are just as meaningless, and accomplish nothing.
- Dreamers like to talk, and talkers like to dream.
- What is Solomon saying to us in these first 3 verses?

***We Are  
Hearing Too Little,  
Talking Too Much***