

scorner heareth not rebuke."

- 2) The song of fools on the other hand cares nothing for your betterment (v.6). It is like a fire of crackling of thorns under a pot; it produces a momentary flash of heat and entertaining noise, but does not last to cook the meal.
- 3) **Though rebuke is unpleasant, it IS far better than the song of fools that leads into deeper sin.**

5. Ending right is better than beginning right (v.8-10)

a. What is Solomon saying?

- 1) The context leads us to interpret the end as ending right. Certainly, ending sinful cannot be the instruction.
- 2) **Ideally, we would all begin right and end right.** However, many people begin right but end wrong. They may grow up in a Christian home, attend Sunday school, or hear the Gospel from a friend, **but** if they reject the Gospel, they will end in doom. Many careless Christians may begin right but yield to lustful temptations and end shamefully.
- 3) Others may begin bad **but** upon hearing the Gospel, repent, trust Christ and live the rest of their life to the Lord. Ending right is far better.

b. Why is this comparison true?

- 1) A proud person who learns patience can end better.
- 2) An angry person who learns to calm his spirit can end better (v.9). We must live for the future (Col 3:1-5).
- 3) Instead of looking back at the "**good old days**", we need to focus on the finish line (v.10). The apostle Paul said, (Philippians 3:13-14) "*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*"

Conclusion: God has given us five pieces of better advice that appear backwards to get us to think (Review). These pieces of advice are **goals**. Think on them long and hard. If God has revealed things you need to change, do not put it off. Act on it right now. If I can be of help, please contact me.

Pray

Better Advice

3 May 2020 AM - Ecclesiastes 7 - Ecc20 - Scott Childs

Welcome: Welcome to our **Sunday morning** online church service.

Prayer

Introduction: Throughout the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon makes many contrasts using the words "*better ... than*". We have noted several already. However, here in chapter 7, he gives us a cluster of these contrasting statements. On the first read of them, they may seem backward to your thinking, but as we examine them more closely, I trust you will ponder them and grasp what God is teaching you.

Transition: This morning I want to draw your attention to five pieces of better advice that appear backwards to get us to think.

1. A good name is better than precious ointment (v.1)

a. What is Solomon saying?

- 1) A good name is speaking of your reputation. Precious ointment is very valuable perfume.
- 2) Solomon then states that your day of death is better than your day of birth.
- 3) These two comparisons actually go together. Having a good reputation when you die is better than being born and having all the temptations and trials of life ahead.
- 4) Sadly, many people care more about how they smell than how they act. One person put it this way, "**The world is filled with good smelling people, people who are able to afford costly perfumes who have rotten reputations.**"

b. Why is this comparison true?

- 1) A good reputation **IS** very valuable. (Proverbs 22:1) "*A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.*" People see your reputation, but more importantly, **God sees it.** (Proverbs 5:21) "*For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.*"
- 2) Having a good name when you die means that you have kept your heart and life in order to the end. He who dies with a good name has been a good influence on others throughout his life. Make it your goal to be able to say

with the Apostle Paul on your deathbed, "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*" (2 Timothy 4:7).

- 3) (Romans 14:12) "*So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*" On Judgment Day, a good name **WILL** truly be better than smelling good.

2. A funeral is better than a feast (v.2)

a. What is Solomon saying?

- 1) A house of mourning is a sad funeral. All funerals are sad, but when we lived in PNG, funerals were very sad. The people waited for 24 hours for their loved one.
- 2) A house of feasting is a happy party. Parties are enjoyable.
- 3) Given a choice, every one of us would rather go to a party with friends than to go to a friend's funeral. Funerals are full of sorrow, heartache and weeping.

b. Why is this comparison true?

- 1) Solomon tells us that the funeral is better than the feast because the funeral is the end of all men. It is a helpful time for the living to *lay it to heart*. In other words, funerals ought to make you reflect on your own life.
- 2) One day, you will be the one who dies. Are you ready for death? Have you placed your faith in Christ to save you from hell? Are you living your life for God's glory?
- 3) Reflections on your own life during a funeral can be very helpful. At a feast, the focus is on having a good time. Parties are not times of reflection. **Therefore, funerals ARE better than feasts.**

3. Sorrow is better than laughter (v.3-4)

a. What is Solomon saying?

- 1) The word translated "*sorrow*" generally refers to anger. It can refer to grief. I believe it is used here of being angry at sin rather than laughing at sin.
- 2) The word translated "*laughter*" also means to mock.
- 3) It is sad that often the source of comedy today is sin. People love to laugh at sinful things. **People laugh at rebellious children, clumsy dads, bossy mums, perverted lifestyles, sensual comments, dirty jokes, immodest dress**

and much more. Those things are not funny; they are sinful. They offend our holy God. They make God angry.

- 4) (Proverbs 14:9) "*Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.*"

b. Why is this comparison true?

- 1) It is far better to be sorrowful, grieved or angry over sin than to laugh at or mock sin. That is wicked.
- 2) Solomon says, "*For by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.*" (v.3). Your countenance is your face. You ought to have a sad face when you hear or see sinful things that anger God.
- 3) The next verse (v.4) tells us that if our heart is wise, we will grieve over sin, but if our heart is foolish, we will laugh at sin.
- 4) **From God's perspective, sorrow at sin IS better than laughter. We ought to feel the same!**

4. Wise rebuke is better than a fool's song (v.5-6)

a. What is Solomon saying?

- 1) *Rebuke* is chiding or reproof. It is being scolded for wrongdoing. **This** rebuke comes from a wise person.
- 2) *Hearing* is heeding or obeying the rebuke.
- 3) The *song of fools* is any ungodly song that encourages sinful activity. You cannot even go into stores today without hearing a **song of fools promoting an immodest, immoral lifestyle, filthy language, drinking, drugs, and reckless living.** The songs of fools pound into your mind their filth with monotonous repetition and a demonic beat.
- 4) It is better to hear wise rebuke than a fool's song.

b. Why is this comparison true?

- 1) Rebuke from a wise person aims to **turn a person from wrong that he might return to right.** Rebuke reproves our sin in order to restore our soundness. **Rebuke hurts our pride that it might heal our perverseness.** Rebuke scolds our errors in order to secure our repentance. Rebuke from a wise person is truly a loving gesture. (Proverbs 13:1) "*A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a*