

## Wisdom Has Value After All

### Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:4

Introduction.

Last week we discovered that life does not always turn out the way that we expect that it would.

Ecclesiastes 9:11 (ESV) **Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge**, but time and chance happen to them all.

We in fact have very little control over the events in our lives.

Ecclesiastes 9:11 (ESV) Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, **but time and chance happen to them all.**

We learned that the righteous and the unrighteous experience the same events in life.

Ecclesiastes 9:1 (ESV) But all this I laid to heart, examining it all, how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God. Whether it is love or hate, man does not know; both are before him.

Ecclesiastes 9:2 (ESV) **It is the same for all, since the same event happens to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As the good one is, so is the sinner, and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath.**

One reason that the same events happen to all is due to the time of life that we are in.

Ecclesiastes 9:11 (ESV) Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, **but time** and chance happen to them all.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 (ESV) For everything there is a season, **and a time** for every matter under heaven:

Ecclesiastes 3:2 (ESV) **a time** to be born, and **a time** to die; **a time** to plant, and **a time** to pluck up what is planted;

Ecclesiastes 3:3 (ESV) **a time** to kill, and **a time** to heal; **a time** to break down, and **a time** to build up;  
 Ecclesiastes 3:4 (ESV) **a time** to weep, and **a time** to laugh; **a time** to mourn, and **a time** to dance;  
 Ecclesiastes 3:5 (ESV) **a time** to cast away stones, and **a time** to gather stones together; **a time** to embrace, and **a time** to refrain from embracing;  
 Ecclesiastes 3:6 (ESV) **a time** to seek, and **a time** to lose; **a time** to keep, and **a time** to cast away;  
 Ecclesiastes 3:7 (ESV) **a time** to tear, and **a time** to sew; **a time** to keep silence, and **a time** to speak;  
 Ecclesiastes 3:8 (ESV) **a time** to love, and **a time** to hate; **a time** for war, and **a time** for peace.

“At this point, some people are tempted to give up and to think there is nothing we can do except resign ourselves to our fate. If the race does not go to the swift, then why run at all? If the battle is not won by the strong, then why prepare for war? If getting smart will not get you more money, then why bother to develop your mind? Since it all comes down to chance anyway, fatalism might appear to be the only honest option.

The Preacher gives a different response. He commends the relative value of earthly wisdom, telling us to live wisely. The Preacher does this first by giving us the example of someone wise (Ecclesiastes 9:13–15) and then by comparing wisdom to several (less advantageous) alternatives (Ecclesiastes 9:16–18). We can add to this by making our own application of wisdom to daily life—wisdom exemplified, wisdom prioritized, and wisdom applied.”

Ryken, Philip Graham. Ecclesiastes: Why Everything Matters. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2010. Print. Preaching the Word.

I. Wisdom exemplified - Wisdom can overcome great odds.

Ecclesiastes 9:13 (ESV) I have also seen **this example of wisdom under the sun**, and it seemed great to me.

A. There was a city that was lacking in defenses.

Ecclesiastes 9:14 (ESV) **There was a little city** with few men in it, and a great king came against it and besieged it, building great siegeworks against it.

Ecclesiastes 9:14 (ESV) There was a little city **with few men in it**, and a great king came against it and besieged it, building great siegeworks against it.

- B. And this city encountered a huge threat.

Ecclesiastes 9:14 (ESV) There was a little city with few men in it, **and a great king came against it** and besieged it, building great siegeworks against it.

Ecclesiastes 9:14 (ESV) There was a little city with few men in it, and a great king came against it **and besieged it**, building great siegeworks against it.

Ecclesiastes 9:14 (ESV) There was a little city with few men in it, and a great king came against it and besieged it, **building great siegeworks against it**.

- C. A wise man caused the city to be spared.

Ecclesiastes 9:15 (ESV) But **there was found in it a poor, wise man**, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man.

Ecclesiastes 9:15 (ESV) But there was found in it a poor, wise man, **and he by his wisdom delivered the** city. Yet no one remembered that poor man.

1. There is no mention of how the victory was achieved, only the agent by which the victory was achieved.

2. It was achieved by the wisdom of a poor man.

- D. However, the wise man's wisdom was not appreciated because he was poor.

Ecclesiastes 9:15 (ESV) But there was found in it a **poor**, wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered **that poor man**.

Ecclesiastes 9:11 (ESV) Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, **nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent**, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all.

- E. Application:

1. All too often people associate wisdom with riches.
2. The poor man is not expected to be wise.

II. Wisdom prioritized - Wisdom is the better alternative.

Ecclesiastes 9:16 (ESV) But I say that **wisdom is better than** might, though the poor man's wisdom is despised and his words are not heard.

Ecclesiastes 9:17 (ESV) The words of the wise heard in quiet **are better than** the shouting of a ruler among fools.

Ecclesiastes 9:18 (ESV) **Wisdom is better than** weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

A. Wisdom is better than physical strength and a powerful position.

Ecclesiastes 9:16 (ESV) But I say that wisdom **is better than might**, though the poor man's wisdom is despised and his words are not heard.

1. The idea is that wisdom is to be preferred for it is more useful or advantageous.
2. Even though wisdom is better, it is often not prized.

Ecclesiastes 9:16 (ESV) But I say that wisdom is better than might, **though the poor man's wisdom is despised** and his words are not heard.

3. It is especially not prized if the wise person is poor.

Ecclesiastes 9:16 (ESV) But I say that wisdom is better than might, **though the poor man's wisdom is despised** and his words are not heard.

4. The result is that the poor man's wisdom is not listened to.

Ecclesiastes 9:16 (ESV) But I say that wisdom is better than might, though the poor man's wisdom is despised **and his words are not heard.**

5. Nevertheless, the soft words of the poor wise man are better than the boastful words proclaimed loudly by a foolish ruler.

Ecclesiastes 9:17 (ESV) The words of **the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.**

- B. Wisdom is better than military armaments.

Ecclesiastes 9:18 (ESV) **Wisdom is better than weapons of war**, but one sinner destroys much good.

1. Wisdom can be a great deterrent to war.
2. Wisdom can be a great advantage in war.

- C. Wisdom spares whereas foolishness can do more damage than weapons of mass destruction.

Ecclesiastes 9:18 (ESV) Wisdom is better than weapons of war, **but one sinner destroys much good.**

One person can do great harm in destroying peace.

III. Wisdom applied - Wisdom has limits and folly has dangers.

- A. A reputation for wisdom takes a lifetime to build but can be destroyed in a moment.

Ecclesiastes 10:1 (ESV) Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give off a stench; **so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.**

- B. Wisdom leads a person down a right path whereas foolishness leads a person astray.

Ecclesiastes 10:2 (ESV) A wise man's heart inclines him to the right, but a fool's heart to the left.

- C. Actions speak louder than words.

Ecclesiastes 10:3 (ESV) Even when the fool walks on the road, he lacks sense, **and he says to everyone that he is a fool.**

IV. Conclusion: