

Listen: Wisdom is calling!

KSBC Sept. 6, 2009

Stop Fooling Around

Proverbs 1:20-33

Intro. Most of us would not react well to being called a fool. Common usage of the terms fool or foolishness include a wide range of meaning, none of which we want connected to us, at least very often. It is offensive to be referred to as a silly or stupid person. It is embarrassing to be made a fool of – being tricked or deceived intentionally. Fooling around is simply wasting time or puttering aimlessly while neglecting the more serious issues of life.

The Bible uses the concept of fool, especially in the Proverbs, to represent and describe the person who chooses not to live in submission to God. The fool is consistently set in contrast and comparison with the wise person. The terms simple, fool (3 different Hebrew words used) and scoffer or scorner are used frequently to help the seeker of wisdom understand and become wise. Unlike our common usage, fool in the Bible has a definite component of moral irresponsibility. The root issue of foolishness is not a lack of intelligence, judgment or experience – it is a deliberate turning from the fear of God. Just as the beginning and controlling principle of wisdom is a submissive and worshipping response to God, so the beginning and controlling principle of foolishness is an attitude that despises or rejects the knowledge of God.

We study what Proverbs teaches about fools and foolishness this morning for six reasons:

1. Everyone is born foolish, it is common to all. 22:15
2. Foolishness is contagious. 13:20; 14:7
3. Foolishness causes others pain. 10:1
4. Foolishness is always close to trouble. 10:14
5. Foolishness ends in eternal death. 1:32
6. Foolishness is treatable. 9:6

Today by God's grace and with the help of his Holy Spirit we call each other to stop fooling around. Whether you profess saving faith in Jesus alone or not, it is damning, dangerous, damaging and destructive to simply waste time and putter aimlessly with your life. Let's seek to understand foolishness in such a way that we in fact can become wise as we grow in our commitment to God's ways.

Proverbs 1:20-33

- The fool in us . . . a biblical understanding of foolishness. 1:7, 22
- The fool from us . . . evidences of foolishness in our lives. 13:16
- The fool out of us . . . decisively leaving foolishness to live wisely. 9:6

1. The fool in us . . . a biblical understanding of foolishness.

1:7, 22

What is foolishness? What is true about foolishness that manifests itself in some way in every person? Note the distinctive nuances of foolishness that the Bible clearly assigns for our understanding and awareness. Foolishness is both a basic choice and an ongoing commitment.

- Foolishness is a choice to regard God and his words as worthless. 1:7

By nature

By experience

- Foolishness is a commitment to remain uncommitted to God and his words. 1:22

A fixed commitment

A passionate commitment

A growing commitment

2. The fool from us . . . evidences of foolishness in our lives. 13:16

What does foolishness look like? How does foolishness appear in our lives? There are dozens of wise sayings and warnings about foolishness in the Proverbs. There are certain behaviors and attitudes that point back to the root source of foolishness – the personal commitment to self rule.

- Easily deceived or led astray.

14:15 *A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps.*

17:24 *A discerning man keeps wisdom in view, but a fool's eyes wander to the ends of the earth.*

7:6-9 *. . . among the simple . . . going down the street near her corner . . .*

- Quick to speak or defend yourself.

18:2 *A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions.*

15:2 *the tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.*

- Resists restraint or appropriateness.

20:3 *It is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.*

12:16 *A fool shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult.*

27:3 *If a wise man goes to court with a fool, the fool rages and scoffs, and there is no peace.*

- Impatient with advice or correction.

10:8 *The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin.*

15:5 *A fool spurns his father's discipline, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence.*

17:10 *A rebuke impresses a man of discernment more than a hundred lashes a fool.*

- Flippant with issues of right and wrong.

14:9 *Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright.*

13:19 *A longing fulfilled is sweet to the soul, but fools detest turning from evil.*

26:11 *As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.*

3. The fool out of us . . . decisively leaving foolishness to live wisely. 9:6; 1:32

Note that the invitation of wisdom is both real and effective for the person doing battle with foolishness. Two heart issues are identified that must be dealt with by each one of us. God's gracious help for fools is seen in consistent ways that he intersects the fools path.

Decisively leaving foolishness involves . . .

- Addressing two heart issues:

1:32 *For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them;*

○ Your rebellion and self rule. waywardness

○ Your sense of false security. Complacency

- Learning from God's gracious interventions:

- God's words 2:1-9
- Discipline or rebuke 1:23; 3:11-12

Early intervention of parents – 22:15; 27:22

- Consequences 19:25; 5:8-14

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Conclusion

The haunting question of 1:22 is before us – 'How long . . . ? How long will you remain foolish, under the dominance of self rule? Are there evidences that God is at work in your life calling you to wisdom in Jesus Christ? Honestly acknowledge your foolishness and decisively commit to following Christ.

Ref Titus 3:3-6

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our savior . . .