

Prayer List

Gene
Veda
Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 10:00 a.m.
Assembly 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Brad Behrens - bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Michael Odom - MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Ernie Sprinkel - preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

King David's acts are said to be recorded in the book of which court prophet?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Dagon - Judges 16:23; 1 Samuel 5:1-5; 1 Chronicles 10:10

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The Folly of Wisdom Without Revelation Ecclesiastes 1:12-18

by Don C. Truex

LISTEN TO THE preacher: "I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 1:13). So far, so good. After all, wouldn't it be fine if more people would seriously contemplate the issues of life? But read on. "In much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" (verse 18).

Please allow me two brief observations just here. First, it is not Solomon's intention to disparage wisdom in this passage. In fact, wisdom is extolled by Solomon throughout his Proverbs and by God throughout His sacred text. Second, Solomon's problem is a common one, i.e., trying to find answers to life and his relationship with the Lord without revelation from the Lord. That is, his mind was working solo on issues that can only be understood in trio: the mind, the revelation of God and, ultimately, our faith (Romans 10:17). So also for us when facing the physical and spiritual vicissitudes of life: "there is a way that seems right" but that way, divorced from the revelation of God, can only lead to trouble.

But still men try. We are proud Americans, often bent on charting the course of our own reason without the revelation of God. I want to suggest that there are three definite results of that mindset.

First, a very dangerous comfort develops. That is, it is easy to come to have a faith, not based on fact, but upon the satisfaction that something sounds good or is what we want to hear. Israel instructed the prophets, “prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits” (Isaiah 30:10). Let me ask you: When the prophets acceded to their wishes and the people ceased believing in judgment, did it mean there would be no judgment? Of course not! That comfort is dangerous.

Examples of that type of reasoning are legion. A young man seeks to justify entrance into an admittedly adulterous marriage relationship by offering the classic line, “I just can’t believe that God would want me to be unhappy.” But I ask you again, does our human reasoning, i.e., “God wants me to be happy,” countermand His explicit commands regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage? Of course not! Our human reasoning in the matter often provides dangerous comfort.

Second, a repulsive arrogance develops. People who have decided that life can be lived without benefit of God’s revelation often develop a two-fold type of arrogance. First, an intellectual disdain for those who do believe in His revelation. Julian Huxley spoke for multitudes when he cynically asserted, “No deity will save us!” And we need to be honest: that attitude wears on us a bit. If you don’t think so, just ask your kids how they feel being the only student in a biology class who believes in creation and, thus, are regarded as “mental midgets” by their peers. And, second, there is a behavioral arrogance that often results. Have you noticed that it just seems that there are no rules anymore? The end result of reason without revelation is that we have lost the capacity to feel shame, to blush (Jeremiah 6:15). Thus, there is not even a social stigma attached to activities that used to be

abominable even to the ungodly—divorce, abortion, homosexuality, alcohol abuse, etc. “Out of the closet” does not even begin to describe the brazen behavioral arrogance that characterizes our society.

Third, hopefully a bittersweet frustration will develop. I think that is what we see in Solomon. On the one hand, the frustration is bitter because the conscience has been pricked. Thank God for that! That is the most productive misery you will ever experience. On the other hand, that frustration can be very sweet as it motivates us to acknowledge that God has set “eternity in our hearts” and we must return home. When we come to acknowledge that, three things will occur:

First, we will acknowledge that there is more to life than just living in a state of frustration. Thankfully, the book of Ecclesiastes doesn’t end at chapter 1, verse 18. No, it ends with Solomon affirming that the whole of man is to “fear God and keep His commandments” (12:13).

Second, we will acknowledge our inadequacy. G.K. Chesterton was once asked, “What is wrong with the world?” His reply? “I am.” The problem is not with God, it is with me! How desperately I need to acknowledge that “the way of man is not in himself” (Jeremiah 10:23). How desperately I need to look to the Father’s Book with the attitude of the Ethiopian nobleman who, in essence, said, “Help me understand!”

Third, we will be willing to accept His answers even when His answers are not what we want to hear.

I freely confess that I must incorporate my name into the thoughts of Jeremiah 10:23: “The way of Don Truex is not in himself; it is not within the scope of Don Truex to direct his own steps.” But, thank God, He has given us His revelation as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our paths (Psalms 119:105).