

### Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

Introduction: There was a woman who went on a short term missions trip to Kenya, helping the missionaries there. Before she left, she stopped at a remote village where she attended a medical clinic. As the native women outside the clinic began to sing together, she found herself deeply moved by their beautiful singing. The harmonies and rhythms seemed worshipful indeed. She was so moved she began to cry. Since she wanted to capture the moment in her memories, she turned to her bi-lingual friend and queried, "Could you please translate the words to that absolutely beautiful song?" Her friend stared at her and respectfully replied, "If you boil the water, you won't get dysentery."

**Main Idea of the Text (MIT):** In all things both inside as well as outside of the house of God we need to have integrity.

V. 1: "Keep thy foot"-we need to realize that when we come to the house of God (Temple in Solomon's day, church in today's context), we are on holy ground (Ex. 3:5). In other words this is a special place. "Be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools"-we may think we know what God wants from us, and we may try to use "churchy" words, but it is more important when we come into God's house (presence) that we listen to Him (1 Sam. 15:22). To listen in this context also means to learn from God. There is too high of a rate of biblical illiteracy in today's church. This isn't just true of new believers because that would be understandable. But it is also true for those who have been in church for many years. I'm not saying we don't read our Bibles. Rather I am saying too many people read it but they don't understand it and therefore they can't defend what they believe or apply what they have just read. If that is the case, then what have we really accomplished? I would submit to you that if all you do is read the Bible without understanding it then you have accomplished very little. "For they consider not that they do evil"-those who are not careful when they come into the house of God, those who think by reciting such words, or performing the mere act of the sacrifices was all that God desired. They don't realize that without confession, repentance, and a transformed life their sacrifices were worthless. What is worse are those who know they have not confessed,

repented, nor have they been transformed but they still come in and perform the sacrifices as though they one of God's children. In other words, God's sees past appearances into reality and outright rejects the hypocrite. The Lord see differently than man does. Man judges by appearance while God judges based on what is in a person's heart according to 1 Samuel 16:7. In fact the sacrifices of a hypocrite are called an "abomination to the Lord." This is not to say that all sacrifices are not acceptable to God. Some of the ones that are acceptable include our bodies being sacrificed as holy and acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1), a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17), and of praise (Hebrews 13:15) to name a few. The point of this verse is that before any of these are acceptable to God our heart must be right. God charged the nation of Israel with not being right before Him when He said in Matthew 15:8 which says, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me." We must be careful that we are not the same way.

**V. 2:** This verse is a good reminder of the old saying, "It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool, than to open your mouth and remove all doubt." The phrase "be not rash with thy mouth" means that we are not to be reckless when we speak, especially to God, that we are to think carefully before speaking and consider what we are saying and do we really mean it? James also gives us a warning about the tongue in James 3:3-8, "Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though *they be* so great, and *are* driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." The phrase "let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God" means that just because we think it does not mean that we should say it. Jesus said it this way in Luke 6:45, "A good man out of the good

treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.” In other words, what is in the well will come up in the bucket. Solomon reminds us that God is above us. This indicates His superiority to us, but also that He is already aware of what is going through our mind and He is not impressed when we speak without thinking. Jesus told a parable about this in Luke 18. A Pharisee and a tax collector went to the Temple to pray and the Pharisee started praying and thanking God he wasn't like the tax collector. However, as the tax collector began to pray he couldn't even lift his head up to look up towards heaven because he realized how much of a sinner he was and how holy God was. For worship to be acceptable to God we must have a proper perspective of who God is and who we are. The end of this verse says “let thy words be few.” Jesus said it this way “let your yes be yes and your no be no.” Those who thought they would be heard for their many words in prayer are called hypocrites by Jesus in Matthew 6.

**V. 3:** Solomon give an illustration here. He says that just as a hyperactive mind leads to wild dreams, a hyperactive mouth produces a lot of foolish words. Proverbs 10:19 says it this way, “Where there is a multitude of words, sin abounds.”

**Vv. 4-5:** Vows are something that are not required by God, they are strictly voluntary offerings from people, but when they are made they carry a heavy burden. Have you ever said, “God if you will just help me this time or get me out of this mess, I promise I won't do it again?” That is a vow to God, and because you made that vow to God you are now obligated to keep it. Jesus taught on this in Matthew 5:33-37 which says, “Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” When it says “He hath no pleasure in fools” it means that when we make a vow to God and don't honor it

we are mocking God. Deuteronomy 23:21 says, “When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.” Notice it is a sin to make a vow and not make good on it immediately. A story is told in Acts of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5. At the end of Acts 4 a man by the name of Barnabas decided he was going to sell some land and he gave everything he made off of it to the disciples. As we come into Acts 6 Ananias and Sapphira sell a possession and they only give a portion of the money to the disciples. That isn’t the problem. The problem comes when they lie about how much they got for the possession. They said they gave it all instead of some of it. Peter says in Acts 5:4, “Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.” As a result of their lying both Ananias and Sapphira died that day. This shows us the seriousness of our sin in God’s eyes. Neither Barnabas or Ananias and Sapphira were required to sell anything and give it, they chose to. It is possible that pride crept in and Ananias and Sapphira probably saw Barnabas being treated with respect after what he did, and so they rashly decided to do the same thing. Again we must weigh very carefully what we say and even what we are going to do for the Lord.

**V. 6:** Solomon continues here concerning making vows to God. If it is bad to make a vow to God and not keep it, then it is even worse to make the vow, not keep it, and say that you didn’t really mean it. How many of you have said or have heard it said when someone offers to give you something or you offer to give something to them, “no thanks just the fact that you offered was enough?” That is not the case with God. If you offer it then you are obligated to do it. God is displeased with insincerity. If we know this, then why do it and risk God destroying or opposing things we do? This phrase shows that there are consequences for our sin.

**V. 7:** The beginning of this verse talks about the multitude of dreams. Nowadays many people get caught up in the meaning of dreams. The Bible says that is “vanity” or pointless. Dreams are simply the result of an overactive mind and or imagination, they mean absolutely nothing. Solomon ends this section where he

began it, we are to fear or be in awe of God. We are to respect Him as the Almighty God and the One who will judge us one day. G. Campbell Morgan calls this the fear of a slave. A slave would not want to upset, anger, or disrespect his master, because he knew there would be consequences for that. As Christians we are slaves to Christ and we need to realize that when we sin whether in word or action there are consequences because God is displeased with us.

**Action Step(s):**

- ✝ When we come into this building we need to realize that we are coming onto holy ground. The building itself is not holy, but the fact that this is the place we have designated to meet with God for corporate worship means that we are standing on holy ground. That means when we come here we are meeting with God to learn from Him in order to become more like Him, so that we can go and represent Him to the world. Therefore it is imperative that we act and speak in a way that reflects we are in God's presence.
- ✝ Stop and think before you speak and ask yourself, is what I am about to say going to bring glory to God? If not then according to Ephesians 4:29 which says that we are not to let corrupt communication come out of our mouth, but only what is good for building up and sharing grace to the hearer should be said. Realize that according to Matthew 12:36 we will give an account for every word we have said, choose them carefully!