

Not Yet Sweat Blood

‘The basketball coach stormed into the university president’s office and demanded a raise right then and there. “Please”, protested the [university] president, “you already make more than the entire History department”. “Yeah, maybe so, but you don’t know what I have to put up with”, the coach blustered. “Look”. He went out into the hall and grabbed a jock who was jogging down the hallway [and pulled him into the president’s office]. [The coach ordered him, “Run over to my office and see if I’m there”. Twenty minutes later the jock returned, [all] sweaty and out of breath. “You’re not there, sir”, he reported. “Oh, I see what you mean”, conceded the president, scratching his head. “I would have phoned”.’

Now I ask, “how many fools are in that president’s office”? Two. The dumb jock, and the even dumber university president!! While we laugh at this dumb joke, the fact is that we’re living in a world overpopulated with floods of fools. Seems almost every time I get a notification of a new posting on the hyperlocal social media platform NextDoor, I’m incredulous at the stupidity and idiocy of the vast majority of posters. I find myself scrolling down in the hopes of finding someone among the dozens of replies who actually knows what they’re talking about. And, believe it or not, I

do find one now and then. So, all is not lost. Yet. But in today's chapter from Ecclesiastes, there is an intriguing statement in verse 4: "God takes no pleasure in fools". "Why?" one might ask. Because, you see, fools are "self-made" men and women. God didn't make any fools. He is no fool. And He doesn't make any. He's put at our fingertips all the instructions and resources necessary for each and every one of us to be wise, and not to be fools. It really takes work to become a genuine fool! Everything required for a successful life, in God's eyes, He has laid up for us. There's a whole pile of perfect stuff with our name on it, just for us. We but just need to ask Him in faith, and He'll hand it right over. If getting our hearts right before Him, and asking Him, is all it takes, well, sounds like it's all pretty easy. It all depends on the attitude and motivations of our hearts. Are we humble? Before God and man? Do we take our Father at His Word? Do we want things just for our own benefit, as we see things? Are we wholly willing to live our lives in the service of the Kingdom?

On the other hand, to be a fool takes real work. Because to be a fool, one must ignore all the beckonings of Lord Jesus through Holy Spirit. One must pretend to one's self that one doesn't hear anything from God. Worse, one must go to all the trouble of creating in one's mind a kind of faux god that is no more than a construct of one's own wants and desires. This is what leftists do. For it's harder to deny the truth than to simply agree to what is truly true. Not only does it take a lot of work to maintain a

facade of reality, to keep up appearances, forever trying to convince one's self that they are the actual truth, it's utterly exhausting and frustrating beyond imagining! This right there explains why today's fools are the most miserable on the planet. Their brief, momentary flashes of pleasure and fake happiness are all too easily interrupted by the people who are not fools who dare to speak a word of truth into their lives, and, momentarily, have the gall to burst their bubbles. The result? Their "heads explode", as the trendy description explains their hysterical meltdowns.

Now, I must give "credit" to where "credit" is due, if "credit" can be applied to pure evil. At first glance, the way of foolishness is a gleaming, wide, broad superhighway, filled with all kinds of rushing people, many cocooned in their luxury vehicles, hauling their mega mansions bursting with bulging wardrobes of the latest designer "fashions", and pantries of the freshest, finest, most delectable foods. Some take their "slaves", servants, and pleasure victims along with them, in a twisted, perverted idea that bringing them along is somehow better than just using and then discarding them as the human garbage they really think they are. Truly that thoroughfare to hell is crowded, but beautiful in the eyes of the foolish. For you see, the devil is the current, illegitimate ruler of this world. And he makes the highway to hell all but impossible to miss. Buy into just one of his lies, and he's got a hook into a person, and if one's not extremely careful, he'll convince one to take another bite, and then another, until one has swallowed not just

the hook, but the whole line and sinker, too.

The beauty and allures of sin are only skin deep. They promise the world, but end up delivering nothing but devastation and misery, weeping and gnashing of teeth. But those inevitable consequences are hidden almost until it's too late, until there's no turning back. As our Lord taught in Luke 13:25: "Once the Head of the house has shut and locked the door, it will be too late. Even if you stand outside knocking, begging to enter, and saying, 'Lord, Lord, open the door for us', He will say to you, 'I don't know who you are. You are not a part of My family'." For the devil has succeeded in doing a number on them. They were fooled. Willingly. Some, though, wanted to have it both ways. And they're depicted in verses 26-30: "Then you will reply, 'But Lord, we dined with You and walked with You as You taught us'. And He will reply, 'Don't you understand? I don't know who you are, for you are not a part of My family. I will not let you in. Now, go away from Me! For you are all disloyal to Me and do evil'. "You will experience great weeping and great anguish when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, along with all the prophets of Israel, enjoying God's kingdom while you yourselves are barred from entering. You will see people streaming from the four corners of the earth, accepting the invitation to feast in God's kingdom realm, while you are outside looking in. And take note of this: Some are despised and viewed as the least important now, but one day the Master will place them at the head of the line. And some whom

you view as 'elite' today will become the least important then."

These people who try to have it both ways will be sorely disappointed. God is holy, and only those who wash their robes in the precious, priceless blood of the Lamb of God, will be correctly dressed to receive the invitations to the great wedding feast of the Lamb of God, the Lion of Judah, in the sublime banquet hall of heaven's Royal Palace in the New Jerusalem. Those with the invitations will have looked away from this world and its temporary, pasty glories. Instead, they will have looked steadfastly upon the Lord Who shed His blood to redeem them. They will have followed His directions to the Narrow Way, the Way of Christ Jesus. And they will have fought the devil's and his angel's most diabolical temptations to sin, to exit off the straight and narrow Way, and merge into the "shining, splendid" superhighway to everlasting death. They will have fought, resisted, until even physical death from this life gave them release and instant transference to Paradise. But whatever painstaking efforts they made to stay faithful will be as nothing to the glories they will receive as they praise Him. He Who refused the escape from unimaginable pain and anguish, sweating as His body was racked with the spiritual war that won our redemption, to the point that His body's sweat became blood itself! For life is in the blood. And our Lord's life was already being sacrificed as He sweat-dripped it out onto the ground in the Garden of Gethsemane. Why? Why did He do it?

Hebrews 12:2-3 says it right there: "Because His heart was

focused on the joy of knowing that you would be His, He endured the agony of the cross and conquered its humiliation, and now sits exalted at the right hand of the throne of God! So consider carefully how Jesus faced such intense opposition from sinners who opposed their own souls(!), so that you won't become worn down and cave in under life's pressures. After all, you have not yet reached the point of sweating blood in your opposition to sin". No, we haven't! To the contrary, all of us to some extent or other have listened to the devil's lies and excused ourselves thinking, "Oh, it's just a 'little' sin. The Lord won't mind. He'll forgive". And so we slip. We fall down. But our Father sees us, and as the Son of God pleads in prayer for us, He reaches down and administers just the right discipline we need to get us back on track. Hear Hebrews 12:5-6, 12-15, 25: '[Jesus] said, "My child, don't underestimate the value of the discipline and training of the Lord God, or get depressed when He has to correct you. For the Lord's training of your life is the evidence of His faithful love. And when He draws you to Himself, it proves you are His delightful child". ... So be made strong even in your weakness by lifting up your tired hands in prayer and worship. And strengthen your weak knees, for as you keep walking forward on God's paths all your stumbling ways will be divinely healed! In every relationship be swift to choose peace over competition, and run swiftly toward holiness, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. ... Make very sure that you never refuse to listen to God when He speaks!'

