



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Ecclesiastes Sermon Series
Supports Session: Why Listen?
Sermon Title: "On Guard"
Passage: Ecclesiastes 5:1-3

Connection to Ecclesiastes 5

Solomon provided instructions regarding how to approach God in worship. He brought focus on the believer's heart and the way we should speak in response to God's Word.

Introduction/Opening

When a person purchases an item that requires assembly, within the box we usually find an assembly instruction manual from the manufacturer. Sometimes people think they know exactly how to assemble their new item, and they forego the instruction manual. Many times, this path results in left over parts or semi-finished products which do not fit together correctly. The instruction manual is vital for proper assembly. When the instruction manual is ignored, mistakes often occur.

Solomon instructed the readers of Ecclesiastes on how to properly approach and respond to God in worship. Obedient believers trust and follow these instructions.

Outline

I. Be on guard (v. 1a).

Believers are often taught to guard their hearts with relationships, friends, and the content they allow into their lives. However, believers are susceptible to not guarding their hearts during worship as well. We must guard our hearts when we enter worship.

Solomon addressed this same issue when instructing those who would follow him. In Proverbs 4:23, he directed his readers to guard their hearts directly. We must guard our hearts from anything that would keep us from focusing on Jesus.

II. Listen closely (v. 1b).

The action of drawing near is not accidental and takes intentional effort. Drawing near involves being close enough to hear clearly and drown out all other competing distractions. We need to eliminate all distractions so we can focus on Christ.

God highly values listening and obedience. The Lord says being a person who approaches in obedience is more favorable than being a foolish person whose faith is works-based. The Bible says a person not only acts foolishly but also commits "wrong" by not submitting

their hearts to listen. God values a contrite, listening heart over external showings of religion.

Listening is different from hearing. A person who hears may comprehend words but refuse to make any real change. When we listen to the Lord, we allow our hearts to be searched so we can adjust our lives according to Scripture. Truly listening involves submitting to God as the ultimate authority.

III. Watch your mouth (vv. 2-3).

Believers are provided with clear instructions to not be “hasty” or “impulsive” in their speech. This does not mean we cannot openly express concerns, but we should be respectful and thoughtful when speaking to the Lord to avoid saying something we do not fully mean.

Solomon advises believers to let their “words be few” (v. 2). He also describes those who feel the need to speak constantly as being fools (v. 3). Controlling one’s speech reveals maturity and confidence to not be the center of attention. Allowing words to be few indicates a follower of Christ values the voice of Jesus over their own opinions. Followers of Christ allow Him to speak through them instead of their voices being the loudest.

Conclusion

It can be tempting to assemble new items without using the instruction manual. It can make one feel confident and independent when someone feels they know exactly what to do. However, this way of thinking works against believers when we approach God in worship. We are commanded to guard our hearts, listen closely, and watch our mouths. We run the risk of impeding our growth and the growth of others when these instructions are ignored.

Consider whether you are guarding your heart effectively when you come to worship. Are you listening closely to the Spirit or allowing yourself to be easily distracted? Are you rash or impulsive with your speech? Today, allow the Holy Spirit to work in your heart so you can hear from Christ more clearly “when you go to the house of God” (v. 1).

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