ECCLESIASTES SERIES SEVEN
LISTEN! LISTEN!
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ECCLESIASTES 5:1-7
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So many of Solomon's observations are horizontal musings—the bitter, barren, boring side of life as seen through his disillusioned eyes. But, in chapter five he zeros in on the remarkable vertical perspective that scrapes away the veneer of empty religion and takes us to the bedrock of a meaningful relationship with Christ. Jesus Christ is not some morning mist that dissipates as the day goes on. He is substantial—and real.

Since God is speaking continually, we would do well to stop and listen.

SOLOMON'S THESIS: God is speaking. Listen carefully and take seriously what He says.

FOUR COMMANDS (SUGGESTIONS?) AND THE REASONS FOR THE COMMANDS FLOW THROUGH THE PASSAGE.

1. DRAW NEAR AND LISTEN—BECAUSE GOD IS SPEAKING TO YOU.

Ecclesiastes 5:1: Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know they do wrong.

The "sacrifice of fools" is the perfunctory, careless observance of religion, unattached to any Godward movement of the soul—enacted out of custom or habit.

The "sacrifice of fools" is the human tendency to complain about our lot in life. When we grouse about our circumstances we are actually complaining against the plans God has made for our lives.

The Bible mentions other manifestations of the "sacrifices of fools."

- Giving God the Leftovers (Malachi 1:10-13)
- Giving God lip service without changed lives (*Ezekiel 33:31-32;* Gen. 28:20-26*)*
- Making decisions without carefully involving God (Judges 11:29-49)

"Dreams" is "fantasizing" which produces much activity but accomplishes nothing.

<u>God Speaks In A Variety Of Ways.</u>

- The Bible (Psalms 119:105)
- Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-3)
- Sign and wonders (Acts 3:1-10)
- Putting out "fleeces" to discern God's will (Judges 6:36-40)
- Godly People (Ecclesiastes 4:13)
- The Creation (Romans 1:18)
- Preachers and prophets (Acts 11:28-29)
- In our inner-most-human spirit during quiet moments (1 Kings 19:11-13)
- In the human mind by sorting out the "pros and cons" of a decision (Isaiah 1:18)
- Dreams (Joel 2:28-29)
- Visions (Joel 2:28-29)
- Failure (Matthew 26:75; John 21)
- In our inner-most-human spirit when we are consistently seeking God (Jeremiah 29:12-13)
- Circumstances

2. BE QUIET AND STAY CALM—BECAUSE GOD HAS THE BEST PERSPECTIVE ON YOUR LIFE.

Ecclesiastes 5:2-3: Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many words.

God is in His heaven and you are on the earth, so please don't start griping about the lot in life God has handed to you.

3. MAKE A COMMITMENT AND KEEP IT—BECAUSE GOD BELIEVES IN YOU.

Ecclesiastes 5:4-5: When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it.

Properly istening to God is always in the context of commitment.
We must be willing to do His will before He will speak (James 1; John 7).
Don't play games with God.

4. DON'T DECIDE NOW AND DENY LATER—BECAUSE GOD TAKES YOU SERIOUSLY.

Ecclesiastes 5:6-7: Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, "My vow was a mistake." Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore, stand in awe of God.

You're about to take a risk. Watch out! Be alert! Listen carefully. Truth will be deposited in your head that is designed to change your life.
Dealing with Jesus Christ is serious business. Do it right. In other words, "Fear God. Take Him seriously."
Hearing God Speak May Cost Us Our Lives, But It Is Worth It At Any Price (Exodus 20:18).

FOCUS ON THE OPEN-ARMED INVITATION FROM JESUS CHRIST TO MOVE INTO AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP AND COMMUNICATION WITH GOD.

Matthew 11:28-30: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

My heart is not proud, O Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.
But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a child quieted at its mother breast, like a child that is quieted is my soul.

Psalm 131:1-2