

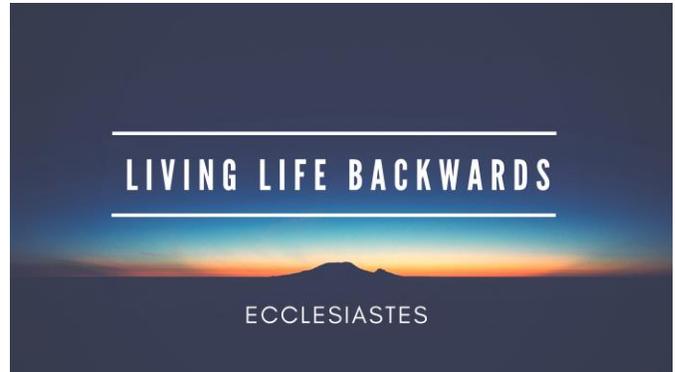
Don't Be a Fool in Church

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

Living Life Backwards, Part 6

David Sunday

July 22, 2018



Let's turn our attention now to the Word of God. It's a joy to gather with you. I delight in our church family and what we're doing each week when we gather before God in worship. This is the most important thing we do all week long. I had a friend tell me a few days ago that when he comes to church, he wants to be preached at. He wants the Word of God to penetrate and call him to repentance. This passage in Ecclesiastes 5 is definitely designed to do that. So let's turn there now and listen to the voice of the living God, as He preaches to us, as He searches our hearts, as He shows us those offensive ways that still remain in us. calling us to repentance and to fearing Him. This is the Word of God:

Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil. ² Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few. ³ For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words.

⁴ When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. ⁵ It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. ⁶ Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands? ⁷ For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity; but God is the one you must fear.

Holy God, how wonderful You are
Your majesty, how bright
How beautiful Your mercy seat
In depths of burning light

[From "My God, How Wonderful Thou Art" by Frederick Faber]

Lord, to fear You and tremble before You, that's what we would long for today. We thank You that when we do, we are covered in the shelter of Your presence. We thank You that You are kind to those who fear You. Your friendship, Lord, is for those who fear You as You make known Your covenant. We want that friendship. We want that closeness with You, God. So we pray, Lord, that You would more deeply write the fear of God upon our hearts today.

As I preach, I'm very mindful of the vanity of my own words and that I am so much in need of Your Spirit to work through me. I pray that You would give us all ears to hear what Your Spirit is saying to this church today. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

This passage is written for people who are usually pretty happy to come to church. You look forward to being here. You come often. But it's also written for people whose tendency is to kind of rate the worship service according to how it meets their felt needs. You know the question we ask each other after church: "How was church today?" What are we thinking about? Did I like the sermon? Did he have enough jokes or illustrations? Was he serious enough? Was it practical enough for my life? Was the music the kind I like? Was there an organ? Were there drums? And did they play too loudly? Did they have a children's choir? How was the coffee in the foyer?

This is a passage for people who tend to get distracted during prayer, who are tempted to look at Instagram during the sermon. Is that any of you? Did you scroll to Ecclesiastes 5, but then an app popped up on your phone to distract you while the Word of God is being preached? It's written for people who know, "I really do need to give to the work of God through His church, but I can't ever seem to find enough money in my budget to do it." It's a passage for people who realize that God is calling them to more than just Sunday morning observation, but to 24-7 consecration. It's written for people who are actually thinking, "Hey, maybe I'll just take the rest of the summer off and just check in on livestream on Sunday mornings."

In other words, it's written for people like you and me, whose intentions are often bigger than our actions when it comes to worship. Here's a preacher who goes for the jugular vein. He's preaching at us. His words aren't very nice. He says three times in this passage that it's possible to be a fool in the way we come before God in worship. Did you notice that? In verse one he talks about the sacrifice of fools. In verse three, a fool's voice comes with many words. In verse four, God has no pleasure in fools. He's speaking very starkly here. He's not mincing words.

But he's doing so because there's a deep undercurrent of grace that runs underneath this passage. It's talking to us about a God Who actually hears us when we speak to Him and a God Who speaks to us when we gather before Him. That's grace. God is alive. God is speaking. God is listening to our voice when we worship.

Solomon has never forgotten the experience he had at the dedication of the temple, which is recorded in 1 Kings 8. The priests brought the Ark of the Covenant into the house of the Lord and the glory of the Lord filled the house. It was filled with smoke and the glory was so great that it says the priests could not stand to minister but fell on their faces before the glory of God.

Solomon has not forgotten that experience and he's telling us in Ecclesiastes 5 that in this life under the sun—this world that's characterized by things like oppression and loneliness and kings who stay in power on their throne much longer than their effectiveness, this world that's characterized by vanity under the sun. Solomon is saying, "Oh, yes, there is a God above the sun and He's a God Who is willing to come down under the sun and meet with people who gather together in His name."

It is possible in this life under the sun to know and experience the glory of God, to gather before Him in worship, to tremble at His presence and know that He is near. It is possible in this life to have fellowship with the God of heaven and Solomon is saying, "Cherish that privilege, and realize that you have an alarming capacity for self-deception when you come before God in worship. Realize that it's very possible for you to be a fool in the way you worship with God's people." We're not immune from this. None of us has gotten beyond the need for this direct, stark warning: don't be a fool in church. How do we avoid such folly?

1. Watch your step.
2. Pay attention.
3. Bridle your tongue.

Watch your step—remember Who you are approaching.

Verse one says, "*Guard your steps when you go to house of God.*" Maybe we should have read this together this morning before we came in from the parking lot. The King James Bible says, "*Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God.*" Let's be clear here. I understand that when we come into this building, it's not the same as Solomon's temple. I get that. I understand that this in itself is not a holy place. This building is just a building. This Randall Road/Grandma's Lane corner is just a spot on Google Maps and God's presence is not bound to this location.

But I want you to understand the fact that this is no longer a holy place in the sense that Solomon's temple was in the Old Testament. That doesn't mean that we should have less awe when we come here; we should have more awe. That's what Hebrews 12 is saying. Because where is the temple now? The temple is a Person—the Lord Jesus Christ, God Himself, Who came down from heaven to earth so that all who trust in what He did on that cross and rising from the dead, we now can have fellowship with God. We can come to God through Jesus, Who is God.

First Peter 2:5 says when we come to God through Jesus we *“like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house...to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”* So where is the house of God today? It’s wherever the people of God gather in Jesus’ name. In 1 Timothy 3:15, Paul calls us *“the household of God, which is the church of the living God.”* We are God’s house, it says in Hebrews 3:6. So if the priests of the Old Testament trembled when they came into the temple, so should we as we come together before God in worship. We should be aware that God Himself is with us. He’s the same God of the Old Testament. He’s the God of Moses. Remember Moses before the burning bush in Exodus 3:5-6?

The Lord said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Removing their sandals was a sign of reverence. It signified that you’re saying, “I am a slave. I’m here to do your bidding. I’m removing all covering and all pretense. Here I am before You, God, bowing in reverence.” It’s the posture that should characterize us as we gather before God in worship. “We are Your servants, Lord, listening for Your voice, eager to obey You, needing Your direction, wanting nothing more than to please You, dreading nothing more than Your disfavor because of our disobedience. We’re longing for Your nearness, God.”

That’s fearing God. That’s the attitude we are to come to God with in worship. Remember Who we are approaching. He is a God greatly to be feared in the assembly of His holy ones, Psalm 89:5 says. Let’s look at three aspects of the character of God that Solomon reminds us of:

1. God is in heaven and you are on earth (5:2). He’s not talking here about geography—he’s talking about theology. It’s not about God’s address, but about God’s essence. He is sovereign over all. He sees all. He hears all. He is all-powerful. He knows all. He alone is great.

Two weeks ago in worship we sang, “All my ways are known to You,” and I can’t get it out of my mind. It just keeps going through my mind. “Lord, all my ways are known to You. You’re in heaven, high above. I am on earth.” There is between the transcendent holiness and the finite frailty of man an infinite gap that only God can fill. It’s only if God comes to us that we can have fellowship with Him. He is in heaven and we are on earth.

2. God is holy (5:4). We see this in verse four in the phrase, *“he has no pleasure in fools.”* This is a way of saying God does not take sin lightly. The prophet Habakkuk says in Habakkuk 1:13 that God’s eyes are too pure to look upon evil. It is our duty, according to Paul’s letter to the

Ephesians to find out what pleases Him and to make it our ambition to be pleasing to Him in all our thoughts, attitudes, words and actions. He is a holy God.

3. God is our Judge (5:6). We see that in the words, “*Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?*” It’s a reminder that God is the One Who evaluates what we’re doing. God is the One Who will either bless or destroy our works. Our lives are accountable to Him. This is where the whole book of Ecclesiastes is leading us. Listen to the last two verses in Ecclesiastes 12:

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

So God is in heaven, God is holy and God is our Judge. Why does He reveal Himself to us like this? Look at the end of Ecclesiastes 5:7. It’s so that we would fear Him. Fearing God is the main key to life. It’s the main key to this book. It’s the beginning of wisdom. You can’t even get to mile marker one on the path of wisdom without the fear of the Lord, without trembling before Him. Saying, “O God, I long to please You. I dread displeasing You. I need Your instruction. I want to walk in Your ways. I’m dependent on You every step.” That’s fearing God. Look at Ecclesiastes 8:12-13 at another instance in this letter where we see this key theme of fearing the Lord:

Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.

So guard your steps. Watch your feet. Remember Who you are approaching, and approach Him with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24). Is that the kind of worship that’s characteristic of us? This does not mean, friends, that when you come to church, it should always sound like a funeral dirge, or that everything should be somber and subdued, or that if you ever hear a child make a noise in the service, you should turn around and glare at her.

This is talking about the attitude of our hearts. The Bible calls us to clap our hands when we come into God’s presence, to sing with gladness, to come into His presence with singing, to serve the Lord with gladness (Psalm 100:2). All these things call for joy and even laughter in worship of God, because He is a happy God, a blessed God and He’s called us into relationship with Himself.

But in all our joy and all our clapping and in all our warmth and delight in worship, we must never forget Who God is. *“Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his”* (Psalm 100:3). The heights of the heavens are His. The land is His. The sky and the seas are His, for He made them. So worship with awe and reverence. Rejoice with trembling. Don't forget Who you worship and what it cost for you, a sinner, to come into God's presence. It cost the blood of the eternal covenant of Jesus.

If you attend a concert where the price of admission is really high, you're going to be a little more alert, aren't you? You're going to be thinking, “I'd better really behave myself in here and make the most of this time, because this cost a lot for me to be here.” Well, friends, it cost the blood of Jesus for us to be here and to call on God's name and draw near to Him with confidence so that we can be accepted in His presence. We should never treat this lightly or flippantly. We should also not think, “Hey, it's okay if I come or if I don't.”

We've done a study of church attendance over the last few years and have discovered is that everyone any given Sunday at New Covenant, two-thirds of our congregation is here in attendance. What that means is that one-third is not. I know there are lots of reasons why a third of the people aren't here. I was part of that third last week. There are good reasons, but we also need to recognize there are lazy reasons. There are casual reasons. There are flippant reasons. There are apathetic reasons why we don't treasure this experience of coming together before God. If those are our reasons for haphazard church attendance, we should repent and recognize the price Jesus paid was high for us to be here. Guard your feet.

Someone wrote that people in churches seem like cheerful, brainless tourists on a packaged tour of the absolute. She pictures us like being on the Titanic, having coffee and donuts on Deck C, presuming someone's minding the ship, correcting the course, avoiding icebergs and shoals, fueling the engines, watching the radar, noting weather reports radioed in from the shore. That's not our responsibility. We're just here to enjoy the cruise. We're just along for the ride. That's the way a lot of worshipers are in church. Her name is Annie Dillard and she makes this scathing observation:

On the whole, I do not find Christians, outside of the catacombs, sufficiently sensible of conditions. Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? The churches are children playing on the floor with their chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT to kill a Sunday morning. It is madness to wear ladies' straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to

*our pews. For the sleeping god may wake someday and take offense,
or the waking God may draw us out to where we can never return.*

This is a graphic way of saying, “Do you realize Who you’re coming before when you worship Him? Do you believe what the Bible says about Him?” If you don’t want to be a fool in church, guard your steps.

Pay attention!

Verse one: *“To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil.”* So when you come before God, the most important thing you bring is two ears that are cleaned out. Get the wax out of your ears—the spiritual wax. You come to hear and receive, not to demand or manipulate with your religiosity. As it says in 1 Samuel 15:22, *“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.”*

What is this “sacrifice of fools”? It’s whenever you are more impressed with what you have to say than with what God has to say. It’s when you go through the motions of worship, making sacrifices, doing your duty, while your heart is far from God. It’s when you do religious things, but your life remains unchanged. When you think it’s just fine to come in here and lift your voice and hands to the Lord, but then go home and be cruel to your family, or go to work tomorrow and rip people off, or tell perverted jokes at lunch or laugh at them, or keep on sleeping with people to whom you’re not married. You’re worshipping, but then you’re not living as if the God you just worshiped is changing you.

Tony Marita talks about a friend of his in high school who was sleeping with his girlfriend. Tony confronted him about it and his friend’s response was, “I never made that promise to God. I never promised to save myself for marriage. That wasn’t part of my deal with God when I said I’d follow Him.” Tony replied, “It does not matter whether you promised it—it’s right there in the Bible.” It is not a negotiable situation. It’s not up for debate or vote. God has revealed Himself to us in His Word, so we must listen and obey.

Listen. It’s the first order of worship. It’s why we’re called to worship, because we’ve got to remember Who we’re worshipping. We’ve got to tune our minds and hearts to Him. It’s why we endeavor to sing songs that are full of Bible truths and why you heard Dan reading Scriptures throughout the service. It’s because we’re more concerned with what God has to say to us than we are with what we say to Him. We’ve got to hear from Him.

This is why we spend so much time preaching in our worship services. It’s because we believe the climax of worship is when the Word of God is proclaimed. Worship didn’t stop when

we stopped singing. I am to worship God right now as I proclaim His Word and you are to be worshiping Him as you listen to His Word. When I preach, I am to preach to you as one who is preaching the living oracles of God. I am to preach with God as my audience. I am to imagine Jesus sitting in the room and be concerned about His face. Is He smiling? Is He agreeing with what I'm saying? Is He being honored by my words? Because He's the only audience that matters. I need to remember that as a preacher. It is not my job to preach what you want to hear or what's going to make you feel good. It's my job to preach the Word of God in His presence.

It is your job out there under the Word—and actually, I'm under the Word right now as I preach—to listen, as if God Himself were speaking to us. Not just David Sunday or Dan Leeper or Patrick Havens, but God is speaking. He is. I don't know why God chose to convey His Word through human means like this. I don't know why He picks people to be the proclaimers. Maybe it's because God loves us and wants us to receive His Word from someone like us, to hear it through the voice of a man. But what I do know is that John Calvin got it profoundly right when he said this. "A man preaches so that God may speak by the voice of a man." It is God Who speaks through the preaching of His Word.

So don't say, "Oh, the Holy Spirit didn't move today when the Bible was being preached." That is just provoking God. Wherever the Bible is open, the Holy Spirit is at work. Don't be waiting for some extraordinary influence of the Holy Spirit before you start paying attention to God's Word. I can guarantee this, friends: When we start paying attention to the Word of God, the Holy Spirit will be working. We will experience His nearness.

So apparently it's really possible for us to fall into the trap of making the sacrifice of fools, because it says here in verse one that many people are doing it and they don't even know that they're doing evil. They think, "I'm doing okay. I'm worshiping God. I know all these words. I know all these songs. I've heard this message before. I could preach that better than he could. I know all that. But I'm here. I'm worshiping." They do not even know that they're doing evil.

Friends, I think there's a lot more worship attendance in the Fox Valley today than there is worship attention. God does not care about your attendance record. He's not just looking for your body in a seat. He wants your attention. If you don't want to be a fool in worship, pay attention. Draw near to hear, rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools (5:1).

Bridle your tongue!

It's striking to me that every verse in this passage makes reference to our speech when we come to corporate worship. In verse one it's implicit that we are to listen, but if we don't listen,

we're offering the sacrifice of fools, which involves speech that isn't worshipful. Then it gets explicit again in verses two, three, six and seven. And verses four and five are talking about making vows. So every verse involves speech. How do fools speak in worship services?

1. Fools speak without thinking (5:2a). *"Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God."* So we have not listened. We have not let His Word capture our hearts and shape our response. We just start blurting out the first thing that pops into our minds. We rush in without thinking. Or we say things about our heart's intentions that we don't really mean. Or we say things to one another about what God means to us, yet God hears our hearts and knows it's not true.

Friends, every time we speak, think of God holding a spiritual stethoscope to your heart. He's not just listening to your voice. It's not like you're on a microphone talking so that God can hear you. No. As you speak, God's got the stethoscope there and He's measuring your heartbeat. He's looking to see if you say reflects what's in your heart. What happens when our hearts get out of sync with God's heart? Is there a spiritual ablation procedure that can be done to bring our heartbeat back in line with God's heartbeat? Is there something that can be done to get that back in sync?

Yes. It's called listening—listening to the voice of God in His Word. Sometimes we speak of God in ways that empty Him of His significance. What's the third commandment? *"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain"* (Exodus 20:7). We can even do that while we're singing, can't we? Empty words.

A guy named Mike Leith wrote about how he broke the third commandment in worship. He said, "I did it like this. I was singing a song and mouthing words which extolled the greatness of God while I was thinking about whether or not our family would eat at the new Mexican restaurant or go with the quick and cheap McDonald's run. Here's how it went:

Bless the Lord, O my soul. A fajita sure sounds good.
Worship His holy name. But can eating out fit our budget?
Sing like never before. Ah, not McDonald's again.
O my soul. Maybe if we ordered off the lunch menu, we could afford it.
I'll worship Your holy name. Yep, Mexican it is.

He said, "When I'm singing about the greatness of God's mercy and thinking about fajitas, I'm using His name as a flippant thing—and that's dangerous."

It's dangerous for us to get this comfortable with God, because it causes us to think we've got a grasp on Him. Am I the only one who's ever been convicted of singing something in worship or saying something in worship that I was not even really meaning or engaged with in my heart?

Hasty speech, telling God what we think He wants to hear instead of really giving Him what's in our hearts. Rash plus hasty words equals foolish words.

2. Fools speak too much (5:2b-3). Therefore, because God is in heaven and you are on earth, let your words be few. God is not impressed with a word count. It's better to say ten syllables from your heart, like, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner," than to pray for ten minutes and not even remember what you just said. Fools are like sleepwalkers in worship. Verse three in the New Living Translation says, "Just as being too busy gives you nightmares, being a fool makes you a blabbermouth." So fools walk around, blabbing things, and don't have a clue what they're saying. As soon as they leave the sanctuary, they forget it all.

One paraphrase of verse seven says, "Words are cheap, just like the dreams you have while you're asleep." Seeing this, we might think, "Well, I'd better just be silent in church. I'd better never talk at all. Maybe we should become Quakers and have silent meetings." No, that's not an option. The Bible calls us to speak to God in worship. When God is in the room, He gets the first word, He gets the last word and He should be the main speaker. We should all be listening to Him.

3. Fools make promises they fail to keep (5:4-6). "*What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people*" (Psalm 116:12-14). Jesus taught us that we should let our yes be yes and our no be no (Matthew 5:37; James 5:12). Our word should be our bond. We ought to be very careful not to make vows we cannot fulfill. If it's contrary to the Bible, don't vow. If you're ensnared in an unbiblical vow, you may need to repent of your foolishness and renounce that vow.

That's what Martin Luther did. When he became a monk, he took a vow of chastity. "I will never have sex. I will never be married to a woman," he said. Then the light of the gospel broke through and he realized, "I'm righteous before God by faith in Jesus." He read in 1 Timothy 4 that those who forbid marriage are actually teaching a doctrine of demons. He said, "Well, I'm free from that vow, then." He repented, renounced that vow, married Katy von Bora and they had lots of kids. Sometimes we need to renounce an unbiblical vow.

But say you're in trouble and call out to God, saying, "God, if You help me, I will do such and such." Then you get out of the trouble, God helps you and you realize the cost of the commitment you made to Him is high. God says, "Don't think you can get out of that vow you made to Me." God takes it very seriously. "*When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay*" (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5).

You might be thinking, “Oh, God is a little easier on people in the New Testament.” Wrong. Just ask Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) They didn’t have to say to the apostles, “We’ll give you all the proceeds of our land when we sell it.” But they did. They made a promise, then they held back part of the proceeds. They wanted to look good in front of people, but still have some of their stuff—which they could have had, had they not made that promise. They wanted to look good in the eyes of people, so they made a promise they did not keep—and God dealt very seriously with that disobedience.

Think of the vows we make in worship. When we come into the baptismal, we’re saying, “Jesus, I trust You. You are the Lord of my life. I’m going to follow You all my days.” When we become members of the church, we make a covenant. There are at least nine promises in our church covenant that we will live in a certain way. When we come to the Lord’s Table, we’re saying, “Jesus, I am united to You. You are my Lord. You are my Savior. I want to love You and live for You, because You first loved me” (1 John 4:19). We’re promising that He is the One to Whom we will belong.

A couple weeks ago we said, “I am personal property of the Lord Jesus Christ. He deserves my allegiance, loyalty and trust, 24 hours a day, in all places, in all aspects of my life—both private and public. He’s worthy of my obedience. He’s worthy of my utmost. He’s worthy of my very blood.” Those are serious words. They’re true words.

When elders, deacons and pastors are ordained, we take vows. “Do you accept the office of elder or deacon, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof, and endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the gospel in your life, so as to set a worthy example before this church?” We say, “By the grace of God, I do.”

Think of marriage. “David, do you take this woman to be your wedded wife, to live together after God’s ordinance in the holy estate of marriage? Do you promise to love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, for better or for worse, in riches and in poverty, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, will you keep yourself only to her until death do you part?” “I do.” It would have been better for me to remain single all my life than to take that vow and break it. God takes these words seriously. So we all are probably squirming in our seats—and we should be.

We’re going to close this service by singing:

Our mouths were open graves
Full of broken vows we made
Our tongues ran wild
Our hearts could not be tamed

[From “Our Only Hope Is You” by Neil and Kate DeGraide]

We're going to confess our sin of speaking rashly, hastily, too much, making promises we have not kept. We're going to say, "Our only hope is You, Lord." Because there is a Savior. Praise God for this! It says in Hebrews 10, "Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'I have come to do Your will, O God. Your law is upon My heart. I have come to fulfill Your will.'" And Jesus perfectly kept His vow—all the way to the cross where He died for us so that we could be forgiven our lawlessness, sinful deeds, broken vows and lying words. What a wonderful Savior we have!

So this passage tells us, "*Guard your steps when you go the house of God.*" Not if. Not "Maybe I'll go; maybe I won't." It says, "This is my habit. This is what I'm going to do, again and again and again." God is very gracious and kind to allow us week after week after week after week to come into His presence. And as we come, we are not accepted by God because our worship is perfect. That's paganism.

When we come, we are accepted by God because of the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can come into His presence. As often as we do, we are unlearning the ways of foolishness and learning the ways of humility, wisdom and reverence. We are learning to fear the Lord which is a good thing because the friendship of the Lord is for those who fear Him.

- ¹¹ *For your name's sake, O LORD,
pardon my guilt, for it is great.*
- ¹² *Who is the man who fears the LORD?
Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.*
- ¹³ *His soul shall abide in well-being,
and his offspring shall inherit the land.*
- ¹⁴ *The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,
and he makes known to them his covenant.*
- ¹⁵ *My eyes are ever toward the LORD,
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.*

(Psalm 25:11-15)

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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