



Daily Verse and Comment

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

(1) Guard your steps when you go to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools. For they do not know that they are doing evil. (2) Do not be rash *with* your mouth, and do not let your heart be hasty to say 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 through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by the multitude of words. (4) When you vow a vow to God, do not delay to pay it. For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay that which you have vowed. (5) *It is* better that you should not vow, than that you should vow and not pay. (6) Do not allow your mouth to cause your flesh to sin; *and* do not say before the angel that it *was* an error. *For* why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands? (7) For in the multitude of dreams and many words vanities abound; but fear God.

A Faithful Version

The counsel Solomon gives provides specific insight into the evils these people were committing. He says in verse 1, “Draw near to hear.” In verse 2, he advises, “Do not be rash with your mouth,” as well as, “let not your heart utter anything hastily before God” and “let your words be few.” In verse 3, he states, “A fool's voice is known by his many words.” Finally, back in verse 2, he counsels humility, “for [God](#) is in heaven, and you on earth.” Whatever they were doing was more serious than it appeared on the surface.

His initial counsel involves hearing. [Jesus](#) says in [Matthew 13:8-9](#): “But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” He gives the same sobering admonition in [Matthew 13:41-43](#):

The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that [offend](#), and those who practice

lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

The first command to hear lies in the Parable of the Sower and the second in the Parable of the Wheat and Tares. Both have the same urgent sense and end with exclamation points, emphasizing urgent seriousness. The instruction on hearing in the Parable of the Sower is quite clear. Consider these factors in what Jesus said: The seed is the Word of God, so what the sower cast was good. In addition, the human soil the seed fell upon was also good.

However, one factor is still beyond the sower's power. The soil, that is, the person the seed fell on, has the power to allow or reject the seed's taking root by choosing to listen or not. That singular choice is of particular importance at this point in the parable. The same conclusion is true in verse 43 concerning the hearer choosing the Lake of Fire or the [Kingdom of God](#). When Jesus uses the term “hear,” He means more than just hearing audible sound; we also “hear” as we read His Word. He is thus emphasizing that people have the power to shut off hearing completely even though the Word of God enters their ears or their eyes and He has opened their minds to grasp it. It is the individual's responsibility to hear, consider, and then accept or reject it.

[Mark 4:23-25](#) contains the same urgent warning, but he adds an additional truth that is important to us, a second lesson:

“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” And He said to them, “Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”

The lesson is that, not only must we first consciously turn on our hearing to be converted, but we must also selectively choose from among all we hear and thoughtfully accept or reject. In others words, we must discipline ourselves to be selective in order to grow, overcome, and glorify God.

Why are these elements of our conversion so important? [Romans 10:16-17](#) provides a condensed foundational reason: “But they have not all obeyed [the gospel](#). For Isaiah says, 'L_{ORD}, who has believed our report?' So then [faith](#) comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Hearing may well be our highest responsibility in our relationship with God because we must [live by faith](#) ([Hebrews 11:38](#)), and faith begins and is sustained by hearing. Hearing is serious business for the children of God.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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