

Leaves Of Hope #3

Family Devotion written by C.M. Gullerud

The God Abraham praise; at whose supreme command
From earth I rise and seek the joys at his right hand.
I all on earth forsake, its wisdom, fame and power,
And him my only portion make, my shield and tower.

L.H. 40; verse 2

Ecclesiastes 2:11, 15-16

Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun. . . . Then I thought in my heart, "The fate of the fool will overtake me also. What then do I gain by being wise?" I said in my heart, "This too is meaningless." For the wise man, like the fool, will not be long remembered; in days to come both will be forgotten. Like the fool, the wise man too must die!

What advantage has wisdom over folly? In what respect is a wise man better off than a fool? The answer to these questions seems so self-evident that it hardly seems fair to ask. However, the answer is not all that simple. Even that wise man, Solomon says: "As it happens to the fool, it also happens to me, and why

was I then more wise?” First of all, it should be made clear that we are not talking about that wisdom whereof the apostle Paul speaks to Timothy: “. . . and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is Christ Jesus.” II Timothy 3:15 And we are not referring to that kind of a fool who has said in his heart: *“There is no God!”* Rather our text is speaking of wisdom and folly with reference to things of this body and life, strictly material things.

The wise man is described as one who walks in the light and has eyes in his head, while the fool is described as one who in darkness walks as if he had not eyes at all. The wise man takes note of the things going on around him and is able to evaluate and to discern, to judge people and events, to practice good public relations. The fool, on the other hand, is like one who fumbles around in the dark, making wrong decisions, rubbing people the wrong way, and ends up as a real failure. It is clear to see that the wisdom here spoken of has much in its favor and that there is a great need for warning against the madness and folly which causes people to make a mess of their lives.

But now what conclusion does one come to when it is shown that the destiny of one is the same as the other? Both the wise man and the fool come to the same end. Both the wise man and

the fool must die and what they have gathered or not gathered is soon forgotten. Those who have gathered a fortune must leave it to another who may be either wise or foolish, but the founder is soon forgotten. The wisdom that helped him gather a fortune does him no good when he is dead. In this respect he has no advantage over the fool who has nothing to show for his life when he dies.

This moved Solomon to say that he hated life because vanity and grasping for the wind stood before him as the result when he viewed the end of the wise man and the fool. “So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me.” Ecclesiastes 2:17-18 If life is carried to its logical conclusion, a person could very easily degrade their life and run away from it and step into all manner of madness and folly. It could very easily cause one to try to drown their sorrows in alcohol and drugs, creating a dream world that is not real and true. It all points out the truth that the greatest wisdom of this world and the shrewdest investor will find no lasting treasure except as he finds it in and through the Son of God who is made to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, as it is written: “Let him who boasts let him boast in

the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 1:31 How joyful we should be that we have the Scriptures which make us wise unto salvation which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him we find peace, rest for our souls, and joy in the midst of despair, strength when we are weak, and hope when we despair. Whether we have conducted ourselves wisely or foolishly in the use of earthly goods, it remains true that we need God. In Jesus we find all that we require for life and eternity. When we see him as he is, we shall no longer hate life, but we will say: *“We love life as we see it in him.”* God grant it to us all in Jesus’ saving name. Amen

**The Father’s love shield me this day,
The Son’s pure wisdom cheers my way,
The Holy Spirit’s light divine
Illume my heart’s benighted shrine.**

L.H. 541 verse 3