

Living in Light of God's Truth

Poor, Wise Man

Ecclesiastes 9:11-18

Grace Fellowship Church / Stephen Petrie / June 7, 2026

I. Wisdom is Better Because It Trusts God Amid Life's Uncertainty

A. Life is unpredictable.

Ecclesiastes 9:11 "Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all."

There is nowhere that life feels more unpredictable than in the reality of death.

Ecclesiastes 9:12 "For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them."

Luke 12:25 "And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?"

Luke 21:34 "But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that **day come upon you suddenly like a trap.**"

B. Wisdom trusts God.

Life does not operate as it "should" but it does operate in accordance with God's good will.

Suffering serves as an opportunity to draw closer to Him.

C. So live based on what you can know.

Colossians 3:23-24 "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ."

Wisdom invites you to trust God even in the uncertainty and unpredictability of life.

II. Wisdom is Better Because It Promotes the Glory of God and Good of Others Rather Than Self

Great King (v. 14)

Poor Man (v. 15)

Great siegeworks (v. 14)

Little City with few men (v. 14)

Shouting (v. 17)

Quiet (v. 17)

Destruction (v. 18)
Might (v. 16)

Deliverance (v. 15)
Wisdom (v. 16)

Godly wisdom is contrasted with foolishness in both their purpose and the means by which they pursue that purpose.

Ecclesiastes 9:15-16 “But there was found in it a poor, wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man. ¹⁶ But I say that wisdom is better than might, though the poor man’s wisdom is despised and his words are not heard.”

It’s vanity to live for yourself. It’s fleeting. It’s uncertain. It’s dissipating and yet it is so tempting.

Wisdom rarely gets a large audience.

James 3:13-18 “Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵ This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶ **For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.** ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

Don’t be like the people of that town who forgot the wise man.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 “We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.”

III. Wisdom is Better Because It’s Origin is From God

The poor man had wisdom that led to victory in the midst of an earthly battle but what we need today is wisdom that leads to victory in the midst of a spiritual war and that kind of wisdom only comes from God.

Proverbs 2:6 “For the Lord gives wisdom...”

You need wisdom not from within but from without.

James 1:5 “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”

This is a prayer that God delights in answering.

IV. Wisdom is Better Because by the Wisdom of God, in the Person of Christ, You are Offered Deliverance From Death

Jesus who is the wisdom of God is our only hope for eternal deliverance.

Wisdom being greater than might is seen nowhere more clearly than in the life of Christ.

Psalm 50:15 “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 “And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’”

Psalm 20:7 “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.”

Are you trusting in Him?

Ecclesiastes 12:13 “The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”