

Thought for the Day 6th July - John Reed

Read Ecclesiastes 7:1-13

I love the book of Ecclesiastes. It's a such a rich and deep book. Not only does it offer a thoughtfully honest reflection on the contradictions and futilities of life, and some of the great passages of Scripture like the poem on time in chapter 3 and the marvellous imagery of growing old in chapter 12, but it also contains passages like this that rival the book of Proverbs for their pithy statements of wisdom.

There are several gems in this that jumped out at me as I read them this morning.

On is found in verse 5: "It is better for a man to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools."

It seems to me that we live in a world where "the song of fools" is too easily heard and paid attention to. Facebook, Twitter, Tiktok, and a whole bunch of other social media platforms provide an opportunity for anyone and everyone to share their thoughts and actions, and anyone can become a star overnight with very little justification for it.

Consider, for example, this story about a man who was arrested for taking a swim in an indoor aquarium at a sporting goods store in Louisiana.¹ Apparently, he did it to follow through on a promise he made to his followers on TikTok that if he got 2,000 likes he would jump in the tank. He described it as a "spur of the moment" prank, but I find it hard to accept that it was spur of the moment since he was following through on an earlier promise. In the meantime, it has cost the store a lot of money to empty and clean out the 13,000-gallon aquarium after his antics.

What used to be the sort of stupid pranks carried out in the school playground by immature teenagers showing off for their equally immature friends are now carried out on the world stage by adults who gain an international following because their videos are "funny." In the meantime, qualified and experienced scientists and medical experts with serious warning about a dangerous pandemic are being ignored by masses who don't find their message entertaining enough.

Never has the message of Ecclesiastes 7:5 been more poignantly true. We are too ready to listen to fools than to heed the words of the wise.

Above all, this applies to those who would rather listen to the musings of a TV actor or a newspaper columnist than to the word of God. In a world where people are hungering and thirsting for satisfaction, we need to heed the words of Isaiah 32:6: "The fool speaks folly, and his heart is busy with iniquity, to practice ungodliness, to utter error concerning the Lord, to leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied, and to deprive the thirsty of drink."

¹ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/man-arrested-fish-tank-swim_n_5efa23f3c5b612083c51358a