

2-23-2020 Message SHARPENING YOUR SPIRITUAL AX

Ecclesiastes 10:5 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler:

Ecclesiastes 10:6 Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place.

Ecclesiastes 10:7 I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.

Ecclesiastes 10:8 He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.

Ecclesiastes 10:9 Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby.

Ecclesiastes 10:10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.

Intro: My wife and I got away for a few days, we went to Caldwell N.J. to deliver a piano to the First Baptist Church, Pastor Dave Bulka's church. While I was there brother Bulka asked me what my favorite verse in the Bible was. I said I did not have a favorite verse but I had what I might consider my favorite books. My two favorite books in the Bible are the Book of Proverbs and the book of Ecclesiastes. The reason they are my favorite books is because they are filled with practical wisdom and advice.

Now Ecc. 10:10 is one of this wisdom filled verses. We read this in Eccl 10:10

Ecclesiastes 10:10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.

I was working on a piano about a week ago and I had to drill some new holes into a piano lid to put little brass screws in it for the lids piano hinge. The wood was so hard that even after drilling a pilot hole the screws broke. I finally had to wet the edge of the screw so it would go into the wood easier. I wanted the screws tight but did not want them to break.

Ecc. 10:10 talks about sharpening your ax with a whetstone. A whetstone is called a whetstone because generally someone would wet it with oil or water to help sharpen a metal edge. Some people just use the stone dry but most people agree that wetting the stone helps in the process. So it is called a whetstone.

Solomon says when the axe is blunt it takes more strength to use it. If you sharpen or whet the edge it will be easier to use. Then Solomon says that wisdom is what sharpens your life. As you work your way through life, things will go easier for you if you let wisdom sharpen you and direct your life. Wisdom is the spiritual whetstone to your life.

This morning I want to talk to you about this word of advice and wisdom given by Solomon in Ecc. 10:10

HOW TO SHARPEN YOUR SPIRITUAL AX.

I want to talk to you about how to sharpen your spiritual Ax in this life. Just as a blunt ax will make work more difficult, a life void of biblical wisdom will be a life that will be filled with greater heartache and struggles.

So let me suggest that you sharpen your spiritual ax and life will be easier for you.

YOU SHARPEN YOUR SPIRITUAL AX BY BEING DIRECTED BY WISDOM.

Ecclesiastes 10:10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.

Two great books to direct us in the area of Wisdom.

Proverbs.

Ecclesiastes.

How to do we sharpen our spiritual ax?

We remove the rough spots off of the edge of the ax.

One of the rough spots is our ways that are contrary to God's ways.

Sharpen your spiritual ax by getting rid of your own ways.

I. FIRST, OUR WAYS MAY SEEM RIGHT, BUT ONLY GOD'S WAYS ARE REALLY THE RIGHT WAY.

God's ways are sharp, straight, and narrow. Your ways are crooked, blunt, and broad.

When you sharpen your ax on a whetstone, you have to apply friction and resistance. It goes a bit easier if you wet the stone. But the friction is still there and what is happening is you are literally cutting the rough edge of the ax and making the edge of the ax sharper and smother.

The Bible says,

Proverbs 16:25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Men in their own minds and thinking can justify just about anything.

God's ways are the safe ways.

When you read the Word of God, it reshapes your life and takes the rough edges off.

Wisdom removes the rough edges of your ideas and opinions and conforms your life to the Word of God and things will go easier for you when you sharpen your life with wisdom.

Proverbs 16:25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

The next thing that will have to be removed from our dull ax is pride, which will dulls our spiritual edge.

II. WE SHARPEN OUR SPIRITUAL AX WHEN WE REMOVE PRIDE FROM OUR LIVES. PRIDE IS OUR WORST ENEMY IN REGARD TO DIRECTION.

Pride in your life is like having corrosion on the edge of your ax.

SOLOMON, WHO WAS THE WISEST MAN THAT EVER LIVED, LEARNED TO WORK WITH HIS PEOPLE.

Proverbs 11:2 When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.

Proverbs 13:10 Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 29:23 A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

Solomon knew how to administrate people and was considerate of their needs. He got lots of work out of his workers without abusing them.

Though Solomon was the wisest man in the world, he did not treat his workers like a despot. He was considerate of his workers and servants. This is a true sign of humility.

Note, Solomon sent them to work in the quarries for 1 month at a time and 2 months they stayed home and rested!

Imagine the wealth and power of Solomon.
Solomon was a master of administration and organization.

I Kings 5:12 And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together.

I Kings 5:13 And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men.

I Kings 5:14 And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy.

I Kings 5:15 And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains;

I Kings 5:16 Beside the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.

I Kings 5:17 And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.

NOTE: REHOBOAM, THROUGH HIS PRIDE. LOST ALL THAT HIS DAD ACCOMPLISHED IN A SHORT TIME, ALL BECAUSE OF PRIDE.

I Kings 12:4 Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

I Kings 12:5 And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.

I Kings 12:10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.

I Kings 12:11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

I Kings 12:12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

I Kings 12:13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him;

I Kings 12:14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

I Kings 12:15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

I Kings 12:16 So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

Pride Brought Rehoboam's destruction.

WISDOM SHOULD DIRECT US. If he just read his fathers books, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes he would have learned how to lead and direct his people!

But instead, his spiritual ax was dull.

Ecclesiastes 10:10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.

To sharpen your spiritual ax you need to whet the edge. You do so by casting off pride, and also applying the fear of God in your life.

III. WE SHARPEN OUR SPIRITUAL AX BY WISDOM AND THAT WISDOM COMES FROM FEARING GOD.

Wisdom comes from our fear of God and willingness to obey Him.

Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Godliness and Wisdom go hand in hand.

A person who fears God will obey God.

A person who obeys God will find his life is blessed.

A person who fears God will keep his commandments.

A person who keeps God's commandments will find life will go easier for them!

The wisdom of God's word is like the whetstone to the ax. It is what sharpens our spiritual ax.

Ecclesiastes 10:10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.

Those who reject the wisdom of the word of God are like people who try to cut down a tree with a dull ax. You will wear yourself out.

I had a guy working for me one time and I gave him my chain saw to cut down some small trees that were growing alongside my driveway. He hit some stones and dulled the chain, and then instead of stopping and sharpening it, he just started to work the chain saw like a hand saw and busted the thing.

In the end it cost me more to fix the saw than if he had stopped working completely.

Some people's lives are that way. When things are not going right, instead of stopping and asking the Lord for wisdom, they just keep trying to solve the problem and next thing you know their life is a real mess. Instead of things going smoothly for them, their ax becomes a hammer with no edge. The very thing that is needed to sharpen the ax they don't want to use.

People run to the psychiatrist to sharpen their spiritual ax, when all the time they neglect the whetstone of God's word.

People run to prescription drugs to solve their problems and neglect the whetstone of God's word.

People go to dear Abby to solve their problems and reject God's wisdom.

There is no man that can sharpen your spiritual ax but Jesus.

There is no book except God's book given to sharpen your spiritual ax.

IV. THINGS WILL GO EASIER FOR YOU IF YOU LOVE WISDOM AND THE WORD OF GOD. THOSE WHO DESPISE WISDOM AND THE WORD OF GOD ARE BUT FOOLS.

Those who despise wisdom and the Bible are like people who refuse to sharpen their ax to cut down trees.

Psalms 14:1 {To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.} The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

1. THE PROBLEM IS OUR HEART.

Proverbs 17:16 Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?

2. THE PROBLEM WITH A FOOL IS HE IS ALWAYS OUT CHASING RAINBOWS.

Proverbs 17:24 Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.

3. IT IS A WASTE OF TIME TO EVEN TRY AND TEACH A FOOL WISDOM.

Proverbs 23:9 Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.

Proverbs 17:16 Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?

Proverbs 24:7 Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate.

WHAT WILL SHARPEN YOUR LIFE.

Think of your life as an ax, and the Bible says wisdom is what sharpens that Ax.

How to sharpen your Life:

The Word of God will sharpen your life, the Word of God contains the wisdom of God.

Ecclesiastes 10:10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.

V. Prayer will sharpen your life.

Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Our verse says:

Ecclesiastes 10:10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.

Now that we are in the winter, the most important thing we need to do in the winter is to stay warm. And so it is that we need to split wood to stay warm.

You know that men keep trying to avoid the trials of this life. However, it is impossible to avoid trials because Jesus said we will have trials. When we sharpen our spiritual ax we get through these trials easier. One of the trials of life is the Hard winters that we face up north. Often hardships bring character into your life, and wisdom often is attained through hardships. In this life you will have hardship and tribulation. Just like a sharp ax helps you split wood easier, prayer will help you through the tough times of life and things will go easier for you.

Biblical times, to sharpen an ax needed two things.

A whetstone and water. And to sharpen our spiritual lives we need prayer and the Word of God.

Through the years God has shown Himself faithful to us.
We have had our share of trials and difficulties.
Greatest blessings have come out of these trials.

I recall the early years of our ministry we had a lot of financial hardships in the ministry but the Lord, through prayer, saw us through them all. We had a lot of hard times with our physical building needs, but through prayer, the Lord has seen us through them all.

Ecclesiastes 10:10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.

We need to sharpen the ax through prayer.

How many times God has made things easier in prayer?

Someone once told me they don't bother God with little things. That is foolish. In everything pray. We need God in all things!

VI. Godly counselors will sharpen your spiritual ax and life.

What will cause the Iron to be blunt:
RUST.

Left to itself an ax will get dull and rust.

So it is that your life will get dull left to yourself.

Proverbs 27:17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Two ways you can learn. you can learn through your own mistakes, or, you can learn from the mistakes of others who can teach you.

I would rather learn from the mistakes others.

One of the great trials we have to deal with in our area is snow and plowing snow in the winter. Because of the contour of our land and where my driveway is, it has taken me years to work through the issue of getting stuck when I plow snow. I sought counsel for help with the issue, and Ray Swingle, an old veteran farmer of the area, helped me a lot with dealing with the contour of the land and even the idea of planting a hedge row of trees and a snow fence until the trees grew. Again, seeking the expertise of others is a great help in going through the trials of life.

How sad it is that people do not seek out spiritual experts to help them through the spiritual trials of this life. Why do they seek to the world? If the world had the answers then why is the world such a mess? The answers are in the Word of God and not in the word of men.

Things get hard for so many people because they have their way of doing things. Our ways are not His ways. Things would go a lot easier for people if they would just sharpen their spiritual ax.

Many people get themselves in a rut and their lives become such a mess. It looks impossible.

JUST SPINNING THEIR WHEELS. Going nowhere.
But wisdom will direct and keep you out of the ruts.

Keep you on high ground.

1. By reading the Word of God.
2. By praying about everything.
3. By seeking godly counsel. Iron sharpeneth Iron.

Apostle Paul:

Acts 9:5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

When I get to Heaven I would like to ask Paul what exactly was going on in his life around that time.

BET EVERYTHING WAS GOING WRONG.
GOD WAS FIGHTING AGAINST HIM.
EVERYTHING WAS TURNING TO ASHES.

Is it time to sharpen your ax?

Ecclesiastes 10:10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.

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VII. Finally consider that we need to continually keep that ax sharp by avoiding things that will dull it. SIN WILL DULL YOUR LIFE!

Sin makes our way hard and difficult.

1. THE DRUNKARD SHALL SUFFER POVERTY.

Proverbs 23:21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

2. ADULTERY WILL LEAD TO HARDSHIPS IN THIS LIFE.

Proverbs 5:3 For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil:

Proverbs 5:4 But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword.

Proverbs 5:5 Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.

Proverbs 5:6 Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.

Proverbs 5:7 Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth.

Proverbs 5:8 Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house:

Proverbs 5:9 Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel:

Proverbs 5:10 Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger;

Proverbs 5:11 And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed,

Proverbs 5:12 And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof;

Proverbs 5:13 And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!

3. WE ALREADY MENTIONED IT. THE SIN OF PRIDE WILL DULL YOU; GOD RESISTS THE PROUD.

James 4:6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

4. SIN WILL BRING RUIN IN THIS LIFE AND THE NEXT.

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

5. THE SIN OF COVETOUSNESS WILL DULL YOUR SPIRITUAL AX.

Proverbs 13:11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.

I Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

6. JUST AS GOOD FRIENDS CAN SHARPEN YOU WRONG FRIENDS CAN DULL YOU.

Psalms 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

When we do not discern proper counselors we get ourselves into trouble.

7. NOT ACCEPTING YOUR DIVINE LIMITATIONS WILL DULL YOU.

Sometimes we over extend ourselves and set out to do things that God never wanted us to do. An ax is designed to split wood not iron.

Life will go a lot easier for you when you accept what God has for you and don't seek more than what He wants for your life. He sets the boundaries and happy is the man that recognizes those boundaries and is content with God's will for their lives.

He said, in Matt. 11:30 My Yoke is easy my burden light!

First got my truck had a lot more break downs because I was too rough with it. The truck was designed to plow snow and when you hit rocks it would break!

God has set boundaries for all of us. God does not bring into your life trials you cannot bear. But when you get outside of His will you will get in over your head.

I Timothy 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

I Timothy 6:7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

I Timothy 6:8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

I Timothy 6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

Ecclesiastes 10:10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.

Consider what will sharpen your spiritual ax and consider what dulls your spiritual ax.

Life will go a lot easier for you if you sharpen your ax and don't go through life with a dull ax.

May the Lord give us wisdom through His word so our life would be a bit easier for us.