

“Summer of Sin” (Wisdom, Foolishness, Sin) July 15, 2006 Jerry Arnold

Father in Heaven, thank you for that beautiful, beautiful reminder that people need you. Lord, we are those people, we are here today because we need you. And we ask that as Your word is opened You will speak to us. We pray Heavenly Father that you will teach us through Your word, that you will inform our hearts and inspire us, and move us closer to You than we’ve ever been before. We are asking for victories and for miracles, and we pray this in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Karen and I have put our house up for sale. We are moving one block away. We have a house under construction, and like you, or some of you, we’ve had some things in our house that needed repair for some time. So now is the time to fix them, you know how it is. You have to sell the car or the house; you have to get everything working right. Couple of years ago, lightning struck near our home. I don’t know if it actually struck our house or just a yard, but it was close. And it popped out some outlets; they haven’t worked, for two years they haven’t worked. There are some switches that haven’t worked either. So we’ve gone without lights on a certain portion of our basement, and without lights in the garage, and without outlets in the bathroom, for two years. There are two reasons why. The first one is, I know the main breaker where it is and I flipped all that stuff. I didn’t want to get an electrician over there because if you had seen my garage you would understand why. You know, people can talk, and I didn’t want anybody coming over and seeing what a mess my garage is. I’ve pretty much figured out that greatest cure for my garage would be a stick of dynamite. But that would take out the rest of the house, so that’s not going to work, so it’s a mess, but we are going to have to sell the house. And so I’ve been trying to clean it and stuff like that, but still it’s not where I am really comfortable, but I had to have an electrician come over.

Now here is the second reason why I didn’t want an electrician to come over: I was afraid of the cost. Yeah, I am careful with funds sometimes, and especially when it comes to practical things like that, but I should get it fixed, you know. I didn’t want to spend the money. I was afraid of the cost, and so we’ve gone two years without electrical outlets in our bathrooms. You may wonder how my wife blow dries her hair. She does it in the bedroom. And which is fine, except during the school year when she has to get up at 5:30, I can sleep through a shower, but when that “747” takes off you know, the blow dryer... Well, any ways, I invited an electrician over. And he got it working, amazing! He spent some time, looked around, checked things out, and he found out that in the main breaker, there was one wire that yes, had been burned. So it’s likely that lightning did strike near there. He snipped the end, pulled the rubber back a little bit on it, the insulation, he re-inserted it, screwed it in, pow, we had power. Then he went upstairs and he checked, there was a wire that it got loose that was in the back of receptacle. He pulled that out, cleaned it up, actually cut it again, did the same thing, and he reattached it by a screw on the side, and then we had everything working. He did few other things for us, I got so excited, I said: “Hey, check this out, check that out.”

It was just two simple wires that had to be replaced, and it started to work again. Well I have a question for you. Is everything working in your house? Think about that. I have more important question. Is everything working in your life? That's what I want to study with you today.

Please turn in your Bibles to Proverbs chapter one. Proverbs chapter one, if you are here visiting today, we are glad to have you. A little explanation about the title, "summer of sin" wisdom, foolishness and sin; we are actually in the midst of the series through the book of Acts, it will take us four or five years to complete that study. We came to Acts chapter three, and you have the story of Peter and John. They healed a lame man who had been lame from birth. He went walking, and leaping, and praising God. In the third sermon that we had on that story, a phrase is used when Peter is preaching and it says: "What you did you did in ignorance, now repent from your sins." So it caused me to have to study; how could what they did have been in ignorance? He is talking about crucifying Christ, and yet they still have to repent. So I began to do a study on sin, shared that with the congregation, and realized that some of our pat answers for what sin is, are inadequate, and so we decided before we can continue in the book of Acts, we needed to understand what sin is. Because the truth is brothers and sisters, until we understand what sin is, we will not understand what the Savior does. Okay?

So last week we were with Cain and Abel, and we discovered that sin has a mother, the mother of all sin. And we really assumed it would be pride, it's not. Pride is a byproduct of this mother of all sins. Mother of all sins is unbelief, not trusting God. That's the beginning of all sin. We tried to make it very practical, and how that works in marriage, the family, dress, and so forth and so on. If you didn't hear that sermon, they'll have them available for you at the end of the service today.

Now, we looked at the first mention of sin in the story of Cain and Abel. Now we are looking at what Solomon has to say about sin. The book of Solomon is about wisdom and foolishness, and how they are opposites of each other. And wisdom and foolishness are Solomon's ways of indicating and teaching about sin. And so we are going to look at the few texts that deal with the fool. Please turn to Proverbs 1 verse 7: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." A fool, according to Solomon, despises wisdom and instruction. It doesn't say they can't receive it, it doesn't say they can't understand it, it says, they despise it. They don't want it, "don't talk to me, I don't want to hear it, just clamp up," you know, "I know what to do!"

Proverbs 12 verse 15, if you'd turn there please. Proverbs 12 verse 15 describes it this way: "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise." A wise person seeks counsel, but fool, no, he's got it, he is right in his own eyes. Proverbs 28 verse 26, please turn there: "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but he who walks wisely will be delivered." But what is going on here? This is a picture of fool. Now note this, that if you look in your Bible concordance under fool, and foolish, foolishly, foolishness, fools', fools, you will find lots of text in Proverbs about fool. What you will discover after careful study, that a synonym for fool is stupid. My wife tells me,

“Don’t use that word Jerry, it sounds too harsh.” I kind of like the word, but it’s too harsh. In fact, if you want to know my text, would you like to know my text? Hold your hand here, and go to Proverbs 30 verse 2, here is my text if you want to know it: “Surely I am more stupid than any man.” That’s how I feel many times, don’t you? Trying to get through life, all right! Well, I can’t use the word stupid, and the reason I can’t, is because you would misunderstand what a fool is. Because we think a fool is somebody who can’t get it. You give them the information, they just don’t get it. They can’t get from here to there logically. That is not a fool in the Scriptures. A fool in the Scriptures is someone whose life is not skilled enough to make in relationships; relationships with God, relationships with family, relationships at employment and relationships with a general community where they live. A fool is out of relationship. A wise person is right in relationships; they are right with God, right with family, right at work, and in the community, they get along.

A fool in the Scriptures is so self centered, so self absorbed, so unwilling to take counsel, that it puts them out of relationship in important areas. And a fool will live their life unhappy. They may be wonderfully successful. You may know fools, we might all know the same fools, they might be movie stars, or rock stars, or wealthy individuals who start companies, or these people we vote in the office, they may be fools. Yes, amen! They may be lawyers, let’s keep this going here (congregation laughs). A fool is somebody out of relationship with God and consequently you have all these other ramifications and a fool lives a life constantly unhappy. You see, the Lord says if we keep our mind on Him, He will keep us in perfect peace. A fool avoids that.

Now I want to show you something that is intriguing. Look at Proverbs 14 verse 9 it says: “Fools mock at sin, but among the upright there is favor.” Now I want to read that to you in the Amplified Version of the Bible. The Amplified Version of the Bible takes the Greek language which in the Old Testament that would be the “Septuagint” which is written about 150-200 years before Jesus. Hebrew was put into Greek in the Septuagint. And so the Amplified Version comes along, and it takes those Greek words, and it adds enough English words to give the meaning. Because there are simply some Greek words that one English word in translation doesn’t really cut it. So here is what it says in the Amplified Version of the Bible, quote: “Fools make a mock at sin, and sin mocks the fools who are its victims. A sin offering made by them only mocks them bringing them disappointment and disfavor. But among the upright there is favor of God.”

Notice this: in the Amplified Version a fool mocks at sin, but notice this, sin mocks the fool. Does that remind you of the story of Cain last week where God said, “Cain if you do well, things will be well, but sin lays at the door, and it wants to rule over you, but you should rule over it?” Sin mocks the fool. Cain will play the role of a fool. And Cain in doing that will be out of the relationship with his brother and family. In fact, he will kill his brother and he will have to leave his family. He will be out of relationship with God, it says in chapter 4: “he went out from the presence of the Lord.”

Now I want to show you something. Keep your hands here in Proverbs and turn quickly to Genesis 4 verse 12. God is speaking in verse 12. By the way, before we read that, what

was the employment of Cain? What did he do? He was a farmer, right! Here is what God says: “When you till the ground it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.” Even the relationship with employment is a skew when you are a fool. Now look at verse 14, Cain is going to speak. “Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me.”

There, he is out of relationship with society. Sin lies at the door. A fool mocks at sin not realizing that sin is mocking the fool. And a fool who continues in that direction will be out of the relationship with brother and family, will be out of the relationship with God, will be out of the relationship with life’s work, and will be out of the relationship with society. They can be successful, they’ll have the trappings of success, but they will be unhappy. They won’t have a good life. Now go back to Proverbs. Proverbs 17, let’s identify a couple of these areas. Proverbs 17 verse 25 says this: “A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her who bore him.” I was that to my parents. I know from the looks on their faces what a foolish son can do to a father, and to a mother. Some of you may have done that to your parents and you may be enjoying children who are doing that to you now. Foolish son! A fool will have a stressed relationship with family. It won’t be working, something is not right.

Psalm 14 verse 1, David will weigh in on this idea of a fool, he says in Psalm 14 verse one, we’ll read just the first sentence of the first verse, it says: “The fool has said in his heart, There is no God.” So there you have a fool. “There is no God; I am not going to order my life by God, I am not worried about God, I can do life without God” that is a fool according to the Scriptures. Look at Proverbs 18 verses 6 and 7, it says: “A fool’s lips enter into contention, and his mouth calls for blows. A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.” What does the fool do? A fool yaks, yaks, yaks until it gets people stirred up, and people are against him, and he is out of relationship with general society around him. That’s what a fool does.

Now I am not going to ask you to respond like I did at the first service. In fact, I was sorry that I did it, but I am going to use them as an illustration. I asked them if any of them have ever heard a sermon about gossiping. Every one of them raised their hand. I said, “How many of you have stopped because you have heard the sermon about gossiping?” Not one of them raised their hand. That’s when I was a little embarrassed for them. However, it makes a good point, and that is, if you know any one who was at the first service today, they are gossips. I took names... Why? Why is it somebody can hear a sermon from the word of God that says “God hates it when people destroy relationships through untruths that are spread around by gossip?” God hates gossiping so much, that a person who participates in it is going to be lost for eternity unless they repent. How is it that we can hear that, and yet we, yeah, well you know, how? Fools!

Let me show you something. Turn to Proverbs chapter 27 verse 22. This principle I am going to teach you right now will help you be a soul winner to your family, to your neighbors, to friends, and people at work. Proverbs 27 and verse 22 it says: “Though you

grind a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, yet his foolishness will not depart from him.” Well what is that all about? Now a mortar is a ball of some sort, usually of a hard substance. And I understand a marble is a preferred mortar ball. Some of you have seen the pictures of a ball and a little white handle at the drug store. The ball is the mortar, and the pestle is that white handle. It is usually also made of marble, and they would crush medicine with it back in days of old. However, I was told at the first service today by one of the gossips that they still use those at the hospital where they work. Okay? And then I was told by someone at the second service by someone who doesn’t gossip that you use them for spices now. You can grind like pepper, and I am sure pepper wasn’t what they ate, but you know things that you can grind. That’s what a mortar and a pestle are. The pestle crushes the grain as it is here.

Now a fool can be placed in there with a grain, and you can crush him and the Bible is saying you are not going to change them. So here is the principle. You can take somebody and prove that their premise is wrong, show how their logic is skewed and their conclusion is incorrect and still not change their mind. Have you ever been in a relationship where someone is just disgusted with you and you go back and you show they had no reason to be disgusted because even the point where they begin to be disgusted is the wrong point, that didn’t really happen, or you didn’t say that or you didn’t do that, they have totally just misunderstood, and by the time you do all that, they are still totally disgusted? That’s the principle. Logic won’t change somebody. You can win an argument; you can’t save souls by winning arguments. Foolishness in the heart of a person is out of a relationship with God, and winning an argument is just like, “ha there, you are just nothing but powder now, see I’ve got the truth.” That doesn’t change anybody, that doesn’t change their behavior. A sermon, a powerful sermon about gossiping doesn’t change the gossip. Only Christ in the heart, it’s the only solution.

Now a fool is out of a relationship with God, out of relationship with family, life’s work, society, they have a miserable life. I want to ask you a question. What does a fool look like who comes to church? Look around... to some degree, we are all fools. And I’ll tell you why. The Bible says that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. But a fool will not receive wisdom from God, or instruction from God; think they have it all on their own. Now, I am holding here a Bible. Hold it up. My purpose as a pastor is to get you engaged with God through His word. I want you to read this Bible and become informed by God Himself who God is. You see a fool who comes to church may believe in God, may even talk to God. Cain talked to God, you know the story, he talked to God. But let me share with you; a fool may come to church and pray during the week. But non believers in God pray, New Age people can pray to demons, they can pray. Prayer without the Word of God is unformed prayer and it might as well be meaningless in a way. What we have to do to not be a fool, is listen to the instructions of God’s word, we have to spend time every day in God’s word. Every day that we don’t spend some time reading a text or two and discussing that with God, is the day that we are saying, “God I can handle it on my own” and that’s a declaration of a fool.

You might well be a red neck; you know the last words of a red neck are: “watch this!” That’s what happens to us spiritually, “watch this”, boom, out of relationship with God,

boom, trouble at home, boom, trouble at work, boom, trouble with society. That's a fool that goes to church. Now a wise person that goes to church they edge out a little time each day. And I am telling you brothers and sisters 5 min. can change your life. You read a text for 5 min. and then spend the rest of the day talking about it to God, you'll be okay. You'll be okay! But if we are going to be wise, we have to read the council of this Book, or we just go on day after day, stumbling along in relationships that are not working well. They are broken; our life will not be working right.

Let's look at Proverbs chapter one, we've got to look at the wise person because we want to be wise. Proverbs one verse two it says: "To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding, to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity; to give prudence to the simple to the young man knowledge and discretion, a wise man will hear and increase learning and a man of understanding will attain wise council, to understand a proverb and an enigma; the words of the wise and their riddles. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Now this week I would like to challenge you to read Proverbs chapter 8. In fact, I am going to have you turn to Proverbs chapter 9, but Proverbs chapter 8 is a beautiful chapter about wisdom. And it's really about Jesus. Jesus portrayed through wisdom, or wisdom personified through Christ, either way you look at it. You know, it will give you a beautiful picture of the Lord. But look at chapter 9 and verse one. This is a picture of Jesus, under the title of wisdom. "Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars; she has slaughtered her meat, she has mixed her wine, she has also furnished her table. She has sent out her maidens, she cries out from the highest places of the city, 'whoever is simple let him turn in here!' As for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, 'come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed.'" That's Jesus preparing a table for you.

Now that's in opposition to chapters 5, 6 and 7 about the harlot woman and how she affects man. And the description is given that she sees a young man walking and the writer, Solomon says: "I observed from my window and I watched as she came up to him and kissed him and said, 'my husband is away on the journey; he's taken a bag of money and will return at the appointed time. I have scented my bed with mint and aloes and all kinds of beautiful perfume, come let us drink love all night, let us take our fill of love together.'" And he follows her and the concluding statement is: "as an ox to the slaughter he follows her to destruction, not realizing that her way is the way to death. One hand you have the fool, the other hand you have the wise. Jesus offers the table. Everything we could ever want is on that table.

Now, when the electrician came to the house; yes, I had to fight through the pride issue of the mess that I had made, but I needed him and I asked him to come. So I was a little nervous about what is this going to cost? Well, this guy is the member of our church and one of the finest electricians you'll ever, ever know. And if you want his name afterwards, talk to me. When he was done, it cost me \$25. Now, in two years, I did the math; that's two dollars a month, that's 50 cents a week that it would have cost me to have him come and fix that thing. Fifty cents a week, I can spend that without telling

Karen. And I could have had all that power in my house but because of the embarrassment of the mess I'd made, and the fear of the cost of getting it set right, I lived in a home that wasn't right.

Now brothers and sisters what about your life? Are you embarrassed about the mess? Are you fearing the price to get it fixed? Well I'll tell you about the mess. Jesus already knows, He'd been there, He is there right now, He knows your life. You can't be embarrassed, you can't embarrass Him, He already knows. What's the cost? Come and sit at His table, that's the cost. He set the table; He's got it all provided. His wisdom, His patience, His love, His kindness, His goodness, His mercy, His power, His strength, all that He offers to you if you'll come and sit at the table with Him. And today I want to ask you, would you like to say to God, "Lord, I want to sit at that table with You. I want Jesus in my heart, I want You as my God, I want to be wise." If you want to say that, then I want to ask you to stand right where you are at. Let's pray.

Father in Heaven, thank You so much for Jesus; we ask Him to come into our heart and we thank You and pray this in His name, Amen.