

CAUTION AGAINST HASTY VOW

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

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INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters, king **Solomon** discusses values on wisdom, pleasure, wealth, honour, power and business (labour) **with their vanities** but here he talks about our religious exercises which have more values than the ones mentioned above.

He stresses that our religious activities have more value in hearing the word and offering reasonable worship or sacrifice (**verses 1,2**), in prayers (**verses 2,3**), in making vow (**verses 4 - 6**), and in the fear of God (**verse 7**).

From these perspectives, we are going to discuss the text of our topic.

Before we do that, let's look at the definition of only one key word – **vow**, in the lesson.

Vow is a solemn promise or assertion especially by which someone is bound to an act, service or condition. The Greek word – **Euche** simply means a vow or promise (**Acts 18:18; 21:23**).

Therefore, a vow is a bound upon the soul by which we solemnly oblige ourselves to act as we promise during affliction or great need if God grants our

request accordingly, though not imposed on us (**Numbers 30:2 Psalm 66:13,14, Genesis 28:20-22, 1 Samuel 1:11**).

It is also a voluntary but a binding solemn promise to do service to God or man.

However, a **hasty vow** is a hurriedly made solemn promise before God that is binding which we may not be able to perform.

Caution For Worshippers [Verses 1 - 3]

The preacher shifted our attention from secular activities with many vanities to our religious values or way of life.

He said that going to worship God must not be done anyhow – *Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil (Verse 1)*.

He said that worshippers then going to the temple and Christians today going to the meeting hall or anywhere and anytime they worship (**John 4:22-24; Romans 12:1**), they must guide their hearts carefully and soberly (devotionally) in humility to hear

the word of God, imbibe it and be practical doers **(Proverbs 4:20,23, James 1:22)**, otherwise, our worship or sacrifice will be like that of fools who misbehave during worship without realizing it is an affront to God.

Therefore, we must be careful with what we think or say in worship because thoughts are words before God **(1 Samuel 16:7, Proverbs 23:7, 15:3, Hebrews 4:13)**.

We must not be rash with our mouths but be of few words especially in prayer, not like the Pharisees who thought they would be heard by their many words and vain repetitions **(Matthew 6:7)**.

We must be conscious that we are addressing God Almighty in prayer. As a dream comes through multitude of business, so a fool is known by his many words **(Ecclesiastes 10:14)**.

Caution Against Hasty Vow [Verse 4 - 6]

Here Solomon cautions all believers to eschew hasty or hurriedly made vow lest we say it is a mistake. This is because God has said that if anyone vows, he or she must pay accordingly **(Numbers 30:2)** - *If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall*

do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

As a result, when we vow, we must pay accordingly when it is due without deferring or delay **(Verse 4)**.

God is not interested in a fool who will vow but fail to pay accordingly making mockery of himself before God **(Galatians 6:7)**.

That is why the Psalmist said that he would pay his vow which he made before God **(Psalm 66:13,14)** - *¹³I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows,¹⁴ Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.*

When we vow, it is binding and failure to pay is an absolute disregard to God and we may face the penalty losing God's blessing. Thus, Solomon advised that it is better not to vow than to vow and fail to perform it **(Verse 5)**.

In line with the above, the preacher warns against hasty vow - that we must guide our hearts and mouths carefully not to hurriedly vow before God which we cannot pay, sinning against Him **(Deut. 23:21)** and He may destroy the works of our hands **(Verse 6)**.

Not In Dream But Fear God (Verse 7)

In the Old Testament, many believed they knew the mind of God through dreams **and by**

dreams they made the people of God forget His Name ***(Jeremiah 23:23-27)***.

Those who believed in dreams fill their hearts with them and in them are multitude of vanities as in the many words of a fool. **They and we** must not rely on dreams rather fear God and keep His commandments ***(Ecclesiastes 12:13)***.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we have been fully informed to be careful and sober-hearted to offer genuine sacrifice **whenever and wherever** we gather to worship God and that we could vow after due consideration as failure to pay may attract God's wrath.

To achieve all these, we must fear God absolutely ***(Ecclesiastes 12:13)***.