**Ecclesiastes 5 (Part 1)**

**“Who’s the Boss?”**

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

**Memory Verse:** Ecclesiastes 5:2b *“God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few.”*

**Lesson Focus:** The fear of God, or having an awe of God is the beginning of the Christian faith. We will draw that truth out as we teach these verses. God is the boss!

**Activities and Crafts:** Coloring Picture of Pharisee and Tax Collector. Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring It Home Discussion for 3rd – 5th.

Craft for 1st & 2nd: Big Mouth

**Introduction:**

Ecclesiastes is a book that challenges us to THINK. (Matthew 22:37, Romans 12:2)

To get kids brains in “think” mode, we will introduce each lesson of Ecclesiastes with some sort of riddle or brain teaser. For this week:

Q: A cowboy rides into town on Friday, stays for three days, and then leaves on Friday. How did he do it?

A: He rode on a horse named “Friday”!

**Starter Activity:** Quiet Places: Ask your kids to name some places where they know they are supposed to be quiet. Write each one of them on the board and also ask them why they are supposed to be quiet in those places. A few expected answers:

1. School/Classroom
2. Library
3. Courtroom
4. Church

If church did not come up, please add it in and circle it as a major focus of our lesson today is going to be about why we are to be quiet and respectful in church. The point of this little game is to introduce the idea of respecting authority.

Q: What does the word authority mean?

A: The power or right to give orders and make rules. “The boss”. “Big cheese”.

In each of the places that they gave, ask them “who is the boss” and write the answer down next to the place.

**Bible Study:**

In this section of Scripture, Solomon shifts gears to give us some very important advice on respecting God’s authority as “the boss”.

**Eccl 5:1a:** We are first told to walk prudently or “watch our steps” when we come to the “house of God” (church).

Q: What are some areas/places where we need to “watch our step”?

A: Floor when wet/slippery, hiking on a mountain, stairs, etc.

**Teachers**: Consider showing a “Caution: Watch Your Step” sign to draw this point out. (See last page of lesson as a sample)

Q: What happens if we ignore those warnings? We will fall!

Just as we “respect” stairs or a mountain, God would have us come to church with an attitude of respect and awe for Him.

**Eccl 5:1b:** Solomon shows us the right way to come to church and the wrong way.

Q: The right way. What does it mean that we are to “draw near to hear”?

A: We come ready to listen, ready to learn, ready to be changed. Such people have a faith in God that is “FOR REAL”.

The wrong way. The “sacrifice of fools” refers to people who come with no desire to listen or be changed. They just want to get church over with so they can go home and get back to whatever their real treasure is. These people have a faith in God that is “FAKE”.

**Read Hosea 6:6**: God knows when we are pretending/faking and He wants us to be “FOR REAL”.

Q: What about you? Are you “FOR REAL” or are you “FAKING”? Are you ready to listen?

**Eccl 5:2**: First we were told to watch our steps, now we are told to watch our mouths. Remember we said we all knew that we were to be quiet while in church.

Q: How does this verse help us understand why?

A: This verse reminds us how great and powerful God is and how small and puny we are.

Q: If our words are to be few, whose words are we to be listening to?

A: God’s word!

**Read Hebrews 4:12**. God will change us through the power of His word, but we must come ready to listen.

**Eccl 5:3:** Just like dreams come when we’ve been very busy with activity, a fool is known when he is very busy talking and not listening.

Q: When you are the one talking, are you able to listen? No!

The Bible has much to say about people who babble on without stopping for breath.

**Read Proverbs 10:8**

Q: What does the wise man do? Receives commands which means he is LISTENING.

Q: What does the fool do? He is ruined by his non-stop BABBLING.

Those whose faith is “FOR REAL” come ready to listen to God’s Word.

Those whose faith is “FAKE” come ready to be heard.

**Eccl 5:4-5:** Here is one way that the fool is ruined by his words.

Q: What is a “vow”? It is like a promise where you are giving God or others your word that you are going to do something.

God wants us to be people of our word.

Jesus also talks about making foolish vows and simply says that our “Yes be Yes” and our “No be No”. (Matthew 5:37)

Q: Why do you think God takes what we say so seriously?

A: Because He is a promise-keeping God! Because He is a God Who always and only tells the truth and He hates lies. When we say we will do something and we don’t do it, we are lying and sin.

**Eccl 5:6**: Here we have a person calling out the fool and saying, “Hey, you gave your word you would do this, why haven’t you done it?” What is the fool’s response? **To make lame excuses!**

Q: What are some chores that you have to do in your home? (i.e. clean your room, make your bed, do the dishes, etc.). If you tell your Mom/Dad that you will do it and later on they find that you haven’t done it and call you out, what is often our sinful response? **To make lame excuses**! (i.e. “I forgot”, “I did, but baby brother messed it up again”, etc.)

This verse says that this makes God angry. Making lame excuses is as old as the garden of Eden. When God called them out for disobeying, Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed Satan. (Genesis 3:9-13)

**Read Acts 5:1-5:** This setting is in the very early church, shortly after Jesus had died and rose again. People were believing in Him and coming to the church and out of love for Him freely giving of their stuff to the church.

But Ananias was like the fool described in our text. He had not kept His word. He wanted people to think that he had sold everything and given it to the church, but he secretly kept back some of it for himself. He lied both to men and to God.

Q: What was God’s response? God actually struck him and he died! WHOA!

**Read the second half of Acts 5:5b again.**

Q: What was the response of the people? That they would fear God. That they would be in humble “awe” of God. That they would remember that God makes the rules because He is the boss.

These parts of the Bible can sometimes shock us, but for good reason. They remind us of God’s holiness and greatness. They also remind us of how ugly our sin is and how thankful we are to Jesus Christ for rescuing us from our sin and forgiving us.

**Eccl 5:7:** Solomon wraps this section up by telling us to do the same thing that the people did when they saw what happened to Ananias: **Fear God**!

**Read Proverbs 1:7**: Fearing God, being in awe of God, is the “beginning”. This is the starting line of our race of faith if we want to have a faith in God that is “FOR REAL”.

**Read Luke 18:10-13** which is the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector who came to the house of God.

Q: Which one came with the right attitude?

Q: Which one came with fewer words and ready to listen?

Q: Which one came in awe of God and which one came in awe of himself?

**Read Luke 18:14**. It was the one who feared God who Jesus forgives and receives.

**Key Points:**

The tax collector came humbly, admitting that he was a sinner and pleading for mercy. He knew God was holy and righteous and because of that he deserved punishment for his sin. But he also knew that God was loving and merciful.

We must first understand the bad news: That we have a problem. That we fall short of God’s holiness and know that we deserve punishment, because of our sin.

Then we come to Jesus and we are amazed that He would be the One who would take our punishment upon Himself. The gospel, the good news, we can then receive and we are forgiven. But we continue, forever, to be in awe of God. He is the boss!

**Scripture from Lesson**: Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

**Lesson Theme**: “Who’s the Boss?”

**Memory Verse:** Ecclesiastes 5:2b *“God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few.”*

**Teachers/Parents:** In our lesson we discussed the idea of God being “the boss” to reinforce the idea of fearing God or respecting His authority. Share with your kids some stories of bosses that you have had in your life that were good or bad. Afterwards, discuss with them what you think a good boss should look like.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Read **Ecclesiastes 5:1** and compare with **Hosea 6:6**. What do these verses suggest about the attitude God would have us come to church with?
2. Sometimes it can be hard to have the right attitude as the family is struggling to just get out the door in time for church without chopping off each other’s heads. While there might not be easy solutions to this problem, what is the one thing that God would always have us do to help us come before Him with the right attitude? (Hint: Read **Psalm 19:14**)
3. Read **Psalm 8:3-4** and compare with **Ecclesiastes 5:2**. What do these verses teach about who God is and who we are?
4. Solomon instructs us to fear God in **Ecclesiastes 5:7**. Many other places in Scripture the “fear of God” is described as the beginning of wisdom and knowledge (Read Proverbs 1:7, Proverbs 9:10, and Psalm 111:10 for some examples). Why is having a healthy fear of God so foundational to our lives?
5. We read Acts 5:1-5 in class which is the story of Ananias and Sapphira. This is a sobering story that should get our attention and remind us of God’s perfect holiness. We can sometimes neglect these “harder” parts of God’s character and only focus on God’s love. But both are true. Read **Revelation 1:17** which describes John when he sees Jesus Christ glorified. How does this passage help us balance God’s perfect holiness with God’s perfect love?
6. A healthy fear of God teaches us that our sin is great and that we are no better than Ananias, deserving the same punishment. Read **Ephesians 2:4-5.** How does having a healthy fear of God and a right view of the filth of our sin, make the love of God so much more astonishing and amazing?

