

KGW28 July 10-16

July 10 Su Reading 191 — Eccl. 5:1-7 — Pay What You Vow!

¹ ^[fn] *Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil.* ² ^[fn] *Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.* ³ *For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words.*

⁴ *When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow.* ⁵ *It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.* ⁶ *Let not your mouth lead you^[fn] into sin, and do not say before the messenger^[fn] that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?* ⁷ *For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity;^[fn] but^[fn] God is the one you must fear.*

ESV Footnotes

(5:1) Ch 4:17 in Hebrew

(5:2) Ch 5:1 in Hebrew

(5:6) Hebrew *your flesh*

(5:6) Or *angel*

(5:7) The Hebrew term *hebel* can refer to a “vapor” or “mere breath”; also verse 10 (see note on 1:2)

(5:7) Or *For when dreams and vanities increase, words also grow many; but*

No Pleasure in Fools — Fools are mentioned three times in this passage. Fools talk too much, therefore, it is better to be one who would “*draw near to listen*” (v. 1) and “*let your words be few*” (v. 2). The context here is that of worship (“*the sacrifice of fools*”—v. 1), when a person might make “*a vow to God*” and then “*delay in paying it*” (v. 4). One example would be the foxhole prayer: people who make a promise to God that, if He would deliver them from danger, they will do such and such. Those are desperate prayers, often with good intentions, but they are foolish prayers if those promises are not kept. God not only “*has no pleasure in fools*” (v. 4), but the fool is inviting Him to “*be angry at your voice*” (v. 6). This is serious business because “*God is the one you must fear*” (v. 7). In our worship, we must be serious, cautious, and wise.

[Blessed Master, I Have Promised - YouTube](#)

Blessed Master, I have promised,
Hear my solemn vow;
Take this pledge of mine and seal it
Here and now.

Strength of mine is only weakness,
Thine is strength indeed;
Strengthen me in fullest measure
As I need.

Let no worldly cares nor pleasures
Call my heart away;
Save me, Lord, and keep me faithful
Day by day.

— Charles A. Dickinson (b. 1849)

¹ *The words of Agur son of Jakeh. The oracle.*^[fn]

*The man declares, I am weary, O God;
I am weary, O God, and worn out.*^[fn]

² *Surely I am too stupid to be a man.
I have not the understanding of a man.*

³ *I have not learned wisdom,
nor have I knowledge of the Holy One.*

⁴ *Who has ascended to heaven and come down?
Who has gathered the wind in his fists?
Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is his name, and what is his son's name?
Surely you know!*

⁵ *Every word of God proves true;
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.*

⁶ *Do not add to his words,
lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.*

ESV Footnotes

(30:1) Or *Jakeh, the man of Massa*

(30:1) Revocalization; Hebrew *The man declares to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal*

Every Word — We don't know anything else about Agur, the writer of this passage, but he made a profound distinction between the greatness of who God is and the limitations of mankind. The infinite God is the one who "*established all the ends of the earth*" (v. 4), while created man must admit that he has limited "*knowledge of the Holy One*" (v. 3). Since there is such a vast difference between God and man, we must listen to what He says, because "*Every word of God proves true*" (v. 5). Do you believe that every word God has given to us in the Bible ultimately came from Him? The statement here is not generally that the "Word of God" proves true, but that "*Every word of God proves true.*" This is why I feel that we should place a much higher value on direct translations of Scripture than on Bible paraphrases. The one acknowledges the importance of each word, while the other is concerned mostly with the thought or idea of the message, which almost always involves interpretation. We need to be very careful that, in the process of trying to summarize God's thoughts, we "*Do not add to his words*" (v. 6). Jesus was even more precise when He said that "*not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished*" (Matt. 5:18). That is fulfillment to the letter.

I couldn't find a video to go along with this hymn, but it is very fitting to our passage, so please read it and make up your own melody!

God's Word is wonderful, perfect and true,
It is His message sent from above.
In it are warnings and promises, too,
From its clear pages there shines God's great love.

God's Word is true, wond'rously true;
Living and vital, eternal and pure;
God's Word is true, I know 'tis true,
All of its promises given are sure.

— Herbert G. Tovey (1921)

¹ Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ² “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil^[fn] has come up before me.” ³ But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.

⁴ But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵ Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. ⁶ So the captain came and said to him, “What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish.”

⁷ And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸ Then they said to him, “Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?” ⁹ And he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” ¹⁰ Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, “What is this that you have done!” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

¹¹ Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?” For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. ¹² He said to them, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.” ¹³ Nevertheless, the men rowed hard^[fn] to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. ¹⁴ Therefore they called out to the LORD, “O LORD, let us not perish for this man’s life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you.” ¹⁵ So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. ¹⁶ Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

¹⁷ ^[fn] And the LORD appointed^[fn] a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

ESV Footnotes

(1:2) The same Hebrew word can mean *evil* or *disaster*, depending on the context; so throughout Jonah

(1:13) Hebrew *the men dug in* [their oars]

(1:17) Ch 2:1 in Hebrew

(1:17) Or *had appointed*

Trying to Flee — Obedience to God is very important, and He has ways of bringing us around to do what He has told us to do. Three times in this chapter, it is mentioned that Jonah was trying to flee “from the presence of the LORD” (vv. 3, 10). What a futile effort! David had learned this and wrote, “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?” (Ps. 139:7). The prophet Jonah should have known this since he lived after David and had probably read that psalm. The story of Jonah certainly shows the sovereignty and power of God. He caused a storm and directed the great fish not only to swallow Jonah, but also to deposit him at the shore closest to Nineveh. Have you ever tried to flee from God? Most of us who came to Christ as adults probably have stories that come to mind about our efforts to avoid God’s call. Have you ever knowingly disobeyed God? Now, that brings it a lot closer to home, doesn’t it? We have our own reasons for

wanting to do it our way, but God's way is always the best. It is certainly better than spending three days inside a fish!

God's Way is Best (piano with lyrics) - YouTube

God's way is best; if human wisdom
a fairer way may seem to show,
'Tis only that our earth-dimmed vision
the truth can never clearly know.

God's way is best, I will not murmur,
although the end I may not see;
Where'er He leads I'll meekly follow,
God's way is best, is best for me.

— Charles Naylor (1874-1950)

July 13 W Reading 194 — Jonah 3:1-10 — The Mercy of God

¹ *Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying,* ² *“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.”* ³ *So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city,^[fn] three days’ journey in breadth.^[fn]* ⁴ *Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”* ⁵ *And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.*

⁶ *The word reached^[fn] the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.* ⁷ *And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water,* ⁸ *but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.* ⁹ *Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.”*

¹⁰ *When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.*

ESV Footnotes

(3:3) Hebrew *a great city to God*

(3:3) Or *a visit was a three days’ journey*

(3:6) Or *had reached*

Man Repents and God Relents — We see something of the persistence of God in this chapter. He had a message of warning for the people of Nineveh, and He wanted Jonah to declare it. It is like a film production’s “Take two!” If the director thought it wasn’t done correctly the first time, the scene would be shot again. *“Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, ‘Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it...’* (vss. 1-2). This time, the fishy-smelling prophet obeyed. Aren’t you glad that God gives second chances? It is interesting to note that, in contrast to Jonah, both the pagan sailors and the pagans in Nineveh were quick to submit to Yahweh in humility. The second characteristic of God we see here is that He is flexible. *“When God saw what they did ... God relented of the disaster”* (v. 10). The immutability of God says that He never changes, and He did not change here. He has always been a merciful and forgiving God. He didn’t change anything in

His character, but He only changed His plan in response to Nineveh's repentance. It is the same today. Ever since the sin of Adam and Eve, people are heading for hell's disaster unless they repent. We are their Jonah, telling them about where they are headed if they don't turn to God in repentance. God will relent if they repent.

[Lord, I'm Coming Home - YouTube](#)

I've wasted many precious years;
Now I'm coming home.
I now repent with bitter tears;
Lord, I'm coming home.

Coming home, coming home,
Nevermore to roam.
Open wide Thine arms of love;
Lord, I'm coming home.

— William J. Kirkpatrick (1892)

July 14 Th Reading 195 — Isaiah 1:9-20 — God's Call and Warning

- ⁹ *If the LORD of hosts
had not left us a few survivors,
we should have been like Sodom,
and become like Gomorrah.*
- ¹⁰ *Hear the word of the LORD,
you rulers of Sodom!
Give ear to the teaching of our God,
you people of Gomorrah!*
- ¹¹ *“What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?
says the LORD;
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams
and the fat of well-fed beasts;
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
or of lambs, or of goats.*
- ¹² *“When you come to appear before me,
who has required of you
this trampling of my courts?*
- ¹³ *Bring no more vain offerings;
incense is an abomination to me.
New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.*
- ¹⁴ *Your new moons and your appointed feasts
my soul hates;
they have become a burden to me;
I am weary of bearing them.*
- ¹⁵ *When you spread out your hands,
I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers,
I will not listen;*

- your hands are full of blood.*
- 16 *Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes;
cease to do evil,*
- 17 *learn to do good;
seek justice,
correct oppression;
bring justice to the fatherless,
plead the widow's cause.*
- 18 *"Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD:
though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool.*
- 19 *If you are willing and obedient,
you shall eat the good of the land;*
- 20 *but if you refuse and rebel,
you shall be eaten by the sword;
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

ESV Footnotes

(1:10) Or *law*

(1:18) Or *dispute*

Clean-hands Worship — Isaiah was God's prophet during the reigns of several kings of Judah before the nation was conquered and exiled to Babylon. Israel had been living in the Promised Land for about 600 years, but the general trend of their commitment to God was in decline. They were going through the motions of worship, but their hearts were stained with sin and an unwillingness to obey God. There are multitudes of people doing that today as well. They go to church, some even regularly, but their weekday lives do not reflect the holiness of God. There are people in your own church, maybe even you sometimes, who go through the process of worship while you harbor a sin in your heart, like bitterness toward someone. God is more than displeased with that; He hates it. He said, *"I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly"* (v. 13). Worship must be genuine and it must be coming from repentant hearts. We do not need to clean up our lives before turning to God for salvation, but as believers, this is exactly what God wants us to do: *"Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil..."* (v. 16). That is repentance. God demands purity in worship.

[Search Me, O God - YouTube](#)

Search me, O God, and know my heart today;
Try me, O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray.
See if there be some wicked way in me;
Cleanse me from ev'ry sin and set me free.

— J. Edwin Orr (1936)

July 15 F Reading 196 — Isaiah 2:12-22 — The Terror of Yahweh

12 *For the LORD of hosts has a day*

- against all that is proud and lofty,
against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low;
13 against all the cedars of Lebanon,
lofty and lifted up;
and against all the oaks of Bashan;
14 against all the lofty mountains,
and against all the uplifted hills;
15 against every high tower,
and against every fortified wall;
16 against all the ships of Tarshish,
and against all the beautiful craft.
17 And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled,
and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low,
and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.
18 And the idols shall utterly pass away.
19 And people shall enter the caves of the rocks
and the holes of the ground,^[fn]
from before the terror of the LORD,
and from the splendor of his majesty,
when he rises to terrify the earth.

20 In that day mankind will cast away
their idols of silver and their idols of gold,
which they made for themselves to worship,
to the moles and to the bats,
21 to enter the caverns of the rocks
and the clefts of the cliffs,
from before the terror of the LORD,
and from the splendor of his majesty,
when he rises to terrify the earth.
22 Stop regarding man
in whose nostrils is breath,
for of what account is he?

ESV Footnote

(2:19) Hebrew *dust*

Terror for Pride — God hates the pride of man: “... *the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty... and it shall be brought low*” (v. 12), “... *and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low*” (v. 17). Why are God’s feelings so strong against the pride of man? The key seems to be with the conclusion of verse 17: “...*and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.*” The Creator is infinitely greater than those He has created. He is the only one worthy of being exalted. Not only was man shown to be exalting himself in this chapter, he was substituting lifeless idols for the living God. He was not only refusing to recognize God’s excellence, but he was also trying to replace it. When humans see the true worth of the exalted God, “*mankind will cast away their idols...*” (v. 20). And they will search for caves, trying to hide from “*the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty*” (vv. 19, 21). That is an odd combination, isn’t it? God’s terror and His splendor. God’s terror is His expression toward the puny attempts of humans to elevate themselves. His splendor is the reality of who God truly is. We ought to be afraid of pride in our own hearts, too. God hates pride in the hearts of Christians as well. He is the only One worthy to be exalted.

Be Exalted, O God - YouTube

I will give thanks to Thee
O Lord, among the people.
I will sing praises to Thee
Among the nations.
For Thy steadfast love is great,
Is great to the heavens;
And Thy faithfulness,
Thy faithfulness to the clouds

Be exalted, O God
Above the heavens.
Let Thy glory be over all the earth.
Be exalted, O God
Above the heavens.
Let Thy glory be over all the earth.

— Brent Chambers (1978)

July 16 Sa Reading 197 — Isaiah 3:13-23 — He Stands to Judge

¹³ *The LORD has taken his place to contend;
he stands to judge peoples.*

¹⁴ *The LORD will enter into judgment
with the elders and princes of his people:
“It is you who have devoured the vineyard,
the spoil of the poor is in your houses.*

¹⁵ *What do you mean by crushing my people,
by grinding the face of the poor?”
declares the Lord GOD of hosts.*

¹⁶ *The LORD said:
Because the daughters of Zion are haughty
and walk with outstretched necks,
glancing wantonly with their eyes,
mincing along as they go,
tinkling with their feet,
¹⁷ therefore the Lord will strike with a scab
the heads of the daughters of Zion,
and the LORD will lay bare their secret parts.*

¹⁸ *In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the
crescents; ¹⁹ the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarves; ²⁰ the headdresses, the armlets, the
sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets; ²¹ the signet rings and nose rings; ²² the festal robes,
the mantles, the cloaks, and the handbags; ²³ the mirrors, the linen garments, the turbans, and the
veils.*

ESV Footnote

(3:14) Or *grazed over*; compare Exodus 22:5

Judging the Prince and Princess — The center of God's judgment in this passage seems to be the ruling class of Judah. They are the privileged class—those with lots of power and wealth. Having that privilege is not bad in itself, but their attitudes toward wealth and power are the problem here. The princes took advantage of the weakness of the poor and stripped them of what little they had: "...*the spoil of the poor is in your houses*" (v. 14). Are you in a position of power over someone? Are you using it to take advantage of them? We are accountable to God for how we treat others. The princesses had the advantages of beauty and money to provide sparkling accessories to their wardrobe—their "*finery*" (v. 18). They lived to be admired. The problem in God's eyes is their attitude—they "*are haughty*" (v. 16). Power and beauty can be threats to godliness, so they are to be used and displayed with caution. God has created us with the kind of beauty that is important to Him, and we don't really add much to it with our finery. God has placed some of us in positions of authority over others, but it is for the purpose of providing good for all, not advantage or extravagance for a few. Let's be conscious of these things and try to see them from God's perspective.

[For the Fruit of All Creation - YouTube](#)

In the just reward of labor,
God's will is done.
In the help we give our neighbor,
God's will is done.
In our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
In the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.

— Fred Pratt Green (1970)