

Shrewdness and Zeal

The Kingdom and the Covenant, Session 3.10

Shrewdness

- Greek word
 - (Gk, adj, *phronimos*)
 - sense: keen awareness, sharp intelligence; known for good judgment or common sense in practical matters
 - translated: wise, sensible, thoughtful, with understanding; crafty, clever, insightful
 - Septuagint – negative sense
 - Pr 14:17, “A quick-tempered man does foolish things, and a crafty man is hated.”
 - “crafty” (Gk, *phronimos*)
 - Septuagint – positive sense
 - Pr 11:12, “A man who lacks judgment derides his neighbor, but a man of understanding holds his tongue.”
 - “understanding” (Gk, adj, *phronimos*)
 - Pr 15:1, “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”
 - “gentle” (Gk, adj, *phronimos*)
- Mt 7:24, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”
 - “wise” (Gk, adj, *phronimos*)
- Mt 10:16, “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.”
 - “shrewd” (Gk, adj, *phronimos*)
 - What was Jesus telling them by using this analogy – being as shrewd as snakes?
- Mt 25:2, 4, ² “Five of them were foolish and five were wise.... ⁴ The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps.”
 - “foolish” (Gk, adj, *moros*): foolish, stupid; devoid of wisdom, good sense or sound judgment
 - “wise” (Gk, adj, *phronimos*), exercises good judgment or has common sense in practical matters
 - What did the “wise” young women do that qualified them as “wise”?
- Lk 16:8, “The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.”
 - more “shrewd” (Gk, adj, *phronimos*)
 - Pr 22:3, “The prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.” (also 27:12)
 - “prudent man” (LXX, adj, *panourgos*): crafty
 - 2 Co 12:16, “Yet, crafty fellow that I am, I caught you by trickery!”

Questions

- How does prudence or shrewdness apply to our covenant relationship with God?
- How does prudence apply to our relationship with other people, either Christians or non-?
- How is prudence relevant to our activity in the kingdom?
- How does prudence apply to our interaction with evil spirits?
- How can we develop prudence?

Zeal

- Greek words
 - *zelos* (noun): excessive fervor to do something or accomplish some end
 - translated: zeal, jealousy
 - *zeloo* (verb): be zealous, strive for, be devoted to, set one's heart on
- Jn 2:17, "His disciples remembered that it is written: 'Zeal for your house will consume me.'"
 - "zeal" (Gk, n, *zelos*)
- Gal 4:18, "It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good."
 - "fine" (Gk, adj, *kalos*): good, fine, praiseworthy, beautiful, better
 - "be zealous" (Gk, v, *zeloo*)
- Gal 5:19-20, ¹⁹ "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions."
 - "jealousy" (Gk, n, *zelos*)
 - Is zeal inherently evil?
- 2 Co 9:2, "For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action."
 - "enthusiasm" (Gk, n, *zelos*)
 - What effect did their zeal have on others?
- 1 Co 14:1, "Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy."
 - "eagerly desire" (Gk, v, *zeloo*): be zealous for, strive for, set your heart on
 - "spiritual gifts" (Gk, adj, *pneumatikos*): spiritual (in nature or origin)

Questions

- How does zeal apply to our covenant relationship with God?
- How is zeal relevant to our activity in the kingdom?
- How can we develop zeal?

Conclusion

- I encourage you to be prudent or shrewd in everything you do and serve the only true God with all the zealous attention he deserves