What Does The Fool Say?

Psalm 14:1-5

1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.
2 The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.
3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.
4 Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord.
5 There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous.

Intro

• On Tuesday I had an important meeting to attend at lunch.
  - On many week days I wear jeans and a casual shirt to work
    - but, on this particular day, I had dressed in a nice pair of slacks and a dress shirt.
  - I was just about to leave the house when my phone rang.
    - It was my mother-in-law and she had some terrible news.
  - She had gone out that morning
    - to discover a flat tire on her car
    - and she needed some help getting it changed
      - so she could get on to work.
  - She needed her wonderful son-in-law
    - to rush right over and help her get up and running.
• The problem was that I didn’t have enough time left
  - to change into something more suited for the task.
• So I resigned myself to the fact
  - that I was going to have to wear my nice dress slacks
    - and hope, against hope, that I didn’t get too dirty
    - while I changed her tire.
• With some trepidation in my voice,
  - I said, with as much artificial enthusiasm as I could manage,
    - I’ll be right over.
• And then it happened.
  - I could hear the glee in her voice
    - as she delightedly laughed out the words:
      - April Fools Day!

April Fool’s Day

• In 1708 a correspondent wrote to the British Apollo magazine asking this question:
  - Whence proceeds the custom of making April Fools?
There wasn’t a good answer for the origin of April Fools then and there still isn’t a good answer now.

The puzzle that April Fool’s Day presents to cultural historians is that it was only during the eighteenth century that detailed references to it began to appear in the literature.

But at that time, the custom was already well established throughout northern Europe and was regarded as a very old tradition.

Many theories have been put forward about how the tradition began but the truth is that the origin of April Fool’s Day is as much a mystery today as it was in 1708.

What is not a mystery, however, is the origin of fools.

The origin of the fool is the rejection of God.

The term “fool” is generally used in both the Old and New Testaments in the same manner.

It describes the condition of a man that has rejected the knowledge of God and it describes a state of mind that will ultimately condemn a man or woman to Hell.

It may be a delight to make someone into a fool on April 1st, but in all reality, it is a tragic thing to be a fool in the scriptural sense of the word.

The Fool Has Said

The fool says that there is no God.

We could stop right there and say that all atheists are fools, And, biblically, we would be correct.

However, one thing that we must recognize this evening about fools is that the idea of spiritual foolishness is not relegated to atheists alone.

The Psalmist was a bit more specific.

A fool is one who has said, in his heart, that there is no God.

Sometimes people say one thing with their mouths while they say another with their hearts.

Just because someone doesn’t profess to be an atheist, doesn’t mean that they aren’t a fool.

In reality, a fool is anyone who lives his or her life as if there is no God.

A fool is anyone who conducts themselves in the words they say, the places they go, and the things they do.

As if there is no God.

It makes no real difference if they profess
What Does The Fool Say

- that they believe in God.
  - The real question is how do they live?
    - Because, the measure of a fool
      - is found in the life that is lived.
  - If you live as if there is no God,
    - if you conduct yourself as if there will never be a day of reckoning,
    - if you go through your life, day after day, living as if you will never answer to a higher power,
      - then, my friend, according to scripture you are a fool.
- The wise man said, in Proverbs 23:7 that as a man thinks in his heart so is he.
  - The fool that the Psalmist describes
    - is not just a fool in word
    - or even in deed
      - but he thinks it in his heart.
  - And what a man thinks in his heart impacts every portion of his life.
    - He becomes a fool through and through.
  - The true definition of biblical foolishness
    - is characterized by the life of an individual
      - who lives as if they will never be accountable to God for their lives.
  - The fool is the person who conducts his life
    - as if he will never answer for his actions
      - or for the words that he says.
  - The fool believes in his heart,
    - as evidenced by his life,
      - that there is no God.
- Because of this the Psalmist says that fools are corrupt.
  - They have done detestable works.
    - There is none among that does any good at all.
  - They have completely forsaken the ways of righteousness and goodness
    - because they have purposed in their lives
      - that there is no higher moral authority
        - than their own sense of self-pleasure.
  - They do whatever seems good to themselves
    - with no regard at all for morality and righteousness.
  - That’s what it means to be a fool.
    - The fool says I will do what I want to do
      - and nobody better say anything about it.
    - The fool says that if it feels good to me
      - then that is good enough for me.
    - The fool is very self-centered.
      - From his perspective, he is the only one that matters.
      - He is the final judge of right and wrong.
• He is the final arbitrator of good and evil.
• He is a God unto himself
• and he doesn’t need anyone or anything else in his life to tell him how he should live.

Consuming Life Like a Fool

• Jesus Told the parable of a rich man who, after his fields yielded a bumper crop, began to congratulate:
  o **Luke 12:17-19**
  o 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?
  o 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.
  o 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

• This man was a fool.
  o His whole universe revolved around him.
    • In the brief portion of scripture that we read,
      • he used the personal pronoun “I” six times.
  o This self-centered attitude illustrates the folly of foolishness.
    • When there is no other authority.
    • When there is no higher power.
    • When there is no superior definition of righteousness and morality
      • the carnal man becomes, to himself,
        o his own measure of right and wrong.
  o He doesn’t consider God.
    • He pushes the knowledge of God far from his mind.
      • He only considers himself.
  o There was no consideration of God at all.
    • He did not think of God’s goodness in providing the great harvest.
    • He did not consider God’s provision in the good weather and favorable conditions.
    • He did not contemplate God’s purpose in providing him with such an abundant overflow.
    • Everything in his life was, in his mind, there to be consumed for his own pleasure.
      • It was all about him.
      • It was all for his own gratification.
    • Jesus told that story to illustrate the folly of foolishness.
      • The man began to make big plans,
        • based on the goodness that God had shown him,
          o without ever considering what God might desire from him.
Instead he said to his own soul,
   • “Take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry.”
     • I can rest from here on in.
     • I’ve got it made.
     • I don’t answer to anyone.
   • I can live my life the way I want to live
     and there will never be any consequences at all for my actions.

But Jesus wasn’t finished with the story.
   • The next verse puts the exclamation point
     on the statement that Jesus was making.
   • Luke 12:20
     • 20 But God said unto him, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?*

The fool never considers the goodness of God.
   • The fool never considers God’s plan and God’s purpose.
     • The fool never looks outside of himself.
     • The fool says, I will do whatever I want to do.
     • I will live however I want to live.
   • I come to this pulpit tonight to warn you not to live like the fool.
     • Not to waste the goodness of God like the fool does.
   • Stop and consider your ways.
     • Stop and consider your life.
   • Are you guilty of living like the fool?
     • Are you guilty of consuming the blessings and goodness of God
       without ever contemplating the plan and purpose of God for your life?
       • My goodness!
   • God has preserved you through some times when you didn’t deserve his grace.
     • God has brought you through some dark lonely nights when you had rejected him.
     • God has been your protection when you were busy running from him.
   • Listen to your pastor tonight!
     • Don’t consume your life like a fool.
       • Do you think God preserved your life so you could waste it?
       • Do you think God spared your life so you could consume it on folly?

The Way Of The Fool
   • A fool is a fool because of his folly.
     • A fool is a fool because of his deeds.
     • Listen to me tonight.
What Does The Fool Say

- It is possible to profess to be a wise man but to live like a fool.
  - There are a lot of people who don’t regard themselves as fools
    - but who live like the fool lives.
  - They profess to know God,
    - to love God
    - and to serve God
    - but they live as if there is no God.
  - They may not regard themselves as fools,
    - but the folly of their actions
    - declares that they are fools at heart.
  - Because the fool never stops to consider God.
    - The fool is too busy to pray.
    - The fool is too consumed with life
      - to take the time to read the bible.
    - The fool has too many important things
      - to do to set aside a time for prayer
        - and fasting in their life.
  - The fool has said in his heart
    - and demonstrated in his life
    - that he believes that there is no God!
- Perhaps the most dangerous revelation about fools in scripture
  - is that a fool may not even realize that he is a fool.
    - **Proverbs 12:15** “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes…”
- The way of a fool seems right to the fool.
  - The fool is bent on self-justification.
    - His own foolish heart becomes his standard for right and wrong.
  - In his own mind, he convinces himself that his way is good.
    - In his own heart he convinces himself that he has done no wrong.
      - His way is right in his own eyes.
  - The Psalmist said that they work iniquity
    - because they have no knowledge.
  - Because they are intentionally ignorant of God
    - they become ignorant of judgment.
  - They don’t have any reservation at all about sin
    - because they don’t have any real knowledge of sin.
  - To them all the things that they do are good.
    - To them sin is something that someone else does.
      - But their way is right.
- There is no better description of our world today.
  - With no sense of a moral compass
    - they have embraced sin because they have no knowledge of right and wrong.
  - They have called evil good
and have declared good to be evil.
  - They are absolutely ignorant of the knowledge of God.
    - But we can’t afford to live that way.
      - We can’t afford to live our lives with no knowledge
        - of what is good and pleasing to God.
    - We must be diligent to maintain an awareness of God.
      - We must be persistent in submitting our hearts to God.
        - We must examine ourselves and our thoughts and motives
          - lest we get to the place that we convince ourselves that our way is right and good.

**Practical Atheism**

- Many years ago, a man called Stephen Charnock wrote a book called “The Existence & Attributes of God”.
  - One of the chapters in that book was named “Practical atheism”.
    - He defines a practical atheist
      - as one who may not be an atheist in name
        - but is an atheist in deed.

  - *It is a person who acknowledges God*
    - *but lives and behaves in a way that denies God.*

- Let me get down to where the rubber meets the road.
  - The practical atheist goes through life
    - heavily burdened with toil and trouble
      - but never takes the time to avail himself
      - of the rest and refreshing that comes from God.
  - The practical fool lives as if he has to bear his burdens alone.
    - He lives as if he has to overcome his obstacles by himself.
    - He never takes the time to appeal to the mercy of heaven.
  - How many times have you sat in the house of God,
    - while the glory of God was moving through this place
      - but have failed to really reach out and touch God
        - yourself for your own personal need?

- The practical atheist finds himself at a crossroads in his life,
  - with important, potentially life changing decisions
    - that need to be made,
      - but never stops to consider the way of God.
  - The practical fool has the knowledge
    - that the Lord is his help and his strength
      - but he never really finds the right opportunity
        - to let the Lord strengthen him and help him.

- The practical atheist lives under the condemnation of past sins
  - and never really breaks free from the guilt and shame of them.
    - He believes in the mercy of God
    - but tragically he isn’t convinced
• that he’s good enough for the grace of God
  o to really set him free.

  o The practical fool knows that Jesus Christ died to set us free
    ▪ but somehow the fool disqualifies himself
    ▪ from the liberty that God desires to give him.

Don’t Be A Fool
• A story was once told of a man who was crossing the ocean.
  o He was leaning over the side of the vessel;
    ▪ it was a bright sunny day,
    ▪ and not a wave broke the surface of the water,
      ▪ just a little ripple here and there
      ▪ kissed by the rays of the sun.
  o And the man, as he leaned over the rail of the vessel,
    ▪ was tossing something in the air,
    ▪ something which, when it fell through the sunlight,
      ▪ sparkled with singular radiance and glory;
    ▪ and he watched it so eagerly as he tossed it up
      ▪ and caught it as it fell.
  o He tossed it up again and again and again;
    ▪ and it threw out its marvelous rays of color
      ▪ as it fell through the sunlight.

• At last an onlooker came and said,
  o “May I ask what that is that you are tossing up so carelessly?”
    ▪ “Certainly,” he replied, “look at it, it is a diamond.”
  o “Is it of much value?” asked the onlooker.
    ▪ “Yes, of very great value.
    ▪ See the color of it, and see the size of it.
    ▪ In fact, all I have in the world is in that diamond.
    ▪ I am going to a new country to seek my fortune,
      ▪ and I have sold everything I have,
      ▪ and have bought this diamond to finance my new life.

• Startled the onlooker asked,
  o “If it is so valuable, why are you taking such a risk with it?
    ▪ The man merely chuckled and said,
      ▪ It’s really no risk at all.
      ▪ I’ve been doing this for a while now
        o and I haven’t failed to catch it yet.

• The onlooker pressed on:
  o But there might come a last time,
    ▪ you might make a mistake,
    ▪ you may have pressed your luck too far...
  o Just then the man laughed and threw it up again,
    ▪ and caught it as it fell,
    ▪ and again and again, and once more...
And it flashed and blazed with glory
  o as it fell through the sunlight,
    ▪ and he watches it so eagerly as it tumbled back down.
  o But, alas, this time the inevitable happens.
    ▪ This time the diamond is too far out.
  o He reaches as far as he can over the rail of the vessel,
    ▪ but he cannot reach far enough.
  o And with a splash, the diamond falls into the ocean.
    ▪ For moment he stares
      • at where the diamond disappeared beneath the waves
        o then he cries with his whole being:
          ▪ Lost! Lost!
          ▪ All I have in this world is lost!

Now, you may say, nobody would be such a fool.
  o But you might be surprised to know
    ▪ that the story is absolutely true
    ▪ and the man sits here among you.
  o Who? You may say.
    ▪ But, you are the man.
    ▪ The ocean is eternity.
    ▪ The vessel is life.
      • And the diamond is your soul.
    ▪ And some among you have been foolishly playing with your soul.

I come to this pulpit tonight to ask you,
  o what is that thing that you are so carelessly tossing into the air?
    ▪ You say, “It is my soul.”
  o I question you of its value
    ▪ and you declare that it is worth more
      • than the very life that you live
    ▪ for the value of eternity is wrapped up in your soul.
  o So the pastor says,
    ▪ “Don’t you think you are taking a terrible risk with your soul?”
  o To which comes the foolish reply
    ▪ “Oh, no, I have been doing this for a while now
      • and nothing bad has come of it yet.”

Oh, my friend, hear the voice of a preacher tonight.
  o Don’t be a fool!
    ▪ One time too many you are going to play the game.
    ▪ One time too many you are going to take the risk.
    ▪ One time too many you are going to walk away from the calling of God.
    ▪ One time too many you are going to reject his plea for mercy.
  o You will toss the diamond into the air,
    ▪ one time too many
• and it will fall, far beyond your reach,
  o and tumble into the ocean of eternity.

• In that moment
  o as you realize what you have just lost,
    ▪ your heart will cry the cry of a fool:
      • Lost! Lost!
      • My soul is forever lost!

Close
• Tuesday may have been April Fool’s Day
  o but I believe that today is the day to quit living like a fool.
• Today is the day to stop acting as if there is no God.
  o Today is the day to realize and lay hold of the promises of God.
    ▪ Today is the day to put your soul back into God’s hands before
      you lose it forever.
• Don’t listen to what the fool says!
  o Listen to what the man of God is telling you:
    ▪ You don’t have to live like the fool!
  o There is a God and he loves you so much that he died for your sins.
  o There is a God and he was concerned enough about the condition of
    your soul that he sent a preacher into your life.
  o There is a God and he bids you to come unto him and find rest for your
    weary soul,
    ▪ strength for your battles and understanding for your life.
  o There is a God and he has a purpose for your life.
    ▪ Please, stop playing the fool with your soul!