

# The Ordinary Church in Extraordinary Times: A Pastoral Approach to Reconnecting

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[32] For the simple are killed by their turning away,  
and the complacency of fools destroys them;  
[33] but whoever listens to me will dwell secure  
and will be at ease, without dread of disaster.” (Prov. 1:32-33)

The immediate context (Prov. 1:26-27), describes a dire situation full of:

calamity  
terror  
terror like a storm  
calamity like a whirlwind  
distress  
anguish  
dread of disaster

In this situation, people are crying out to God, trying to find security, searching for safety, pining for relief, agonizing for comfort. Many of them have prior to now, dismissed God’s wisdom. But now, amid this doom, the wise use these proverbs to reveal three paths, three voices, telling us how to get through what we dread.

**Path/voice #1:** the simple (*they are killed by their turning away, vs. 32*)

**Path/voice #2:** the fools (*they are destroyed because of complacency, vs. 32*)

**Path/voice #3:** the wise who listen to God (*they dwell secure, are at ease, have no dread, vs. 33*)

**Path/voice #4:** the scoffer (*they delight in their scoffing, vs. 22*)

**Path/voice #5:** the wounded (*those sinned against by naive, foolish, scoffing ways, vs. 11-16*)

## 1

### “Whatever. It’s all good.” The Naïve Congregant and Pastor (Gladly Apathetic, Avoids hard things)

Keeps the vibe light, impatient with sadness, sorrow, complexity, seeks quick fixes, hates conflict

- “The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps” (Prov. 14:15)
- “The prudent man sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.” (Prov. 22:3; 27:12)

Weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice  
Rejoices with those who weep, weeps by coveting those who rejoice

### Discipleship Opportunity/Sermons/Our Message as Leaders:

- In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider . . . (Eccl. 7:14)
- In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (Jn. 16:33)
- Prosperity gospel, covid-immunity, individualism/consumerism
- Testimony/Hope! “The Lord preserves the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me.” (Ps. 116:6)

## 2

### “You think this is hard? I’ll tell you what’s hard!” The Foolish Congregant and Pastor

(Angrily Avoidant, *makes hard things harder*)

If the naïve rob you of your tears, the fool creates them (Prov. 17:21, 25). Blusters, agitated, reactive, angry, asks no questions, knows all answers, every slight an equal offense

- “A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.” (Prov. 18:2)
- “If a wise man has an argument with a fool, the fool only rages and laughs, and there is no quiet” (Prov. 29:9)
- “The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the prudent ignores an insult.” (Prov. 12:16; 14:17)

Weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice  
corrects, instructs, rebukes those who weep, rejoices only if they get what they want

#### Discipleship Opportunity/Sermons/Our Message as Leaders:

- The foolish congregant/pastor will demand that you remain naive
- The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him. (Prov. 18:17)
- Politics, the talking points of my tribe
- [19] Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; [20] for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (James 1:19-20)
- Hope of Testimony: “My wounds stink and fester because of my foolishness. I am utterly bowed down and prostrate: all the day I go about morning . . .” (Psalm 38:5ff)

### 3

#### “The Sky is Falling. All is Lost” The Wounded Congregant and Pastor (Afraid of what is ~~hard~~ good)

Familiar with sorrow, cynical of goodness, unable to imagine trust

- “By sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed.” (Prov. 15:13)
- “Like an archer who wounds everyone . . .” (Prov. 26:10)
- “I was only joking . . .”
- “Whoever sings songs to a heavy heart is like one who takes off a garment on a cold day, and like vinegar on soda.” (Prov. 25:20)

Weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice  
Intensely Weeps with those who weep, too hurt to rejoice with those who

#### Discipleship Opportunity/Sermons/Our Message as Leaders:

- [14] Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil . . . [17] Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people . . . [18] For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (Heb. 2:14, 17-18)
- Times of prosperity. **Times of adversity.**

[1] For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

[2] a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;  
[3] a time to kill, and a time to heal;  
a time to break down, and a time to build up;  
[4] a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;  
[5] a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;  
**a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;**  
[6] a time to seek, and a time to lose;  
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;  
[7] a time to tear, and a time to sew;  
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;  
[8] a time to love, and a time to hate;  
a time for war, and a time for peace. (Eccl. 3:1-8)

Ecclesiastes 9:2-3

[2] It is the same for all, since the same event happens to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As the good one is, so is the sinner, and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath. [3] This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all. Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead. (ESV)