



Sermon – May 6, 2018

Verses Covered

Proverbs 4:1 – 12, 21 - 22

Deuteronomy 6:4 – 9

Proverbs 20:1

So we're continuing through Proverbs. We're in chapter 4. A few years ago at another church, I had a couple come into my office and sit down. And they said to me, "Look we want to raise our children in freedom. So what we're going to do is we're going to offer to our children every option out there religiously. We're going to offer them Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity. We're going to offer them everything because we want them to be able to make a choice in freedom. And we don't want to push them into anything at all." I want you to listen to Deuteronomy 6

⁴"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! ⁵You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your might. ⁶These words that I command you today, shall be in your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children. You shall talk of them when you sit in the house, when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, when you rise. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

That does not sound like I'm offering options to my kids. What that sounds like is I'm coming in and saying, "I'm tell you boys Jesus is the only God there really is." We're going to honor Him and love Him in this house. And we're going to put it on the door posts, we're going to put it on our foreheads, we're going to lock this down, and we're going to teach it everywhere we go. So when you come to the book of Proverbs, it's great in that it, we've already looked at the fact that it says to the parent, one of the things we've seen is your job is to walk toward Jesus. You're not going to be perfect, but you're going to maintain a consistent direction. You were walking this way to Hell, you got saved, the Holy Spirit indwells you, and now you're going to walk in the power of the Spirit toward Christ. So the direction of your life is altered. You're not going to be perfect, but your direction should be consistent. And then it says that we're to train our children up in the way they should go. In other words, as we walk down this road, our children are with us, part of the time, and so we need to help them know where the edges of the road are. What's OK and what's not OK. That's our job. Now the great thing about the book of Proverbs in chapter

four, it this kind of Solomon's personal testimony of his father's impact in his life. And a couple of things that his father taught him, which is not bad for us to learn. Look in verse 1.

¹Hear, O sons, a Father's instruction, and be attentive that you may gain insight, ²I give you good precepts, do not forsake my teaching;

Listen to this.

³When I was a son with my father, tender the only one in the sight of my mother, ⁴he taught me and he said to me;

It's interesting. Solomon says there was a time in his life when there was a tenderness between him and his dad. Now you have a time with your kids; when you're their hero. And in that moment you've got to instruct them, particularly I think what David told Solomon here that obviously impacted his life because he still remembers it as an adult. Now there comes a time when they hit teenage years and it's different. When your children hit teenage years, you will absolutely understand God. You will understand how you can create a being in your own image that will not acknowledge your existence. Can you still teach here? Yeah, but when they start hitting their late teen years, particularly into college, they're wrestling with something. And what they're wrestling with is whether or not what you taught them, they're really going to buy into. They're making a shift from it being your faith in the family, to being their faith in their life. And they're going to struggle some, but you've got to do that. Then when they marry and they get out, you're teaching days are over. You may teach them in conversation. They ask you a question, that's fine. But your teaching days are gone. You're not going to instruct them anymore. When Peg and I were at CAPS last weekend with all the young pastors, they had a Q&A with us. One of the questions was: "My child's grown, what can I still... and I see them going to wrong way, can I tell them what to do?" And my response was, "No. You had your time." You don't inject in your kid's life. So there really is a time when, unless it's through conversation or they ask you a question, your teaching time is gone. So you've got a limited amount of time. And you've got a time that's the most powerful. So he says, "When I was young, tender, this is what my dad told me." Listen to what he told him and we're going to walk through this real quickly, not the whole chapter, but enough to get an idea of what he says. Look in verse 4, last part.

⁴Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments and live; ⁵Get wisdom! Get insight! Do not forget, do not turn away from the words of my mouth. ⁶Do not forsake her, she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you.

Now this is the first thing you're going to teach your kids. You're not going to be able to teach them everything in scripture. So what you're going to do is teach them principles. And one of the principles is that the things in this book will protect their life. Look in chapter 5.

¹My son, be attentive to my wisdom, incline your ear to my understanding; ²that you may keep discretion and your lips guard knowledge. ³The lips of forbidden woman drip honey; her speech is smoother than oil.

This is the first thing you teach your kids. Before you put this on, as a young man, every woman is forbidden. You do not and are not allowed access to any woman, period. When you put this one, you're allowed access to one woman. You have one woman that is not forbidden to you. Every other woman is still forbidden. Do you know how many lives and marriages could be saved by simply living that one precept out? We're in the middle of a Me Too movement. Everybody's, we're discovering all these men are really lecherous because Proverbs 5 has no impact on their life. We just had to get rid of the head of the Southern Baptists, Frank Page, whom I've been to Israel with, I've had supper with, I've had lunch with, I love this guy. But we just had to get rid of him because he's had a prolonged affair with another woman. Because for him, Proverbs 5 did not impact his life. I'm telling you, what David taught Solomon is exactly right. These, the stuff in this book protects me. It guards my life. It is brilliant if you pay attention to it and pull it into your life. It will guard you. Then it goes on. Look at this. Verse 8.

⁸“Prize her highly, she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her. ⁹She will place on your head a graceful garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown.”

He says, “Listen you embrace her. Not only does she protect you, but she will bring you honor.” You say, “Well wait a minute. How does she bring me honor when the world persecutes us and hates us because of who we are?” Well that's the brilliance. Remember what Jesus said? You love them, you answer them softly, you pour hot coals on their head. Listen, when they hate us and we love them properly, the honor returns to the church. First century, at the end of the first century all the apostles are dead, except one, John. He's the only guy that doesn't die a violent death. But about the time he dies, the Roman empire says, “We've had enough of these Christians.” They hated us for two reasons, remember. We were cannibals; we ate the flesh and drank the blood of Jesus. We were atheists because we only believed in one God. So the Roman government had it. They began to systematically persecute us; created the catacombs, all sorts of issues arose. But in a couple hundred years, the Roman Emperor made Christianity the official religion of the Roman empire. Now how did that happen? Because the government finally realized how wonderful we are? Absolutely true. You know why he switched that? Do you know who demanded that our persecution stop? It was the Roman populous. The Roman populous actually, over a period of time, went to the Roman government and said, “You need to leave these Christians alone. They're the best people in our neighborhood. They pay their taxes. They love us. They stay inside their homes. They honor their families. They don't stray. They've loved us even in the middle of our attack on them. They're the best people in our neighborhood. You're killing off the best people.” And the populous demanded that the Roman government stop killing us. It's an amazing truth. Even in the middle of persecution, we live this out, we do it right, God places honor on our life if He honors us. Luke 2 says Jesus increased in favor and stature with God and man. There is no stature with man unless that stature is true with the Father. I incorporate these things, He blesses me, He brings honor.

Look at this, verse 10.

¹⁰Hear, my son, accept my words that the years of your life may be many.

Verse 12.

¹²When you walk, your step will not be hampered; if you run, you will not stumble.

You're going to teach your children two things. OK. You're going to teach them Psalm 139 and you're going to teach them Jeremiah 1. You're going to teach them that before they were born God had a plan for them and that according to Psalm 139, He's got a set number of days for them to live to live out that plan. You can't extend those days, but you can shorten those days. My first funeral, I was in seminary, it was my last semester, I had just taken a church in Oakwood, Texas. And no cell phones in that day so finally the phone rang, somebody came and got me and I called back. A lady in my church and she said, "I need you to come down and do a funeral. My 17-year-old son got drunk, has flipped the car, and he's dead. And I need you to come down and do the funeral." So I went down, Proverbs 20:

¹Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, whoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

He didn't do that. He ignored it. I did the funeral, but the curious thing was that father. The mom was a great, Godly Christian. The dad was kind of the town thug. He'd been shot five different times and was a tremendous drunk. And I'll never forget. He stood at the casket while we buried his child and he began to scream out in the small church, "I taught you better! I taught you better!" No, no, no. He did exactly what you taught him. Ladies and gentlemen, you have a responsibility to teach your children that they stay away from the things that are going to cut them short.

Now before you get on me, let me tell you something. I grew up Baptist, that's all I know. I had a lady ask me the other day, "Why do you pound Baptists so hard?" Because it's the only thing I know. I don't pound Methodists because I don't really know what they do. I know what we do. And I know we have our issues and I'm telling you. I grew up hearing the same sermon over and over and one sermon I never heard. All my life, and it affected me deeply because I didn't violate one and violated the other. All my life I heard in Baptist church, right, that you must never drink alcohol. That's what I heard my whole life. So it's what I preached. It's what I believed. It's what I locked down. Read the scripture, it has verses like Proverbs 20:1, wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging. So the idea is you fear it, you're careful with it, it bothers you. So you don't just go into it and imbibe, you watch it because it can deceive you like it did this kid. I get that. But the Bible never says anywhere that I cannot partake. It really does not say that. It's what I heard my whole life, but I always struggled examining the scriptures because it's not what the scriptures teach. What it does teach is you be careful. It's the reason I don't drink. I love Blue Bloods. Great show about the police being the right. But every night when they get home, Tom Selleck and his dad, they always have a little thing of bourbon that they take. And that's fine; unless you're Chris Osborne. I take it, I'll need a sip tonight, in about a month I'll need two sips, in about six months it won't be my choice, it will be the alcohol's choice whether or not I partake of it. So I'm careful. I'm fearful. So I don't drink at all because I know me. So all my life I heard if you drink, you're really just not spiritual. But you know what sermon I never heard? There's a sin that is always wrong, it's never OK. I never in all my years growing up, ever heard a sermon about it. And I engaged in it and it ultimately caused me a heart attack. I never ever heard a sermon about gluttony, ever. And yet the Bible condemns it cover to cover. You know what two days we are the most gluttonous? Christmas, His birth, and Thanksgiving, the day that ostensibly we thank God for what He's done for us. We're most gluttonous, a violation completely of scripture. You ask any medical guy, "What's causing the health crisis in America?" And there is a crisis. But

what's causing the crisis isn't so much the insurance company, what's causing the crisis is, we over drink, we smoke, and we over eat, and we don't exercise. We have ignored clear teaching and we are damaging our lives. It is always amazing to me, I see guys preaching from the pulpit that are obviously gluttonous, but will scream about alcohol. That's what I grew up with. And so I grew up with the understanding you don't drink, but you can overeat and it nearly, and it probably did shorten the days that I will be on this earth. So understand, this book, and you want to teach your kids, this book will guard you, this book will honor you, and the teaching of this book will allow you to live out the allotted time God has created for you, for you to be able to do exactly what He wants you to do on this earth.

And then he says, look in verse 22, in verse 21:

²¹Let them not escape from your sight, these words; keep them within your heart. ²²For they are life to those who find them and healing to all their flesh.

You see this book? You want life? You want healing? It's not in a bottle, it's in these pages. You go back to Genesis 3 we have four problems after Genesis 3. The world's bad, it bites us. We've lost community; Adam and Eve lost each other. We've lost Him. And we're riddled with guilt. We stepped into this world with all four of those problems. Now the Bible says that if you take the principles of God and pull them in your life, He will bring healing in all those four areas. Can He really do that? Absolutely. My relationship with Him is restored in the blood of Jesus Christ because He puts His Holy Spirit in me, the third person of the Trinity, as a deposit and the Holy Spirit stays there until the day Jesus comes and takes me home. He heals that problem.

What about this world, it still stings me? Yeah, but there are two things true now that are not true for those that do not know Jesus. There are two things true. Number one, when this world does sting you, according to Romans 8, Holy Spirit who's in there permanently, prays for me and then something good comes out of what stung me because of the prayer of the Holy Spirit which a person that does not know Jesus does not have. And so he doesn't have that benefit. I have the ability, no matter what stings me in this world, what did we just sing, to overcome it through the prayers of the Holy Spirit in me. And then when I die and get here, no more problems, no more mess, nothing ever bites me again, Satan's bound, I never see sin again, it's all fixed. My guilt, what did God say? He said, "I'm going to throw your sin as far as East is to the West. I'm going to throw it in the depths of the sea. I'm going to put it behind my back." Why those three metaphors? To tell you to quit living in it. If you have the blood of Jesus on your life, you have been and will be tomorrow totally forgiven of anything you've done or will do tomorrow. You're freed. I love the Greek word, *aphiēmi*, for forgiveness. It's used in John 4 when the woman at the well got so pumped, she, the Bible say, left her water pot, left or forgot, doesn't matter. That's the same Greek word that's used in 1 John 1:9 when it says if we confess our sins, He will forgive us our sins. He forgets it. He leaves them. He drops them. If you, listen to me, if you leave this room today with any guilt in your life, it's because you do not believe what God has said about your sin. It's done.

What about community? Can He really create community? Well let me tell you, He can do what Facebook can never do. A couple weeks, even no matter what football team you root for, a couple weeks ago an Alabama fan baptized and Auburn graduate whose name is Baylor. I can't make

that up. God can handle any community issues. You say, "Does that really work?" Because we're racially divided today. You know it worked in the hardest time ever in the history of this country. Worst division we ever had in the history of this country was the Civil War. South fought for the right to secede so that we could own blacks. It was the economic ruin of the South, and the North there were people in the North that did the same thing. But we fought over that. So in the middle of that, right before it started, there was a black slave called John Jasper. He fell in love with a woman and they married, were able to leave their plantations and marry. But that night there was a slave revolt and they came and got John Jasper and his new wife and they separated them. They begged to stay together, but the slave owners didn't care. They separated them so John Jasper never saw her again. So you can imagine the hatred in his soul toward the white slave owner. He gets saved. Meets Christ. Has this amazing turnaround. He actually becomes a pastor and begins to preach. A curious thing happens. He preaches, he preaches to confederate soldiers. A black man whose white owner took his wife that he never saw again and after meeting Jesus Christ, he preached to confederate soldiers who are fighting to keep him enslaved. How does a man do that? After the war, he started a church in Richmond, Virginia, the actually second, first capital is Montgomery, Alabama. But second capital of the confederacy, Richmond, Virginia, he started a church there Sixth Mount Zion. Somebody asked him, "Were there five others?" He said, "No we just liked the name." Did he build community there? Black church. Huge. 2,500 people attended. Probably the first mega-church in America. There were a number of white people that came to the church. You say, "Well how do you know that?" Because we have a quote from him one Sunday and he said, "Hey, you white people, don't get in the way of the regular paying customers." That's a pretty gutsy statement to say in Richmond, Virginia, right after the Civil War. The whites came to his church and he loved them and he preached to them because the principles of scripture in the person of Jesus Christ can change a man from the inside out. We're not going to change racism because we argue. We're going to change racism when Jesus changes us. That's it. So I don't care what government we put in office. You tell your children; you don't argue with them about whether or not the Bible's true or whether or not God's true. You tell them, in this house Jesus is Lord and in this house we take this book, and then you show them in your life, it's guarded us, it's brought us honor, it's allowed us to live the period of time so we can do what God wants us to do, and we've been healed and given life through what this book says, rooted in the person of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray.

Father, heal us in every way we need to be healed. And Father my bet is there are people here that are on the precipice of doing something really wrong and are on the precipice of wrecking everything in their life and home. Let them step back today, embrace your word, and Father let them do it in a way that their children and even grandchildren will see who they are and see that this book works. Father make that clear in all our lives. In Jesus Christ name.