



Sermon – 01/07/2018

Verses Covered This Week

Proverbs 2:1 – 15

Ephesians 5:22 – 26

1 Peter 5:8

Ephesians 2:1 – 2

Psalms 119:14, 24, 52, 54

2 Timothy 1:2

Romans 8:26 – 28

Ephesians 1:11 - 14

So we are walking through the book of Proverbs. We are starting today in chapter 2. Now I love Star Wars. I don't love it that much, OK. We have three trilogies. We have Episode 4, 5, and 6, which was the first trilogy which was really good. Then you have Episodes 1, 2, and 3, the second trilogy which was really bad. It introduces to the worst actor in the history of mankind, Anakin Skywalker. So that thing was really bad. Now we have the third one which is really pretty good. We had the second, we'll have the third thing coming. Now in Christianity we are, we believe in absolutes. Now an absolute is an idea that something, if it's true, it's always true. It's never not true. If it's wrong, it's always wrong, if it's false. If it's right, it's always right. If it's error, it's always error. So we have this belief in absolutes. That's why, when the Bible says in Acts 4:12, there's no other name given among men under heaven by which man can be saved. We believe that's absolute. It's only in the blood of Jesus Christ. So we're committed to absolutes. Now it's interesting. Star Wars is based on Eastern mysticism. Which is the idea that God's in everything and everything's in God. So you have this force and you can manipulate it. And it's interesting because in the bad trilogy, Obi-Wan, Anakin said something, and Obi-Wan Kenobi looks at him, and remember we, and then he said, "Only a Sith," which of course we know, the bad people, the Auburn grads. So, "Only a Sith," or in this case Georgia now. "Only a Sith thinks in terms of absolutes." Now that was his line to Anakin Skywalker which I thought was really funny when I heard the line. Because if you understand Star Wars, what do you have? You have two absolutes. You have the Sith and you have the Jedi. And the Jedi are good. And the Sith are bad. And they're always bad. And the Jedi are always good. And what you do is you kind of wonder in training and stuff deciding whether or not you're going to be a Jedi, or whether or not you're going to be a Sith. It's really your choice. And the world is kind of divided into whether they buy into the Jedi mentality or whether they buy into the Sith mentality. So you have this Eastern mysticism that has two absolutes.

Now that is precisely what the Bible teaches. There are two absolutes. Jesus said in John 10:10, “I’ve come that men might have life and have it abundantly.” There’s His absolute. That’s His purpose in your life. The next absolute, He says, “The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy.” So you have this absolute motive out of Satan and you have this absolute motive out of Jesus and they don’t ever change. It’s always that way. Jesus never comes to hurt you. The enemy never comes to bless you. So we have these two absolutes and you decide which one you join. And there isn’t, like Star Wars, there isn’t anything in the middle. There is no gray. I love people when they say, “There a lot of things gray.” There’s nothing gray. You are either, when you leave this building, when you came into this building, when you go to work tomorrow, you’re either going to set yourself in a position where the enemy can hurt you or you’re going to set yourself in a position where Jesus can bless you. There isn’t anything in the middle.

So I want you to listen to Proverbs, chapter 2, here’s where we’re starting. We’re continuing through the book. Now listen to what he says.

¹My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, ²making your ear attentive to wisdom, and inclining your heart to understanding; ³Yes, if you call out for insight, and you raise your voice for understanding; ⁴If you seek it like silver and search for it as hidden treasures; ⁵Then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

Now listen to this. Why? Why should I seek it? What’s the big benefit.

⁶For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.

If you want the wisdom and the understanding that will enable you to be placed in a position where Jesus Christ can bless you, then you have to embrace His wisdom. And His wisdom is different than everything else. Now we’re going to cover a little bit of ground today. So moisten your fingers. Here we go. Go over to Ephesians 5 with me. Ephesians chapter 5. Now let’s suppose you’re having marital issues. Both got married at church, but you’re struggling, your marriage is really hurting. And you go into the teacher’s lounge or you go sit down in a lounge bar, have a couple drinks, sit back with some friends, and you say to any of your friends, “Hey, really struggling in my marriage. We don’t know how to make the things work. What should we do?” Now listen to this. Verse 22. Ephesians 5.

²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, His body and is Himself its Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, also the wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

No ladies are you going to hear that from your friends in the teachers’ lounge? You’re going to go to the bar and have a margarita and somebody, and you tell them, “Man I’m struggling in my marriage.” And they go, “Well, I’ll tell you what you need to do. You need to go home and submit to your husband.” You are not going to hear that! As a matter of fact, if you even say that you tried to submit to your husband, they’re going to go, “Well there’s your problem right there.

You're submitting to a moron." Which is true. I don't debate that. Remember women are emotional, men are stupid. So I get that. You're submitting. I get that. You're not going to find that from those people. And then men. Look at this.

²⁵Husbands, you love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her,
²⁶that he might sanctify her,

It says to things to us, gentlemen. We do have the final say in the home. That's why we own the remote. It was God's intention that man should have the remote. So we're the head of the home. We make the final decision. I got that. But here's the two things it says that we do with that power. We give ourselves up for our wives so that our decisions are based on her desires, not ours. And number two, we are responsible for sanctifying her. We're responsible that when you and I die and we stand before Jesus Christ, if our wives do not understand Jesus better and love Him more because we were their husbands, we have failed. Now if you go to the bar or you go to the lounge or you sit out with your buddies and you tell them, "Man I had a rough day in the marriage." Do you think they're going to look at you and say, "Well, I'll tell you what, John. You're the head of the home." Now you'll probably hear that. But they are not going to look at you and say, "Listen, you need to make the best decisions for her." Nor are they going to look at you and say, "You really need to deepen her spiritually." You're not going to hear any one of those things in the world because that's wisdom that comes from God.

Let me show you again. 1 Peter chapter 5. Now we're in an intellectual community, right. 1 Peter chapter 5, verse 8. We're at Texas A&M, as a matter of fact, several years ago, probably 25 years ago, it was in USA, I just remembered this, in USA and world report there was, I think we were number 4 in the country in per capital Ph.D.'s. So we're an intellectual deal, right. You sit down with someone, having a couple drinks, or you're just in the teacher's lounge, whatever it is, you're sitting down with somebody, and you say, "Man I'm really struggling. I don't know what's going on in my life." Listen to 1 Peter 5:8

⁸Be sober minded, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

Are they going to tell you that? Are they going to look at you and say, "Look man, you've got a personal enemy who actually spends his existence looking for somebody who's life he can pull into his agenda and away from the agenda of Jesus and wreck their life." There is nobody outside these walls that's going to tell you that. As a matter of fact, if you look at them and even say, "You know I really believe there's a Satan." They're going to look at you like you are nuts. Because that wisdom isn't outside these walls. And then if you take it one step further. Look at Ephesians chapter 2. Go to Ephesians chapter 2 and listen to what Paul writes about the culture we're getting our wisdom from. Listen to this.

¹You were dead in the trespasses and sins, ²in which you once walked following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.

Here's what he just said. He said, "Before you came to Christ, you lived your life listening to your culture and the problem is your culture is under control of the being of 1 Peter 5:8." They are not going to tell you that. So when Proverbs says, from God's mouth comes wisdom, there is a wisdom that comes from Him. You're not going to hear anywhere else except here. So there's the first thing. You say, well, and go back with me to Proverbs, you say, "Well, OK. Why? I mean really, why shouldn't I listen to my culture?" And that is, that is the issue today, by the way. This Bible, when I came up, was always attacked scientifically. That was the deal. It was always malign. But we have had, over the years, enough great Christian scholars who have come along and shown great validity scientifically in the scripture. But that's really where the attack is today and there really is no attack. The issue today, and I hear it in my office, I hear it everywhere I go. And that is, "Yeah, I know the Bible says this, but really we know better than, that portion really doesn't apply to us anymore. I like John 3:16 that He loves me, but I'm not going to Ephesians 5 that I have to submit to my husband." We are discarding what we do not like. That's the issue that we face. So why should I take this? Now listen to what he says. Verse 7.

[⁷He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;](#)

Now let me explain something, OK. An upright is a person who, New Testament terms, Paul calls them saints in 1 Corinthians. Is a person who' heard the Holy Spirit say to them, "You're bad. Jesus isn't. His blood is the antidote for your sin. It's the only antidote for your sin. And you need to trust in His blood for your forgiveness." And when you do that you're now upright. You've been stooped, but now He's turned you around toward Him and now you're upright, walking toward the Father, and according to 1 Corinthians 1, you are a saint. Now listen to what he says.

[⁷He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity,](#)
[⁸Guarding the paths of justice, and watching over the way of His saints. ⁹Then you will](#)
[understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path. ¹⁰For wisdom will come](#)
[into your heart knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; ¹¹discretion will watch over you,](#)
[understanding will guard you, ¹²delivering you from the way of evil, from men of perverted](#)
[speech; ¹³who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness; ¹⁴who](#)
[rejoice in doing evil, delight in the perverseness of evil; ¹⁵men whose paths are crooked,](#)
[and are devious in their ways;](#)

Now listen to what he just said. He said two things. Listen to this. This wisdom that you're not going to get in the teacher's lounge, unless you're with believers who are committed to scripture, this wisdom is what shields you and guards you when you become upright as you walk toward Christ and you want His holiness and His glory to permeate your life, and you want to find the richness of His blessings. It is this wisdom that keeps me walking the correct direction. That's the key. It is the protection for your home. Let me show you. Go to 1 Corinthians 13. We all know this. At some point in every marriage, it's read. Now I'm not trying to inflict guilt, that's not my heartbeat this today. I just want to make a point. This week there will be several believing couples who will exchange vows, exchange rings, go on a honeymoon, come back, and establish a home. There will be unbelieving couples who exchange vows, exchange rings, go on the honeymoon, come back, and establish a home. Here's the horrible stat that's true. There is no difference in the divorce rate between either group. Both groups are losing their homes at 50%.

Both groups. Why would that be? Because for some reason, we're ignoring the wisdom He's given us to enable our marriage to work. Now listen to me. You live out Ephesians 5, husband and wife, husband and wife live out 1 Corinthians 13, the enemy cannot take your marriage from you. Now listen to 1 Corinthians 13 beginning in verse 4. Now I'm going to run through this real quickly and I want to point something out.

⁴Love is patient, kind, doesn't envy, doesn't boast, isn't arrogant, ⁵isn't rude, does not insist on its own way, is not irritable, or resentful, ⁶does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸That love never ends.

Now I'm not being funny here. Patience is a choice. Kindness is a choice. Not envying somebody is a choice because you're going to run into somebody that's more talented than you, that's smarter than you, that's better than you, that's more gifted than you, you may be married to somebody who's way beyond you in your intellect, in your capacity, and you may even envy your spouse. Arrogant, that's a choice you make on what you believe about yourself. Rude, that's your choice. Insisting on its own way. You know what the number one problem in marriage is today? It's not communication. It's not money. It's not sexual infidelity. It is two selfish people in a marriage; both living for their own end. That's it. That's a choice that I don't insist on my own way. It's a choice not to be irritable. It's a choice not to be resentful. It's a choice not to rejoice at wrongdoing. All the way through. If I'm going to bear all things, believe all things, that's a choice I make. So if because of Jesus Christ I get into this marriage and we step at the altar and we make these vows and we go off and we exchange the rings and we come back from the honeymoon and we build a home and I, as a husband, say, "Look I will be the head of the home, but I will be it in a spiritual way. I will deepen you. When you're done with me in a year, you will know Jesus better. You will love Him more. The decisions I make, unless it's best for the family as a whole, you, if we can't compromise, your heart will win the day." I've never known, ever in all my years of counseling, I've never known a Godly woman who struggled submitting to a man that walked well with Jesus and put her above himself. I've never seen that. Submission, gentlemen on your wife's part, is based on your heart and your actions. And if you both get into that relationship and you submit to his leadership, doesn't mean you don't tell him what you think, like I have to say that, doesn't mean you don't tell him what you think, but you build this unified home out of choice principles in 1 Corinthians 13. Those things become a shield and protecting force to your home. And he can't hurt you, now you go through normal stuff, all marriages do. We have male/female differences, personality differences, love language differences, we have respect and value differences, we have all that. I get that. That's why Christians face the same things unbelievers face. But we have something, we shouldn't be divorcing at their rate because we have a wisdom they don't have. But I think the real problem is we don't yield to this.

Now one more thing. Proverbs 2; listen to this because this is my favorite part. So he's told me, right, there's a wisdom God gives you're not going to get in the world. That wisdom will keep me walking toward Him and allowing His abundant life to permeate my life. Now here's my favorite line. Look at this. Verse 10.

¹⁰For wisdom will come into your heart and knowledge will be, what, pleasant to your soul;

Turn over to Psalm 119. Quick left. A chapter you ought to read once a month. Seriously. Once a month you should cover Psalm 119. Look in verse 14.

¹⁴In the way of your testimonies, I delight,

There's an emotional statement.

as much as in all riches.

Look in verse 24.

²⁴Your testimonies are my delight;

There's an emotional statement.

they are my counselors.

Look in verse 52.

⁵²When I think of your rules from of old, I take comfort, O Lord,

54.

⁵⁴Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my sojourning.

You're not likely going to sing advice you get in the wrong place. But you can sing advice you get from Christ. The whole point is that there's an emotional impact in your life. What are the two industries in America, seriously, what are the two industries we spend all the money on right now? What are the two? Entertainment and counseling. If entertainment worked, we wouldn't need the counseling. We spend millions of dollars on both and we just don't get. His wisdom impacts my soul. Look at, as a matter of fact, just let me read this. Grace, mercy and peace, 2 Timothy, from God the Father. Grace; what a great truth. If you understand that, it should bring great pleasure to your soul. Because hear what it means. I'm in rebellion against God. It's not like I made a few mistakes and I'm, no I'm in rebellion against the Creator. He, though, before I was ever born ordained His Son, God the Son, to pay a penalty on the cross so that His blood would, would adjudicate my sin. It would forgive me and I could be OK with the Father. We're made OK through the blood of Jesus. And here's the cool thing. You say, "What do I have to do to get that?" Nothing. God doesn't come to you and say, "Look I had my son die, but here's what you're going to have to do. Need to go to church 42 out of 52 weeks. Gotta be 42. You need to read three chapters of the Bible every day. You need to do two good deeds every day. And if you do all that, then at the end of the year, every year, I will allow My blood to work for you that year." No. One time. I don't care what my age is. His Spirit speaks to me. I yield to what His Spirit says to me and instantaneously, freely, He gives me a forgiveness over my rebellion; past, present, future. I don't need last rites when I die. I have them in the cross. Jesus paid last rites for me. If that doesn't warm you. You say, "Well preacher I get the forgiveness thing but you don't understand what I did the other day." The consequences are enormous. That's why you have the

word mercy. It's a Greek word, *éleos*, that refers to God massaging the consequences of your sin. He doesn't remove them, but He works with you to pull you out of them and to enable them not to lifelong destroy you. Does that not bring pleasant knowledge to your soul? And that's in the scripture.

Listen to this. Because at some point all of us, if we live long enough, are going to get, we're going to get busted. Even if you walk in the abundant life of Christ, this world is going to bite you. It's the enemy's world and it's going to hurt us at some point. So God just looks at us and goes, "Bummer?" Listen to this. Stay where you are. Romans 8. He who searches hearts. Here we go.

²⁶Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; we don't know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; ²⁷and He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

So when I have this just crushing moment, and I get in my closet and I shut the door and I literally can't pray, Holy Spirit in me prays for me in a way I can't hear. And then the next verse, the Baptist verse. He says:

²⁸And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good to those who are called according to His purpose.

Does that not bring pleasure to your soul to know? That no matter how bad things get in your life, when you can't even pray and you shut that closet and all you can do is cry, His Spirit prays on your behalf.

One last thing. Listen to what Paul writes in Ephesian. He says:

¹¹In whom we've obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the council and the purpose, ¹³In Him, you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation – you believed Him in, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit ¹⁴who is the down payment of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.

You've come to Christ, I don't care if you're 7 or 72, you come to Christ, the minute you come to Christ in that grace God forgives your sin, puts His Holy Spirit in you so you can face anything you face, and then He makes you a promise that that Holy Spirit is not leaving you and that He will, He's the down payment until the day you die and God comes and takes you home. Is that not pleasant to hear? Is it not pleasant to know that if I do my marriage correctly the enemy can't hurt me? Is it not pleasant to know that no matter what happens to me in this life, He doesn't leave me, He hangs me? Even when I mess it up, His grace and His mercy; absolutely there. That's why you pay attention to His wisdom. It keeps me upright, walking toward my Father and it's pleasant to my soul. Again, big Alabama fan, right. If they win tomorrow night, big deal. I'll be excited after the game, but Tuesday, doesn't mean a thing. But His Spirit's in me until the day I die. And that is way more than any national championship for any school.

There's a, what's his name, Bart Ehrman, who is a religion studies professor at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. So he teaches religious studies, right. He's an agnostic. That is, he believes there is a God but you probably can't find him or know him. And he people like me that come into his class and just butchers him on whether or not the Bible's true. So the first thing he does in class when he gets these kids in, and remember you're in the Bible belt, North Carolina, right. Actually in the South we consider North Carolina yankee-land, but we'll save that for another day. But you're in the Bible belt. So he asks these kids in class, right, and he gets them in class and he asks them this question. He says, "So how many of you believe that the Bible is divinely inspired, God's word?" And he says that nearly every hand will go up. So then he asks a second question. He says, "Well," and he'll bring up some popular book. Like a few years back he brought up Susan Collins, The Hunger Games. And he said, "How many of you read The Hunger Games by Susan Collins?" And virtually every hand, of course, in the classroom went up. He said, "OK. How many of you have read the entire Bible?" And he said maybe two or three hands will go up. And then he says, "So if the Bible is so inspired, and if it really were God's word, surely you'd read it instead of The Hunger Games novel, all the way through." That is our problem. Not anti-Facebook. I don't care if you do that. But get in there, take your phone, turn it off, open a drawer, put it in, shut the drawer, pick this up, and see what God has for you. Because Facebook can be nice, but it can't bring the pleasure to your soul that the truth of the blood of Jesus Christ has given you.

Let's pray.

Father thank You that You have deposited in our hand written form of Your wisdom. I mean we have it. Father we have tons of versions. We have tons of Bibles; every size, every color, every print, everything imaginable. So Father let us find Your wisdom to shield us and to bless us. Thank You for what You tell us in this book. In Jesus Christ name.