



Sermon – March 8, 2018

**Verses Covered**

*Proverbs 3:27 - 32*

So we really face two things as a church today. Jesus said in the sermon on the mount, in the Beatitudes, he said that we were, we are, salt and light. Salt's not a seasoner really much, back then it was a preservative. It preserved the meat. So our job is to preserve God's character. And then we're to be light. We're to show people how to find what we're going to celebrate this morning. And that is the table that allows us to have victory. Now we have to do that inside a culture today, in 2018, that is unbelievably hostile and angry. They're mad. I still go back that it's highly coincidental that when you took the 10 Commandments out of the schools and you took prayer out of the schools and you really banished Him back in the early '60's. It's about then when all of a sudden we had all sorts of school shootings and this little meme that we kicked God out and that's why things are happening badly. I think actually it has a tinge of truth to it. There is some legitimacy. And we're just a country that's mad. The democrats say one thing; the republicans won't respond. The republicans say one thing; the democrats won't respond. We're partisan in every area. Everybody is furious with each other. We're mad about something. And the bigger the government gets, it's not going to get any smaller, the more it encroaches on our freedom and the madder people get. We are in a society that is angry. We fix nothing. We still have racial issues. They're getting as bad as when I remember them in the '60s and '70s. We are absolutely in a bad place in our society. And if you think electing a particular person to an office will fix society, you are absolutely incorrect. It doesn't matter who we put in there. They're not going to fix anything. Only Jesus Christ can alter life. Now and the only way He can do that is if people hear His message and embrace, and that's on us.

Now I want you to listen because Proverbs 3 is the perfect illustration of how we do that. I love what he says. It fits so much the New Testament. Look in verse 27.

<sup>27</sup>Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.

<sup>28</sup>Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come again tomorrow, I will give it." When you have it with you.

And this is going to reference far more than money. Then he says in the negative vein,

<sup>29</sup>Don't plan evil against your neighbor, who dwells trustingly beside you. <sup>30</sup>Do not contend with a man for no reason, when he has done you no harm. <sup>31</sup>Do not envy a man of violence, do not choose any of his ways. <sup>32</sup>For the devious person is an abomination to the Lord; but the upright are in his confidence.

We have this clear responsibility; it really tells us two things. He says, "If you have a chance, I want you to do good to your neighbor. And then he says, in a negative vein, "I don't want you to do something bad to your neighbor when you have no cause." Now obviously if the neighbor's damaging your home, you have cause. But other than that, you have no cause. We have this story with Jesus when He talked about, I mean one of the two first stories you learn at Vacation Bible School, David and Goliath and The Good Samaritan. The Jews hated the Samaritans. So Jesus told the story. This guy goes out, he gets mugged, priest comes by, sees him, kind of tiptoes on the other side of the street so he won't see him. Levite comes by, does the same thing. Finally, a Samaritan that everybody hated goes up, picks him up, carries him to a motel and a doctor, gets him taken care of, leaves money and says, "If there's any more, if it overspends, I'll come back and finish paying for it." He did exactly Proverbs 3. It was in his power to bless this guy, and he did it. And all the Samaritans look good. Now listen to me. We have an enormous... The world's not going to get any better. We, though, it's better for us if it's like that. We shine brighter. And we have a chance to impact. Now what he says is, you do something good. I don't just feel good about my neighbor. I embrace it. And I'm telling you, the church succeeds and fails in this.

It failed in the '60s when we were facing so many racial issues and there were black couples moving into white neighborhoods. And the entire neighborhood would be vindictive towards the black couple moving in; slashed tires, nothing kind to them. What in the world would have happened to them, I mean you think about it seriously. We have literally thousands of churches across this America. We had thousands in the '60s. Far more attended church in those days than do today. Had those churches taken their people in those white communities where black people moved in, and if the white Christians in that community had caught those black couples and said, brought them supper, helped them move in, helped them get established, now listen, and then look at them and say, "We want you to know the reason we're doing this is not so we won't have a racial issue, we're doing this because it's not about race, it's about salvation. We're doing this because of Jesus Christ and we want you to know Him." We are so caught up in racial issues, we've forgotten, it's not about a racial issue, it's about whether or not people know Jesus Christ. So I have a responsibility if I do something like that, if we bring a couple in, we love on them, we've got to say to them, "We're doing this because of Jesus Christ and what He did for me." And if we had done that in the '60s, if the thousands of white Christians had done that in the '60s, we wouldn't be near where we are today.

In the '70s, the Jesus movement came along. Billy Graham actually tagged on part of that. Jesus movement, these kids were coming to Christ that had never been to church. You've got to understand something about the 70's versus 2018, in the 70's there were three churches in every town. Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian. South Louisiana, Catholics, but everywhere else, those three. They were all the same. All had a pipe organ. Everybody came in a coat and tie. Nobody smiled in any of the churches. Had their Bibles. Came and sat in the pew, and that was it. This one church, I don't even remember if it was Baptist or Methodist. It doesn't matter; same thing. This kid comes in out of the Jesus movement, just got saved, all he knows is, I'm supposed to go

to church, man. It's all he knows. So he comes to church in shorts, kind of a golf shirt, sandals. He walks down the front and it's right when the preacher starts preaching. He doesn't know any better. Has no Bible. I mean he just knows, "I met Jesus. I need to be in church." Walks all the way to the front of the church, sits down on the floor cross-legged right in front of the preacher. He's looking at this, and every church back then, every church had a Deacon Bob. OK. Deacon Bob's job was to impose the correct etiquette for the church. This kid comes down and as he's walking down the aisle, of course, every one sitting in their coat and tie are looking at him disdainfully, but they're also catching an eye at Deacon Bob, who's 82 years old, in the back. It's like NASCAR waiting for the wreck. And sure enough, Deacon Bob gets up. He's 82 so he can't walk all that well. So he's strolling down to the front where this kid is. Poor preacher's pouring his heart out about Jesus, there is nobody listening. And he's watching the car wreck about to happen. Here comes Deacon Bob, he's hacked, here's this poor guy, he walks down here, and sure enough, man, Deacon Bob gets down there, puts his hand on this kid's shoulder, kid kind of looks back, puts his hand on his shoulder, sits down next to him cross-legged on the floor, opens his Bible, and sits with him the entire rest of the service. Now what did Deacon Bob say to that kid with that? "We want you here. We don't care how you dress." The other thing he said to the congregation is, "I'm the keeper of etiquette, but even etiquette is as important as whether or not somebody hears about Jesus." He did good when it was in his power to do good.

And we have that responsibility. There's nothing more powerful than us loving people and putting the name of Jesus, tagging it on to that act of love that we perform. And then he says, don't do anything to people when you don't have any cause. So that's the part of the sermon that has to do with me making that confession. Go to the airport, if you fly much, inevitably you've got a delayed flight. A lot of times it is the airlines fault. I mean we've got an airline that can't even send dogs to the right place. So you're going to have some messed up stuff. And it may be the airlines fault. What will happen is there will be 30 people in line. Some poor guy or gal behind the counter doing her best to try to fix things and it's not her fault. And everybody is yelling at her. Everybody's mad at her. Everybody's ripping her poor little guts out. Now we have two options as a Christian. We can go up and join the throng: yell at her because we're mad at the airline. Or we can walk up, look at her, and just very plainly say, "Look I know you're having a bad day, I want you to know something. I know Jesus Christ and because of that I want you to know, even if you can't fix my flight, I'm not going to get mad at you. I'm not going to yell at you, and I will do nothing to make your day worse than it is." What does that say to her? Especially if she goes home and some friend of hers comes up to her and says, "You know, we're having an Easter Pageant. Would you come to church with me?" Don't you think she's far more prone, when a Christian just loved her when nobody else in the entire airport did, and that's why you can't just be nice. You can't just be a nice guy; you've got to tag Jesus on to that niceness. Mike Wilkinson and I were in Morocco one year and we were talking to the missionary about what we could do to reach the Berber tribes. And he said, "Well I'll tell you what we can do. We can drill a water well." We said, "Hey that's great." And finally something bothered me about the way he said it. I said, "Well if we do that can we tell these people about Jesus?" And he said, "Well we really can't do that. We're just going to dig the water well." Let me tell you something ladies and gentlemen, we're not about the Peace Corp. And we're not about just being nice people from Central Baptist. We are ambassadors for Jesus Christ and we have that responsibility. And it is rooted in this table. If I've gotten right vertically with the Father, Romans 5:1, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. If that's happening, you know what that means? I take on His attitude toward

everybody else in the world. And here's what I want you to understand. There's not a person in the world God doesn't like. There's not a person in the world He didn't die for. Not a person in the world He doesn't love. If that's His attitude, and I've met him, then it better be my attitude. And we have that responsibility. And when you do it, you tag Jesus onto it.

When we were in Turkey, we were doing some mission work, and we were going out to where there had been an earthquake. We went out to the earthquake the day before and there were tons of modular homes that had been built for the people who had lost everything in Adapazari, Turkey. Every home had two things on it, two name-plates: Lottie Moon, Christmas offering, Southern Baptist and Samaritan's Purse, Franklin Graham's organization. So the second day we get in the van to go back out to the area, there's a lady sitting in front of us and she turns around. She knows we're believers. And she turns around and she looked at us, and she said, "I want you to know something. Our Muslim brothers did nothing for us. Not a single Muslim country came to our aid. You Christians came to our aid." And she turned around and never said another word the rest of the trip. She didn't worship Jesus. She didn't fall at His feet. But I guarantee you this, she was far more open to our Christ than she'd ever been before. We act, we do good when it is in our power to do it, and we name Jesus, we tag Him to every nice thing we do. Because the Bible's really true. We are the salt and light of Him. We're in a world that can't conquer us. You know Matthew 17, right? Jesus said, "The gates of Hell cannot prevail against the church." But that's not a church that just sits on Sunday morning, dresses nice, comes and we're kind to each other. It's a church that steps outside the walls, does what they need to do, don't do what they shouldn't do, and tags every bit of it in the name of Jesus Christ. When we do that, we impact the world. When we fail in that, we allow the world to crumble in on itself.

1940's really, '39, earlier than that, Hitler comes to power in Germany. It's interesting, he killed 6 million Jews. 6 million Jews. Gassed them. Shot them. Performed experiments on them with Mengele. Do you know why he was able to do that? I mean it's interesting because the Prussian aristocracy of Germany hated Hitler. The people that ran Germany before Hitler were really ostensibly Christians and they were aristocratic, they hated his vulgarity. Do you know why he was able to kill 6 million Jews? Because of us. Did you know the Hitler practiced the occult with Himmler, Goebbels, Mengele; he practiced the occult with those guys. They worshipped Satan. But here's the interesting thing. There was one thing he feared. It wasn't France, it wasn't England, there was one thing he feared. He was afraid of the church. Which makes sense. You worship Satan, he knows who the big person is. It's not him. He feared the church so he ran a test. It's called *Kristallnacht*. But he took his goons and he said, "Alright tomorrow I want you to find every Jewish business establishment. I want you to find the Jews, pull them out, beat them up. I want you to rock their windows. I want you to break their businesses. I want you to do everything because we're going to see if the church will respond." Two men stood against Hitler, Martin Niemöller and Dietrich Bonhoeffer; Niemöller would go to jail, Bonhoeffer will die 10 days before the war ends as part of an assassination attempt on Hitler. But the church, when it was in the power to do good and step out into the streets of Germany and demand action from these goons that have attacked these Jews for absolutely no cause, a complete violation of Scripture, had the church stood, you wouldn't have 6 million dead Jews. But it didn't and we do.

Now ladies and gentlemen, this is not a country club here. It's not the Kiwanis Club, it's not the Rotary Club, we are a group of people bought by the blood of the Son of the Creator of the universe.

And therefore, we have a responsibility to view everything as He views it. And that means we love people whether we like them or not. It doesn't matter. He likes them. He loves them. And we have to stand because we really are salt and light. And when we stand well it works. And when we don't, it doesn't. It is enormous, the power that we possess by a simple obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ. That is why we do what we do.

Let's pray.

Father, simple passage here. We do good when we have the opportunity. We don't do bad when we have that opportunity. Father as we look over history, we've done it right and we've done it wrong. So I just ask You for us in this room that we do it right. Father I don't know anything about D.C., I know the Brazos Valley. Let us in this room be salt and light in the Brazos Valley so that people in this area that never would have dreamed of going to church would see us, hear us tag Your name to what we do and Father use that to reach this valley. I ask You to make that difference; not put more people in our pews, but to put more people in Your kingdom. Father, You make that difference. I ask You that in Jesus Christ name.