

Proverbs 10:6-7

Sunday 10/26/2014

Well, if you have your Bibles, turn over to the book of Proverbs, Chapter 10. That's where we've been for a little while. Now that we've sunk our teeth into the Proverbs themselves, it bogged down a little bit. There's so much in here, and I want to make sure we go through it all, but we're in no hurry. We want to get everything out of it we can.

Last week, we were in Chapter 10, Verse 5, and we saw a great practical lesson on the cycle of life, the seasons, and how those four seasons are a picture of what we go through not only in a year but in our own lives: starting out in the springtime of our life, moving into the summer, into the fall, and then, of course, into the final phases of our life in the wintertime.

I gave you probably, from a practical standpoint, one of the greatest verses that deals with your life and my life and time. It says in Psalms 90:10-12:

Psalms 90:10-12

The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

We talked about that if you remember, at the end of our time last week, "So teach us to number our days that we may be able to apply our hearts unto wisdom." Out of life, you look at that 70 years that he's talking about there, we kind of calculated it out and went through all of the things. When you put it all together, probably all of us have, out of a full life, if we live a full life, probably 15 or 20 years to serve the Lord. Nothing is more precious in our lives as a Christian than time. During that time, our fruit-bearing season, as Psalms 1:1-3 talks about.

Today, I want to continue through this passage, and we'll look at several more proverbs and make the appropriate comments on each one of them. You want to remember now, and I'll keep bringing this before you, you want to remember that these proverbs are about the issues of life. They're about everything that we face every day on a regular basis, the things about life that God sees and understands, and that in time, if we get the book of Proverbs in our life, we see them also the way He sees them. We get His knowledge, His wisdom, His understanding to see and understand every issue that comes in our life.

So, before we start this morning, let's go to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to bless our time today. We do thank Thee and praise Thee for the Lord Jesus, and we thank You, Father, for the time that we've set aside for the good people that have come out today. We pray, Father, Your blessings upon us, and Lord, we pray that You'll put us under the blood today. If there's anything in our life that is not pleasing to You that would hinder us from getting what You have for us, that we would bring it to You, Lord, and ask You to forgive us. We just ask You now, Father, in all that You do, to give us today what we need, and we'll thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it, Amen.

I. The Blessings of the Just

Now, Proverbs chapter 10, we're going to pick it up in verse 6 today. It says this:

Proverbs 10:6

Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

I could never overstate the first part of that verse about the blessings of God in a Christian's life because it's so true. In the Old Testament, throughout the Bible, I'm thinking in particular there when Jacob blessed his sons in Genesis 48:14-17. The Bible says that when he brought them in to bless them, he put his hands upon their head. That's symbolic in the Bible of the Father blessing his sons, and it symbolizes the Father giving him his blessing as his son.

Our head in the Bible is an incredible study unto itself. 1 Corinthians chapter 11 talks about that the head of every man is Christ. What talks about our head in the Bible is talking about our thoughts, our direction in life, what we do, where we go, living your life for the Lord with His direction. We use our head in many, many different phrases even today about it, direction in life. "Get your head on straight," and all those things that will all bring the connotation of getting your life in order.

It's hard for me, as I think it would be for most Christians, to even understand how to live your life without the blessings of God upon you. Yet, all my life, I've seen Christians that seemingly just struggle with everything. I've seen Christians over the years that they can never get ahead. They always have some fundamental issue that just keeps dragging them down. They never go anywhere, never have any really fun or good time. They just always carry a burden or carry a load for something. They may never sink completely, but they go through life with the water just up to the edge of their nose where it's really hard to breathe. Sometimes they do sink; they lose everything they've got. I look at situations like that and I think to myself, "What a terrible way to go through your life." It's hard for me to imagine a child of God not wanting the blessings of God.

I'm going to tell you something right now. The farther we get from the Bible, and this is true of even us here. I know we have the Bible, we stay in the Bible, but you know, we're kind of like in a bubble here. Outside this bubble, the Christian world is just completely upside down. You talk to other Christians who truly are saved people, and they probably love the Lord, but you're going to find when you talk to them, they don't have a clue of what's going on in the Bible and what's going on with the Lord.

I'll tell you why that is: because the Bible is its own book of definitions. I like the Webster's 1728 dictionary back there. We sell it in a bookstore, and Noah Webster was one of our founding fathers, and he wrote most of the curriculum for the school system when the country started. His dictionary, Webster's dictionary, was a standard, and he put his first one out in 1728. It's one that I really like, and it's one that I use, and you won't find all of the modern-day words in it that have come into being and come into been created since that time. But the reason I like it is because many of the definitions of the words he actually goes back to the Bible, and he uses the Bible to

define those words. Because your Bible, if you understand it, it's its own book of definitions. God defines things differently than we do in the world.

I think that the farther we get from God, the farther we get from the things of God, the more we get away from the fact of the Bible definitions, and that's where we really get messed up. I think it's just almost everything in life. I think that people are messed up on salvation. I think they're messed up on faith. I think they're messed up on all of those great concepts that in the Bible are defined in one way, but Christianity, because they've lost their Bible, have defined them another way. I think that's true of the word of the concept of blessings. I really do. I think that most of God's people have really lost the concept about what God's blessings are. They don't even understand when they don't have them in their life. They wonder why they have so many problems in their life. They wonder why they can't ever get ahead in life.

The reason why they can't is because the Bible says here, "Blessings are upon the head of the just." We know that God in the Bible, the picture is putting your hand on someone's head and blessing them. In the Bible, God's hand comes in two formats. God's hand will either be upon you, or God's hand will either be against you. Most of God's people today, bless their hearts, they can't tell the difference. They have no clue that when they're trying to go an uphill battle in life and can't figure it out. I've seen it all my life. I see it more now probably than ever. But God's people are trying to run up a mountain with a hundred-pound pack on their back, wondering why they can never make any progress. The bottom line is because biblically, the hand of God is against them, not for them. When you have the hand of God for you, upon you, you have the blessings of God.

Truthfully, God's hand will either be upon you, as it says here in Proverbs 10:6, or God's hand will be against you, like it says in Job chapter 9. But it'll be one way or the other. Over the years, I've seen these people never figure it out. They never get it. They're never happy. They'll buy a new car. They'll buy a new house. They'll buy new clothes. For a while, that'll make them happy. But the car gets old. The smell's gone out of it. The clothes wear out. You wear them four or five times. Pretty soon, it's not exciting anymore. They go from one thing to the other in life. Bless their hearts, they're the most miserable people on this planet. I've seen them go through life and never figure it out.

The blessings of God have to be defined in the Bible the way the Bible defines them. Christians, as I said, have lost those definitions today. The blessings of God in our lives are not based, and you've got to get this. This is just the beginning of what I'm going to talk about today because I'm going to define it for you today. I'm going to take a little simple thing like the blessings of God and put it into a biblical context that most of God's people never heard or never understood before.

II. The Source of God's Blessings

The blessings of God in our lives are not in what God gives you. The blessings of God in our lives are based on what you give God. They never get it. They just never get it. There are people that take everything from God, and never one time in their life have they ever given anything

back to God. Then they wonder why they're destitute. They wonder why they have nothing in their life.

Philippians 4:19

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Probably every child of God here today knows that verse. It may be many of your favorite verses, but you better analyze the verse. That verse says more than just God's going to supply your needs. That verse says that God supplying your needs is in Christ Jesus. Ephesians chapter 1 talks about the fact that the blessings of God, everything that God is, He put in Christ Jesus. So it isn't a fact that you just are saved so God has to come down and bless me. Do you understand what I'm saying here? You have to have the right biblical relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ to tap into those blessings of God. Most of God's people don't even know what that real relationship is.

As I said, they go through their whole life taking everything from God. God for them is an emergency, "break the glass in time of need." God for them, they only talk to Him, they only come around when they need something. A lot like some of your relatives. They only show up when they really need something. The only time God hears their voice is when they're in a destitute situation. God is obligated to a certain degree because we're His children. But remember now, God has just obligated that you make it through. He didn't guarantee in what condition you'd be on the other end. When you got saved, God promised He'd get you home to heaven. Do you understand that? But that means He'd get you home in a wheelchair if He has to. He'd get you home in a casket if He has to. He'd get you home with some disease if it has to. His promise is He'll get you home.

The blessings of God in your life and my life don't come because now I'm a Christian and God's just going to bless me. Those things defined in the Bible, the blessings of God, come because of the fact, and it's real simple: they flow through Christ. They come by Christ Jesus. So if we have no biblical-based relationship with Him, then there'll be no blessings of God in our life.

I've seen people all the time, and I have a few in my mind this morning, but I'm not going to say it because I'm very kind today. I feel in a very kind, generous mood. But I watch them, and they'll be saved people, and they're absolutely some of the most miserable people you ever met in your life. They don't go to church anywhere. They don't do anything. They've never given anything to God. They'll take everything and everybody will give them. When they have a need in their life, they get on Facebook and they whine and complain about what they don't have. "Oh, I need this. Oh, we're destitute. Oh, we need this." Then some stupid Christian out there will feel sorry for them and meet their need, and then they'll get all over the thing and tell everybody, "Look how God came through." No, that's not God coming through.

I like the guy down on the plaza that stands on the corner with a sign, "Feed me, I'm hungry," but won't work. When people give me gift cards for my birthday or my Christmas, June 14th, by the way, and I know the 25th of December, but I like to get them a little before, around the 20th, you know. But anyway, I always save them, but after they're gone, you never saw more fun in all

your life than driving up to a guy on a street corner who won't work with a sign saying, and you throw him a \$100 gift card, and he picks it up and thinks, and then he finds out there ain't nothing on it. Do you think I really do that? You don't know. I don't do that, but I sure like to sometimes.

I got such a soft heart, I break my own rules. I was down at the stop out there last week, and when we're at Restart, and when I get everybody dropped off, there's a little coffee place down in the River Market area. It's got the best coffee in the world, so I have about 20 or 30 minutes before I have to get on my track because you guys are still out there figuring it all out. So I run down there, and I walk up there and get a cup of coffee and walk back down. I was coming back to the truck, a guy came up, and he says, "Hey sir," and he had a handful of change, and he says, "This is all the money I got. My wife and my kids are up there," and he says, "You know," he says, "I need to get some gas. Did you have any money in all you can spend?"

Now look, I've heard that story. They all got kids, they all got cars with no gas in them, and you know what? I gave him \$5. Now I had a gift card that didn't have anything on it just in case. Now I knew, and just you know, I followed him up around, he didn't know, and I gave him the \$5, and I followed him up around, and he didn't know it, and he had no family. He went on up the thing, went on out through the thing up there, and he went on his way, and you know, he's thinking he got \$5. You know the reason why I followed him? If he really would have had a family, I'd have given him \$20, okay? But I followed him up.

But I gave him that \$5. I witnessed to him. I hate to say this because I witnessed to anybody if it only cost me \$5. You know what I mean? You want your destitute, you need \$5, I'll give you the \$5. Whatever you buy with it is between you and God. I'm giving away at heart, but I will give you the gospel in the process of that, and I witnessed to him about the Lord. He walked on up the road and following around, went on his way, and I said, "You know what? It was worth the \$5 to me." I figured out what he was going to do probably long before he did. I just wanted to see if I was wrong this time, and I had to pull the truck over, went up and got his kid that they'd have been hungry, I'd have got up when I got some hot dogs and brought them back to him, but I figured he was shaming me.

I don't know what this story has anything to do with it. I'm talking about in my message this morning. Oh, I know what it was. I don't give those cards out, and I'm really disappointed in you. For Christmas, you're getting a gift card. You know I wouldn't do that, don't you?

I told you a couple of weeks ago that my main philosophy of ministry with people is simply this: always take care of those who take care of you. I mean, that's just what it is. I've watched some of you go through some really tough times, I really have, and yet I've watched you never falter even in the midst of your tough times. I've watched you never falter in what you gave to God within your life of your life because of the faithfulness that you are and who you are, and you know what? He's blessed you and brought you through every time.

In life, you never judge a person's life by one event that takes place. You never do it, not one happening. You look over the space of time and see how that pattern of life plays itself out. It's not that you're not going to have some scary times in life. The fact that you give to God what He

wants you to do with your life doesn't mean you're not going to have some scary times in your life. The world can be scary, but it does mean that God's always going to bring you through, and that's how He teaches you to trust Him.

I was talking to Crystal last week about our church here because she was telling about a blessing in her life, and I asked her if I could use this story, and she said, "Yeah." She told me how that she had her car, it had all kinds of problems, and you know, she wasn't going to run anymore, and she had to get another car, and she didn't have the money to buy one, and so she was going to have to get a loan to get one, and she really didn't want to do that, and she was kind of fretting about it. I won't tell you, Crystal's done everything that I could ever ask a person to do in this church. I mean, she started here, she got disciplined, she went through all the classes, you worked with her, so other girls work with her, and she come down, she's involved in ministry, she's done everything that I could ever ask anybody to do, and I appreciate her and love her in the Lord.

But she came up when she was all excited because she said, "I'm sitting there trying to put a pencil to everything I got to do, and the phone rings, and it was either her mother or somebody, I forget who it was, who had a car that they were going to give me. All I had to do was come down and get it and drive it home." See what I'm talking about? You take care of God, God takes care of you. You look at those things, and when you do right by God, He gives us all sufficiency.

2 Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

When we do right by God, He gives us all sufficiency, and when we don't do right, He can take it away from us just as fast as He gave it to us. I have actually watched people in this church over my lifetime here and all through my ministry who came in, got dialed in, got plugged in, started to do, God gave them every desire of their heart, everything they needed, and then I don't know why, for some reason, whatever the case, they decided to go back to the world again, go back to that thing. I've stood here and watched how God gave them everything in order because they were doing what they needed to do, but just as God gave it to them, as they turned around and went the other way, He just took it back in the same order that He gave it to them.

I told you a couple of weeks ago, and I say this again, my ministry philosophy of ministry with people: always take care of them that take care of you. I live by that. I believe that is absolutely a fundamental rule. But I must tell you, I learned that on the basis of what God has done in taking care of me. I didn't read that in a book someplace or sit down and just say, "I think I'll do this." I learned that on the premise and the basis of what God has done and taking care of me. I take care of God in my life for one reason basically, and in His final analysis, you know what it is? Because of the way He takes care of me. I reciprocate back. I call this in my own theology, "God consciousness," being aware of God in your life, not taking Him for granted, not using Him, as I said earlier, only in the case of an emergency.

III. Joseph: A Picture of God's Blessings

You see this great illustration in Genesis chapter 37, and it really runs the whole scope of the last part of the book of Genesis up to chapter 50, and it's a story about Joseph. I think that Joseph is probably one of the greatest studies in the Bible for many, many, many, many reasons, but if you want to take one story that really represents what I'm talking about today and understanding God blessing your life and the blessings of God, it would be the story of Joseph's coat of many colors.

Now, that's a fun Sunday school lesson. Most of you kids have heard that in Sunday school, most of all of us have heard it in Sunday school, but you probably never thought about it in the context that I'm going to talk about it here. That coat is a picture and represents the blessings of God in our life. Jacob is a type of God the Father. Joseph was a picture of me and you in a practical way. Now there were other boys involved in his family, but Joseph got the coat. Joseph was the younger. He was probably the tenderest of the father's, where the other boys were out partying around and doing their own thing as older boys do. Joseph still wanted to stay close to the daddy, and he appreciated that, and out of that relationship, it's obvious that Joseph was special. I don't know all the circumstances why. I don't know all the how it all laid out, but it's very obvious that he was.

The coat that Jacob had made for him and gave him with the many, many colors on it is a picture of the many, many, many blessings that God puts in your life and my life when we cultivate that special relationship. Basically, what God did, God set him apart from the other boys, and God will take those Christians who take care of Him. You want to understand the blessings of God in your life? You want to know how to have them? You want to know where they come from, where they start? You actually think that just when you get saved that God just has to bless you because, and I understand He takes care of you, I get it. I'm not saying that He doesn't, I'm not saying that He won't come through for you. I'm talking about bona fide blessings that God dumps on you because of the fact you're taking care of Him. God will take care of those that take care of Him and set them apart and bless them more than other Christians who won't give anything to God.

I want to define it for you today. God just doesn't come down and bless you and me. Let me ask you a question. Most of you can answer this because most of you are involved in ministry here, and so you'll have a pretty good appreciation of what I'm saying. When you work with somebody, when you disciple somebody, when you bring somebody through the 10 things that changed about you the day you got saved, when you take a couple in or you take a young man in or a young lady, and you work with them in the Bible, no matter what their deal is, and you spend time with them, and you meet on a weekly basis, and you give them what they need out of the Bible, and you see them grow and gravitate, let me ask you a question: who gets the bigger blessing, you or them? You do. You may meet their need, and you may give them what they want, but I want to tell you something, there is no greater blessing on this planet than giving what you have to somebody else and giving in their life and seeing God work through you and change somebody else's life.

IV. The Only Miracle for the Church

We get a big deal about miracles today. Charismatics make so much of miracles that the Baptists are afraid of them. I'm not afraid of miracles. I just from the Bible understand miracles. Do you

realize for the church, do you realize for the church, there's only one miracle? In the apostolic times, it was all miracle of healing, miracle of tongue, miracles of everything. You died, somebody came over and said, "Don't worry about it," slap you on the rear end, and up you went. You were blind, nobody would put pokey in the eyes, and you can see. But it hasn't worked today because the only miracle for the New Testament church, now hear me now, I'm not saying God isn't going to come through when you have a need, but when everybody has a real desperate need, you know the first thing they ask for? A miracle. Then they get all bummed out when they don't get it.

Years ago, we had a guy that in a church I was with, and I was just a young guy then, and he died. I forget what disease he had, and he was probably in his 40s, a relatively young guy, but he had some disease, and the doctor says, "There's no hope." Well, he went to the pastor, and he asked the pastor, "You know, I want to do everything." He says, "It's not a fact that I'm not saved or ready to go home to the Lord." He was a good guy. He says, "But," he says, "I want to make sure I do everything I can do." He says, "I want to claim the verse in the Bible that if any sick among you, let them call for the elders, anointing with oil, and he'll be healed."

Now, I want to tell you something, that verse is not in a book that's written to the church. See, but I, back then, I didn't have any say. I got a call on the intercom from the pastor. We were going to do it Sunday night after church. He says, "Bob, I need you to go get some oil." Now, you don't know what a pressure burden that was on me as a young pastor. First of all, I was unsure what the verse meant. Second of all, how am I going to go get the oil? That puts a tremendous responsibility. What if I get the wrong oil? What kind of oil was I supposed to get? There were no instructions. Do I get Quaker State 3040? Do I get Crisco? Do I get Wesson? Not Smith and Wesson, just Wesson. So I'm in a jam. I go down there and went into the kitchen, and I don't know what to find. I found, I just prayed to God I got the right oil. I found me some Wesson oil, put it in a little styrofoam cup, and at the end of service, I brought it in, and the guy got down there, all the pastors got around, we put oil on his head, and he died.

That verse does not mean that if you're in some dire, destitute face and death, that if somebody rubs 10W-40 on your head, you're going to be okay. The only miracle, listen to me now, the only bona fide miracle given to the church is the miracle of the new birth. That's all it is. That's the only miracle we have. Now, do you know what that does? If you're saved here this morning, let me hear you say amen. Are you saved? Then you know what that does? When I put you with somebody and they have a need in their life, they need to be disciplined, they need to be structured, their marriage is on the rocks, they're having some kind of problem with their kids or whatever the case it is, and you work with them, do you know what they really need? They need a miracle. But they don't need some hokey-pokey miracle of somebody poking them and throwing them up and down and singing around and giving them the prayer dance. What they need is a bona fide New Testament Bible miracle.

Ladies and gentlemen, if you've been saved this morning, you going into that person's life and giving them what they need, you become the miracle that they need. That's ministry. It's the only miracle for the church. It's the only miracle we have. When somebody has a need, you step up, you take that person, you give them what they need, you become the miracle that they're looking

for. You have the potential, everybody in here, to be the miracle that somebody's looking for in their life. Why will you not see that, and why will you not act on that? You need to be the miracle in your children's life. They need a miracle in the world that we live in. They need a miracle. The people that you work with, the people that come in, their marriages are on their rocks, they got all kinds of problems, they've got addictions, they've got this, they've got that, they need a miracle. God is not going to come down and zap you with a miracle stick that takes away your problem. He's going to give you somebody in your life that got the miracle of the new birth that can give that miracle to you that you need, and you get blessed from it much more than the person you work with. They may be thankful, they may be happy, they may say, "This is the greatest place, I'm going to stay here forever," but they don't get the blessings like you do when you let God use you in the life of somebody else. God blesses us on the basis of what we do for Him, not what He does for us. Get it straight. It isn't about what He does for you, it's about what you do for Him. When you minister to somebody, you get blessed.

Acts 13:2

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

The church at Antioch, the Bible says it gives you a whole list of people that were there, and then it says this in verse 2, "And as they ministered unto the Lord." Do you want the hand of God's blessings on your life? Well, minister to other people as God gives them to you. But the first one that you minister to is the Lord. You couldn't find 20 of God's people in this city who understands what it means to minister to the Lord. God has some needs. Now I know you think He doesn't. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, I get that. He can move mountains, I get that. He raised dead people, I understand. He has some needs today that He needs from you and me. Just as the blessings of God come when you meet His need or somebody else's need, when you minister to the Lord and meet His need, wow, there's the blessings.

God's got some needs today. I'm going to let you think about what they are, and we'll talk about them a little bit. Blessings are giving somebody what they need, and when you work with somebody and give them what they need, you're going to get the blessing out of it. You never get blessed by God giving you things. You get blessed by giving other things to people that God gave you. You've got to see it, and then you wonder why you're not blessed. You keep your life to yourself. You keep everything to yourself. Everything is about you. You're your own best friend. You're focused. I knew one guy one time that I thought he'd never find anybody to bury because I wouldn't think he'd ever find anybody he could love as much as he loved himself. We go through life, and it's all about us. We never look outward about what God needs, the needs that are out there. We'll take the miracle of the new birth, but we'll never be that miracle in somebody else's life. Shame on us. Shame on us this morning.

V. The Cost of God's Blessings

The blessings of God in your life, now that's a good thing. The blessings of God in your life is a great thing, but as you go on in our story in Genesis chapter 37, you're going to see the second

part of that principle: that the blessings of God in your life, and boy, we want them, and I'll take them no matter what, and you only get them by what you give to God, and God blesses through what you give Him, but I'll tell you something, it'll cause you some problems. It always will. I've learned that every good thing that God does for us will come also with a set of issues and a set of problems.

In this case, in Genesis with Joseph in his coat of many colors, it was the other brothers, wasn't it? They hated Joseph because of that special coat that his father gave him. Boy, don't you know when he went into his daddy and his daddy said, "Son, I had this made for you," put it on him, and he looked around, he says, "Buddy, this is great." He was so caught up with what his father had given him through their special relationship, he never thought, he thought his brothers would be as excited about him getting that coat as he was. Whoa, is that a mistake you're going to make in life? He walked out there with that little coat on with all those sparkling colors on it and said, "Boys, hey guys, look at what Dad gave me." They weren't happy about it.

It's the most amazing thing in this world. God's people ought to be thrilled to death that God is blessing another child of God, even when He doesn't bless you. It's the craziest thing I've ever seen in my life. It's the absolute craziest thing. When God blesses you and your family, and He doesn't bless someone else the same way, and they see it in your life, it will cause you some problems. Joseph's brothers, the Bible says, envied him. They wanted what he had. They were jealous of him. They were jealous of his coat, and in time, they turned to them hating him to the point where they were ready to get rid of him any way that they could. But you see, the real truth of the matter is, they all could have had a coat. He got the coat because he had a special relationship with the father, and instead of wanting, coming out and saying, "Wow, I'm going to get a coat just like that because I'm going to love my father and do for him like Joseph did," uh-uh, it was the problems in their own heart. They had a problem in their own heart with the father, and they never got the coat.

Hey, there will be people in your life, some of them will be your friends, many of them will be your family, who they play at being a Christian. They pretend they're right with God when they're not. They care nothing about God, giving anything to God. They make it to church once every six weeks, you know, faithfully. It's a thing where they care absolutely nothing about their life and God and giving it with their kids, whatever the case may be. They'll see your family, they'll see God's blessings in your life and your children, all He does for you based on all you do for Him. When all of you get together at Christmas, when all you get together for birthdays, when you all hang out together, hey, it may be July 20th, it may be 101 degrees out, but it's going to be like 30 degrees below zero at that party. It's going to be frosty. Deep down inside, they resent you. They envy you, and many times they hate you.

Oh, they don't hate you in the sense of, "I hate that person, I never want to see him again." They hate you in the sense that they hate what God has done for you. They really hate the God that's in you. Deep down inside, they see all of that, and they hate you, and they're jealous of you. They envy you for what you have with God, but you know what? They won't do anything right in their life and change a thing to get what you got because the problem isn't you, no more than the

problem with Joseph. The problem was in the heart of God's people. They don't want to give God anything, yet they want the blessings of God.

VI. Cain and Abel: A Warning

The definitive passage on this is found in Genesis chapter 4. Turn over there, and the first eight verses, and it's the same thing here, and it's a great story. It's a story of Cain and Abel, a great example of this very thing we're talking about.

Genesis 4:1-8

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

Now, you want to, and again, everybody knows this story, but let's look at it in our context of our life. I want you to see some things. First of all, the Bible says in verse 4 that the two boys, they bring an offering to the Lord, and Abel brings his, and Cain brings his. The Bible says that God had respect unto Abel and his offering. He got the blessing. God looked at that and He said, "That's a good thing. I'm going to give you My blessings. I got respect unto yours." But He looks at Cain and He says, "Cain, I'm not going to have any respect of yours, and there's no blessing that comes along with yours."

Now, theologically, here's what you got: Cain's a picture of an unsaved man. Abel's a picture of a saved man. Abel went to the flocks, he got a sheep. You and I were saved today, we were saved by the blood of a Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ. Cain, on the other hand, he didn't get a sheep. He brought his fruit. He brought his things that he had labored with to bring to God. It's a picture of a man coming to Christ and offering a lamb, and a man coming and offering his own works for salvation, and God wouldn't accept it. God will never accept it. So He says to Abel, "I have

respect unto yours. You got the blessing." Cain, "I'm sorry, I cannot bless you because I cannot accept and have respect unto your offering."

The Bible says in verse 5 and 6 that Cain is wroth. He's angry. He's mad. What follows here is exactly what I'm talking about, and I've tried to show you a number of different ways as we come to this point through this. God says to him, "You know what? I know I blessed your brother, and I didn't bless you." He says, "It's not a problem. There's no reason for you to get upset at your brother. There's no reason for you to get upset with Me. Hey, just go get the right offering and bring the right things to Me, and I will give you the blessings." You know what his response was? He killed Abel. Then in verse 11, he left the presence of the Lord.

You see, now there's your sister, there's your brother, there's your co-worker, there's your friend, there's the people in your world who see you doing things for God. God's hand in your life. They don't have the hand in their life. They don't get it, or they do get it and they won't act on it. They're just like Cain. Cain, here it comes, get it down, you don't hear anything else I said, hear this: Cain wanted the blessings of God without giving God anything. He wanted, he wanted it all from God without ever thinking why God wanted a lamb instead of cantaloupes, potatoes, turnips. Cain wanted the blessings of God, just like a lot of people today. "I want God's blessing, but I don't want to give God anything to get blessed," and then get mad about it. But as I said earlier, Abel paid the price, didn't he? Cain killed him.

So that's a great proverb: "The blessings are upon the head of the just," but not everybody's going to be happy about it. I'll say it again, you get the blessings of God in your life by you ministering to Christ, by finding out what His needs are, and then giving it to Him through the ministry to Him. Now we talk about ministry here all the time, and we minister to people, but I'm going to tell you right now, and I say it enough that it should go without saying, that our ministry to people is based on our ministering to the Lord first. Because unlike maybe many other preachers or maybe some of God's people, I know what His needs are, and I know that most people are sitting up there scratching their head and saying, "Well, how could God need anything? He doesn't drive a car, so He doesn't need a car. His lights, or He doesn't wear clothes, He doesn't need clothes. I mean, He got the, I mean, what does God need from me? What are His needs?"

Well, first of all, to start it off with, His need is for souls to be won into His kingdom, and He's not going to come down and do that by Himself. He wants to do it through you. He wants you to recognize what He did for you, and then He wants you to give back to Him through others what He gave to you. That's His need. He has a need for souls to be saved. The Bible says that God is not willing that any should perish, but all should come to repentance. I wish we felt the same way about it. God has a need, and the first need that He has is souls into His kingdom.

Now I understand it, God could have come down and just littered the sky with gospel tracts every morning when the dew is on the ground. I mean, there was a time when the manna was on the ground. I guess He could have just put John 3:16 and the plans of salvation all everybody's lawn in the morning. The birds are the greatest singers in the world. I guess instead of having them chirp in the morning, they could have chirped out, "Jesus loves me, this I know." He could have done any of that. He chose not to do it that way. You know why? Because He chose for you

and me to be the miracle that people needed. He did the miracle in your life and my life first, and then He wants you and me to take that miracle to somebody else. That's the first thing He needs. God's people will never get it. It's too busy in life getting what they want.

I'll tell you what else He needs. He needs your worship and praise, and you don't do that by getting up and singing some goofy song or getting up and throwing your hands up in the air. The Bible says in the Gospel of John that when we worship Him, we worship Him in spirit and truth. Your spirit and the truth of that book, that's where worship starts. You got the wrong book, you got no worship.

I'll tell you something else He needs. He needs our undivided attention. Too many things we're looking at instead of Him. I told you a couple of weeks ago, I was doing this this morning, and I told them about my two dogs. They just, you know, I always like, and as I said a couple of weeks ago, I always like in my relationship with God like I'm the dog and He's the master, you know. I'm sitting down there this morning, and they're both on the couch, and I'm doing my stuff, and every time I move, they were laying there half asleep, and all I did was just turn to get something, both of them are up. If when I flip my phone off at night and they hear that when it shuts down, they're up. They know it's time to go to bed. They can be sound asleep on the floor, and I'll be sitting there and just cross one leg to the other, and they're looking at me, "Let's go." They never lose sight of where I'm at in their world. I don't know how many times I've sat there and I've said, "Oh God, why can't I be just like that? Why can't I just have my attention span that is totally focused on You?" Because at the end of the day, I know what You want in my life, and it's also true of you, "You want my undivided attention," and there's too many things in this world that diverts my attention from Him to other things.

Now, I'm not a stickler about those things, and a lot of preachers are. I mean, I hope the Royals win tonight. I hope they win the World Series. I do. I'd like to see this town go crazy. They deserve it. The guys deserve it. They've worked hard, and because they did good last week and gave me the illustration that I needed, they need to win it. Now I get that, but you know, deep down inside, compared to God in this book, I don't really give a flip. I'll tell you something else, when we're in heaven for 150 million years, nobody's going to have the record of who won the World Series, so I'm cool with it. I try to keep a balance. Yeah, I want them to win. Yeah, I got a Royal shirt. Yeah, I got a Royal hat. Yeah, I wear it around. Yeah, when the Chiefs get, I love it when the Chiefs get a shot, I get another Big Mac. I'm with you, man, I'm with you. But at the end of the day, I don't really care. End of the day, I want my undivided attention to Him, and nothing infuriates me more when something in this life pulls me off of that. I just, I just want to kick myself. We get the blessings of God in our lives because of our ministry to Him.

I'll tell you what else He needs. He needs you and I to finish the work that He started. You see, when you look at the plan, He lived 33 years. He never did one thing outside of a circumference of 40, 50, 60 miles. He never reached the world. He never went to China. He never went to the Eskimos. He never went to Europe. He never went here. He did everything He did within a 60-mile radius of where He was born. God, who made Him the Savior and brought Him down to be the Savior of mankind, you'd have thought that He would have lived forever and just stayed on Earth and perpetuated the kingdom and just kept that thing going. Now, if I'd have been God,

that's what I would have done. But God chose not to do it that way in His infinite wisdom. You know what He chose to do? He chose to let Him be on this Earth for 33 years, lay out the example, give everything we needed, put it in the most perfect model you ever see, and then take Him back to heaven and say, "I have begun a good work in you, and I want to perform another day of Jesus Christ. You do the work. You finish the work that I started." That's what He needs.

I'll tell you something, I got a whole list of them. I'll just give you one more. I'll tell you something else He needs. He needs you and me to replace ourselves. So down here, we talked about this last week. He needs to start with your family. You need to replace who you are in Christ with your family and then other people around you. That's how, that's what He, that's His needs.

VII. The Mouth of the Wicked

Okay, let's look at the second part of that verse: "but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked." Wicked people will always cover their true wickedness by what they say. A wise man can spot it a hundred miles away. In the people ministry, a couple last year or whenever it was, I taught you the patterns of deception. When you know those patterns, you can pretty much tell when somebody's not on the up and up. You know, it's a great principle of life: don't listen to what a man says, simply watch what he does.

When I hear over in the Middle East, when I hear the Palestinians want to go to the UN and talk about peace in the Middle East, when I hear Hamas want a cease-fire and talk about peace with Israel, don't fall for it for a second. Just look at the last 200 cease-fires they called, and they broke every one of them. When a Pope talks about everybody getting together and all the denominations loving God and being buddy-buddy and holding hands and singing Kumbaya, don't buy it. Look back at a thousand years of the bloodiest time in history of murder and deceit you ever saw. Nothing's changed.

Now, going back to the book of Proverbs, when we're studying here, you find the evil man and the strange woman. We've already seen that, went through it. The Bible says her path is on the way to yet she covers, she covers her mouth when she speaks. Yet the Bible says she flattered with her words. In Proverbs 5:16, the Bible says the words of her lips drop like honeycombs. Proverbs 5:3, her mouth when she says something is smoother than oil. Proverbs 5:5, but the Bible says in Proverbs 5:4, "but her end is bitter as wormwood, and as a two-edged sword," and her steps take you straight to hell. She covers much violence with what she says.

Now, there are people in life just like that. They're wicked, and their violence is under their tongue, and you get taken in if you're not careful. Everything they say, there will be an ulterior motive involved with it. This is where discernment and discretion, as the book of Proverbs says, comes in. Matthew 12:34 says:

Matthew 12:34

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

When a man is wicked in his heart, it comes out of his mouth. He may try to cover it, but if you know what to look for, it's there. When there's wickedness in a man's heart, that wickedness will lead to violence, and every action he does. Everything out of the wicked man's mouth needs to be viewed with caution, and this is where you've got to have, as I said, perception and discretion and discernment. There are some people I've met through life in my Christian journey over the years, and I wouldn't believe anything they said, and I wouldn't trust them any farther than I could throw them.

In the Bible, there's quite a lot of examples that you can follow when you can study that. Now I go back doctrinally, when we're reading all this stuff, he's talking about the Antichrist, just so you keep it in context. Here's deceit, his deception, and what he tells people in the first half of the tribulation period. 1 Thessalonians 5:3 says that he says he's bringing in peace and safety. They buy it. They believe it. He lies. He covers his wickedness and his violence with what he says, and then he nails them. I know that that's what he's talking about, but practically, a lot of his kinfolk run around today, and you'll bump into him sooner or later.

VIII. The Memory of the Just vs. The Name of the Wicked

Now look at verse 7:

Proverbs 10:7

The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.

Every February 22nd, we have what we call President's Day. That's a great reminder of this verse. Some states it's George Washington's birthday. We celebrate some states it's George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, and then some other states it's George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Thomas Jefferson. But it's President's Day. We think about them in a good way. I mean, there are certain names that you always associate. I talked about Daniel Webster a little while back. He's one of our founding fathers, and these three men were our founding part of our founding fathers. Yet if you found that the average Christian, you, they couldn't name, the average kid going to school doesn't have to be a Christian, you get the average kid that's 15 or 16 years old and ask him to name five of the founding fathers, he won't even know who they are. Many guys won't even know who his own father is, let alone one that founded our country. But that's what you got today.

In the Bible and New Testament Christianity, the names of people are very important. Even the world does it and doesn't understand why. That's why you find most popular names are like Peter, Paul, John, Timothy, James. Sometimes they'll be called Jacob, sometimes they'll be called David, sometimes they'll be called Samuel, maybe Mark, maybe Luke. They are very popular names because they don't always know this, probably never do know it, but they lend themselves to good, wholesome guys in the Bible. They're good names. You'll find women naming their girls Ruth, Hannah, Sarah, Mary, Martha, Rebecca, Rachel. They don't know necessarily why they do it for the most part, some of them do obviously, but those are good names, and people are drawn to good names.

In church history, you'll find certain names that really stand out, and it should be a blessing to a Christian if you understand anything about your Bible. The name Martin Luther, who started the Reformation. John Wycliffe, who put out the first English translation in 1384. Your King James Bible, Albert, comes from that. William Tyndale puts out another one in 1536. 95% of your King James Bible is of Tyndale's Bible. It's a blessed name if you know it. Who doesn't know the name of John Bunyan? John Bunyan wrote Pilgrim's Progress. Probably 99% of God's people today have never read that book, one of the greatest books that was ever written. Jonathan Edwards, the Great Awakening in New England, spread all across America. Charles Wesley, the great songwriter. John Wesley, the great preacher. George Whitefield, one of the most phenomenal influential preachers of all time.

David Brainerd died at 29 years of age, tuberculosis. Had a burden for the American Indians. Used to be in the woods in Pennsylvania and West Virginia praying for the American Indians. Got tuberculosis. He would go out and pray for hours under the great pine trees and the deep snow when the fever-wracked body would melt the snow around him in puddles of water. He died 29 years of age. Never won one American Indian to Christ. Never started any church. Never did anything as the world sees it for God. Yet he kept a journal, The Diary of David Brainerd, one of the most incredible things you'll ever read in your life. Got it in the bookstore back there. One of the most incredible things you ever read. But who knows that today? Who knows it today? Who even knows his name today? But it's a blessed name.

William Carey, he knew who it was. Henry Martyn, he knew who it was. Robert Murray M'Cheyne, knew who he was. Those were men back in the 1800s that read his journal years after he died, got such a burden that William Carey went to India as a missionary. Henry went to India, and M'Cheyne went to the Jews. Won millions of people to Christ based on one man's name and what he did. We think of General William Booth, Salvation Army. Charles Spurgeon. Dwight L. Moody. C.I. Scofield. Harry Ironside. Billy Sunday. J. Frank Norris. We have what we have today in this church. You have this church teaches the King James Bible and stands on it and has the fundamentals of teaching what the Bible should be because of one man's stand, and you guys don't even, most people don't even know who it is. The list goes on and on, and to a Bible believer, they are blessed names, for one way or the other, they were used of God to get us the Bible that we have today. As I said, 99% of God's people don't even know who they are.

"But the memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot." Ever notice there's no kids ever named Judas by their parents? You ever notice there are not many kids named Saul? Ever noticed that there's no girls ever named Jezebel? A lot of girls called Jezebel by other women, but their moms never called them that way. The verse there doesn't even say the last part of that verse that there's any memory. Memory is our word for memorial. There's no memory of them. They're just rotten names like Adolf Hitler, names like Heinrich Himmler, the Roman Caesars. I think of Idi Amin, who was in Uganda down there in South Africa or Central Africa, and he was one of the most tyrant dictators, had butchered more people. I mean, he was absolutely, and when they overthrew him, when they took him out, you can't even say his name down there anymore. Incredible, incredible.

The Roman Catholic Church has an official list of Popes, and every three or four years, they adjust it for their own agenda, and nobody ever squawks about it, and nobody ever says anything about it. You know why? Because nobody cares. If you read the official list put out by the Roman Catholics, not by a Baptist, if you read the official list of the Popes and their deeds put out by the Catholic Church, it'd make you puke. It's the most corrupt, terrible, horrific stuff you ever saw in your life. Nobody cares anymore. Nobody cares. Their name is rotten.

Now it stands to reason that someday we're all going to die. We saw that last week when we hit the wintertime, and last week I gave you Psalms 90, "we spend our days as a tale that is told," and that'll either be in your case or my case, a good tale or a bad tale. When we talk about a guy like Joseph Stalin, never good. Nobody will ever think much of Lee Harvey Oswald, Benedict Arnold. Nobody today will have anything good to say about him. If you're related to John Wilkes Booth, you probably couldn't get anywhere anyplace if they know who you're related to. There are tales that are told down through history about those guys and many, many more like them, and over the next 200 years, people will talk about and be taught about these guys and a thousand more just like them as wicked men, just as we are today. There's no day honoring them. There's no memorials.

I remember in the first Gulf War when Saddam Hussein was the leader of Iraq, and he had statues of himself everywhere, and everybody had to pay. His picture was in every place in that city, and when he finally overthrew Baghdad and the place went down, you know what? You can see pictures on CNN and the news where they were hooking up chains to those big bronze statues, and they were poking them over. They were throwing his pictures in, burning them in mass fires. Over there today, you couldn't find any resemblance to Saddam Hussein. He's gone. He's gone, and that's the way it goes. No reference to him, no reference of anything about him.

Then there are some real Christians that real Christians will never forget. I like to read stories about great Christians, especially when they die and the impact. I was reading years ago, I read it every once in a while, about the death of Billy Sunday. He died in 1935. Billy Sunday was probably the last great evangelist that ever shook this country. Everybody else, you know, after that, there were some good ones, but he was something else. When he died in 1935, he laid in state in Madison Square Garden in New York City. Two million people filed by in a two-day time while his body lay in state. A New York Times reporter, I can't remember his name right now, but he covered his death, and he said in his account that he stood there for two days as two million people filed by, person after person, and he said almost everybody that went by said to the person in front of them or the person behind them or said to themselves, "My life would not be where it is today if it wasn't for that man's preaching." What a tremendous name to have. Two million people, and probably another 10 million that didn't go by, that had their lives changed because of the life of one man.

I think of J. Frank Norris, the Texas Tornado. I think of how he took a stand against the Southern Baptist Convention, broke out, and I'm telling you, I know you don't get it, I know you don't understand it, I know you take it all for granted, but the reason why you're not speaking in tongues this morning, and the reason why you're not messed up in an NIV or an ASV, or the reason why you're not some neo-evangelical church, and I'm not wearing a robe and my hair

slicked back with one of the mics that come around the side of my mouth, is because of J. Frank Norris. He held the line with that book and what that book says and gave birth to the fundamental movement. It's dead now, except for a few people are holding the line, but he did it.

I remember about three years ago, my father in the Lord, most of you know Mel Shabaka. Jean Shabaka was here just a couple of weeks ago. He died, and we went to the funeral in Canton. There must have been 600 guys there, 600 guys that old Mel had put into ministry either directly or indirectly. Probably another 20,000 out there that didn't come to the funeral. Jean said she got telegrams and letters from people all over the world. His life impacted for two days. For two solid days, us guys sat around at tables and receptions, and we just talked and talked and talked way into the wee hours in the morning about what Mel meant to us, about his ministry, and how he changed every one of our lives.

Now, when your tale is told, when my tale is told, the Bible says in Psalms 90, "we spend our days as a tale that is told." We live our life, we go through it, and when we die, people sit around and talk about the impact that we had in our life, good or bad, a blessed name or a rotten name. When our tale is told, what will be said about us? Will they sit around and complain about the fact that we still owe him a lot of money? Will we talk about, and boy, I've heard that as well, "He ripped me off in every business deal I ever had. He never paid his debts. He was a drug addict or he was an alcoholic."

We had a lady in our church one time, and I worked with her, a couple other girls too. I can't remember, oh, Mary, what's her name? I don't remember her last name. I don't remember her first name. Thank you, you did. She came here, and I don't remember how she came here, but she came here, and this was one of the most wicked, worthless women I ever met in my life. She had an ulterior motive for everything that she did, and I'll tell you, she was out to get everything from everybody she could. We gave her a chance, and I remember we sat right there and talked to her that third night Bible study. She got mad, stepped up, walked out of this church, flipped her nose up in the air, and was gone and never came back. All we tried to do was get her to see that, you know what, we don't operate that way here. This was a wicked woman. She got sick about a year later and died, and she's on her death bed, and the hospitalist is calling her family, and she's on life support. They called her son and her daughter and said, "Your mom's dying. We need to have you come down." The son said, and I quote, "Well, don't let her die till I get there. I want to be the one who pulls the plug out of her life support system." See what a name, what a mother. "The memory of the just is blessed: but her name's a little wicked shall rot." That's a terrible, tragic thing, but it happens a million times a year because of the fact that people don't do what God wants them to do.

Proverbs 22:1

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

A good name, a name that carries with it the blessings of God, a name that carries with it all that God has done in your life that other people see. Listen, when people hear your name and know

you're a Christian, they automatically think of you in a context of how you live your life as a Christian. They simply spell your name by the way you live your life: rotten or blessed.

Romans 14:7

For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

There's always somebody watching your life. So I want you to understand today about blessings. You don't get blessed just because you're a Christian, so God has to bless you. Blessings are based on what you give to God, not what God gives to you. You see many people out there who never get a thing from God. They struggle everything with God. It's because generally, when you look at their life, they've never done anything for God. They're like Cain. They want the blessings of God, but they didn't want to do the right things to get that blessing, so they get mad at God, they get mad at Abel, and that's where it loads, and that's how it happens.

The blessings of God come from you ministering to others. When you minister to others, you give to them, and in giving to them, you get blessed. But when you start ministering to the Lord and giving Him what He needs, meeting His need, that's where the blessings come. God will bless you, and His hand will be upon you, and everything you do in life.

Psalms 1:1-3

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

That's the blessings of God based on your relationship with Him because in Christ Jesus is all the blessings of God. Let's pray.