

Proverbs 5:20-23

March 24, 2024

Well, if you have your Bibles, I want to invite you to turn to the book of Proverbs today. As you should be well aware of, hopefully not sick of, we have been coming through the book of Proverbs verse by verse. We're still not really into the Proverbs yet because that doesn't start until chapter 8, but all of the first seven chapters are basically an introduction telling us that we, as God's Son, have to get wisdom, discretion, and understanding before we can even get anything out of the rest of the book. So it's been a good study for me. I've certainly enjoyed it.

Last week we saw in chapter 5, we were in verses 15 through 19, we saw the key to keeping the first love of your life. The first love of your life is going to be your relationship with the Word of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. We talked about, if you remember, how it laid out the concept of a well. We know now that is your personal responsibility and your personal relationship that you have with the Lord, what you and God have going together that's just between you and Him.

We talked about the concept of the water of the well going into a cistern. A cistern, we told you last week, is a place that you store water. So the water now is stored up. It's a picture of you getting the Word of God and keeping it and holding on to it for the times in your life that it becomes those dry spots in life that you need to have what God has for you.

Then it talked about the concept of fountains of spiritual truth bursting forth. We talked about how that's a picture of the water you have in your life and your relationship and your marriage going out into the fountains with young people in your own life, your family, and families ministering together and coming forth out of your family.

Then it laid out the concept of running water. We talked about how that's a picture of never getting stagnant in your life. Stagnant water always turns into a cesspool, a very bad, you know, breeds all kinds of diseases and all kinds of problems, just like a Christian's life. Flowing water is the cleanest, purest water that you get. Believe it or not, when water flows down through a brook up in Colorado or Montana or Wyoming, wherever you go up in the mountains, it's actually the rocks that purify the water to keep it from getting all the stuff in it. How true that is in your life and my life as the water of the Word of God in your life and the rock of God in your life, purifying everything that you get. So we talked about all that.

We also in that passage, we got the great truth of how God takes care of us, how He takes care of our families, how all that we have and all that we do, that God always has a hand in our life. I think the hand of God in our life and I recognize it and being thankful for Him and all that He does in our lives is probably one of the most neglected things in our life. We talked last week how that God, where He brought us all from, the people that He's put in your life, the church that He's given you, the Word of God that He's provided for you, all of the friends that you have that will stay with you and go through things with you that the world would never do. God has put all these in our life to help us get us where we're at today.

I. Israel as God's Son

Now we've been talking about this doctrinally and we've been laying this out, how it's all a picture of how it applies to the nation of Israel. I told you, when you study the nation of Israel and you watch how, go through those five stages of the formulation, the calling out, and all of the things that God has done with them, you can see the hand of God in everything that they did. Wherever they went, God was with them. I think it's a great example that is an encouragement to us under the concept of God's Son.

Now I know that Israel is God's Son as a corporate nation. I know that. I know there were no individual sons of God in the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. Exodus 4 makes it very clear that Israel as a nation, a corporate nation, was likened to God's Son. But you and I in the New Testament, because of the spiritual new birth and the kingdom of God that you and I were born into, there's the kingdom of heaven, we know that we are God's Son. We are as individuals the sons of God. We've talked about it on a Thursday night as we have come through those seven pillars and all the things that they did.

When I look at Israel and all that God did for them, it's always been an encouragement to me. I look in the book of Exodus and I see how Israel was floundering down in Egypt. What a picture that is. Egypt's a type of the world. What a picture that is of how that you and I struggled before we were shaded with the world. How the world, like they did in Israel, had put us under bondage. That we struggled with everything that went on in our lives and how God heard our cry.

How God, with the nation of Israel, He sent them a deliverer, Moses. Moses is one of the greatest types of Christ anywhere in the Bible. He sent them a deliverer and He brought them out of Egypt by the blood put on the door, a picture of the day that you and I got saved. Just like after they went out of Egypt through the blood and God took them out of Egypt, they go into the wilderness of sin. It's a picture of your life and my life after we're saved. The wilderness of sin is a picture of the old world system that you have to go through in life now, but there's absolutely nothing there for you. The water was bitter. The sun was hot. They're in an arid desert where there's no rain. It was terrible. They didn't have any food. It's such a picture of you and I after we get saved. This old world will always be at an adversity to us.

But what did God do? He did the same thing with them as He did with us. He brought down the manna from heaven, a picture of the Word of God in your life. He supernaturally fed them in a wilderness journey, just like in our wilderness journey, He supernaturally feeds us with the Word of God. When they didn't have any water, He brought water out of the rock. The rock is a picture of the Word of God and He gave that water to them supernaturally. All through that journey through the wilderness, it's such a picture of what God did for Israel as God's son, but boy, it's also a picture of what God did for me. It's a picture of what God did for all of us.

Every step of the way God was with them and led them. He led them by a pillar of fire at night. He led them by a cloud of smoke during the day. When they traveled, the Ark of the Covenant, now the Ark's a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, and when that Ark of the Covenant, whenever they moved, the Ark was always out in front. The whole nation of Israel followed that Ark wherever God led them to go. That's a picture of your life and my life being following the Lord Jesus Christ wherever He wants us to go. All the parallels, they're so unbelievable.

God's hand of protection in their life. They journeyed for 40 years. They go through everything. A couple of, 13 nights ago we talked about when we studied the pillar. One of the seven pillars was the nation of Israel. We saw the many ways that God likens His relationship to the nation of Israel. We saw, remember I took you in Matthew 21 where you had the story of the householder and I showed you how that it was a picture of what God had done with Israel. The Bible says the householder, who's a picture of God, established a vineyard. That's the nation of Israel. Then He goes on in that parable and He tells us that God took that vineyard. He hedged it round about. He dugged a winepress and He built a tower. Now I don't have time to go into all three of those today, but I'll tell you what those three things represent. They represent God's protection for the nation of Israel. He just didn't bring them out and establish them and let them fend for themselves. No, He brought them out to establish them for a purpose and then He gave them everything they needed to protect them, just like He has done for you and me.

God protecting Israel as she grew. Isaiah 53:2 is another great picture.

Isaiah 53:2

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

Now I understand it prophetically that's talking about Christ, but historically that's talking about the nation of Israel. A plant growing up tender can be killed by the sun, killed by the drought, has to have enough sunlight, has to have enough water, has to have everything to grow properly. God was likening the nation of Israel to that tender plant and God was giving them everything they needed in the right proportion to make sure they grew the way God wanted them to grow. All through the Old Testament you find in God dealing with Israel you'll find the phrase "and his tender mercies." That's one of the most beautiful illustrations in the Bible wherever you find it. God's tender mercies toward the nation of Israel.

Deuteronomy 32:11

As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:

It's a picture of God as a mother eagle looking over her baby eagles, the nation of Israel. We saw a couple of Thursday nights ago, Israel is God's wife, and I gave you all of the verses that show how God as a faithful husband, as a loving husband, meets every need of Israel. Yet when it comes to the New Testament and us as God's people, the great thing about all of those analogies is that we can apply every one of them spiritually to our lives. It just wasn't about the nation of Israel.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 10:6 that all the things that happened to the nation of Israel, all the things that God brought them through, all the struggles they had, everything that they went through, tells us in that great chapter that they were for our own samples and for our examples and for our admonition. We're to learn from them and you can look back and you can see God's hand in protection in the nation of Israel and yet you can apply those things to your own life.

The Bible says that every hair on your head is numbered. God has an easier time counting it on some of us than He does others, but every hair on your head is numbered. The Bible says that not a sparrow falls to the ground that God doesn't know about it and see it, and His love for us is an everlasting love that will endure all things.

II. The Love of Christ

I've told you many times that the book of Song of Solomon is probably for me as a Christian, and a lot of this today I'm going to talk about, I hope it impacts your life, but it was very clear to me as I was preparing this this week that I needed this message much more probably than anybody here. If it gets into your life and does something for you, I'm glad, but you're going to find much of this is directed to me. Much of this is about what I need to do and keep myself on track.

But the book of Song of Solomon, no book lays out how much Christ loves me more than the book of Song of Solomon. We talk about the love of Christ, Christians talk about it all the time, but I'll be honest with you, very few Christians really understand the true love that God has for us. You know why that is? Because they don't understand that book of Song of Solomon. We see it all the time. We see that and we get caught up in the love of God, and that's such a used talking point today. We think God loves everything. We think Christ is in everything.

I've told you this before, when you think about Christ, you realize that the only thing Christ cares about and the only thing Christ worries about and the only thing Christ wants to have anything to do with is you and me. You see a guy out there that makes the touchdown and he throws the ball down and he gets on his knees and he thanks God. Do you think God cares about a touchdown? Do you think God cares about what really goes on in this world? Listen to me, folks. God cares about one thing. Christ cares about one thing. All Christ wants to do all day long, 24/7, is one thing. He isn't worried about this. He doesn't worry about that. He's not worried about the United Nations. He's not worried about the Ukraine. He's not worried about the economic disasters. He's not worried about who's president, who's not president. He's worried about one thing and one thing only: having a relationship with you and me. It's all He wants. It's all He wants.

The reason why so many of God's people don't understand that is they don't understand the book of Song of Solomon. None of them. The book of Song of Solomon tells me how God looks at me so I can understand it, because one of the biggest problems Christians have today, and I deal with it all the time, especially young Christians. Some older Christians have a problem too when they don't grow the way they should, but the biggest problem God's people have today is they don't really see themselves the way God sees them. They really don't know who they are in Christ. The only way you're going to really understand that is to understand when God looks at you what He thinks. The only way you're going to know that is that you realize that God's focus is not on this over here or world events over here or world stuff like that. You say, "What about Israel?" That's God dealing with Israel. That's His side of the fence. That's His wife. Christ's not dealing with Israel. God's dealing with Israel. Christ is dealing with you and me. That's all He wants.

That great book not only tells me of the shout of God, how He loves me, but it's very clear of how I should love Him back. I want to tell you, this is a sad message today. It is. It's a sad message. It really is.

III. The Consuming Nature of First Love

Hey, you remember how it was when you found that really special person in your life? How at some point in your life you found that person that you either wound up marrying or at that point you thought you were going to marry. Remember how it was, or even how it is today? That person was all you could think about. Other things that were important got put aside.

When you were a teenager growing up and you had your first love, you didn't eat much. Your mom and dad would say, "Are you sick? You're not eating your dinner." "Oh, I'm fine." You were sick all right. You were love sick. Remember how it was? Other things got put on the back burner. You found now the love of your life. Before, you used to run out and play ball with the guys. Now they call you up. "No, I got to go over to so-and-so's house." "Come on, man. We're going to play some ball." "No, no. I got to go do something else." Remember? Sure you do. You used to hang out with the guys or used to hang out with the girls, and now you don't hang out with them anymore. You're hanging out with that special person in your life. You talk all day on the phone if you can. You text all day on the phone if you can.

This was before they had a family plan with their phones, and I know why they did the family plan, because they realized that people in love just make phone calls all day long. I had one kid one time, his dad brought him into me years ago. He was so upset. His son had gotten this girlfriend. She was a nice gal. He was a nice kid. But you know how it is when love bites you. The phone bill was \$600 with his phone. Hey, don't laugh. I've seen people at the end of the month, 1,000 texts in a month. Now you're not eating. You figure it out. I don't know, you're either not eating or not going to the bathroom. I don't know what you're doing. Oh boy. Love for sale. When love's in the air, man, you remember you just wanted to spend every day together, every hour, every minute. That relationship that you had been always waiting for has finally arrived and it absolutely consumes you. I see it all the time. I've seen it all my life.

Now let me ask you something. Imagine for a moment of time and ponder for a moment: Why have you never had that type of total consuming with the Lord Jesus Christ in your life? Why is it that somebody in a physical form can captivate you and take you off this planet and get you off the ground and your head in the clouds somewhere? But the One who came down and died for you, who every day of your life has one desire, and that is, and His phone bill don't cost anything, and He doesn't do the texts, He just wants to spend every waking moment with you. I got a sad story to tell you today. I do.

You know, the Bible is many things. The Bible is a great history book. All history of the world revolves around the Bible as far as I'm concerned. The Bible is a great book that shows you why we believe what we believe. The Bible is a great book on prophecy, shows you what is going to come down the line someplace. The Bible is a great book to show you how you can get rid of your sin and come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. But you know, for you and

me who are saved, and I love the Bible for history because I love history. I love the Bible for what Christ is coming back because I want Him to come back. But you know, the greatest thing for you and for me after we're saved that the Bible represents, the Bible represents 66 love letters that God wrote you. I can't imagine that God's people who took God's salvation, many of them will wind up at the rapture and have never read those love letters one time. It's a sad message I must bring to you today. I'm not preaching this to you. I'm preaching this to me.

Last week we saw in chapter 5, verse 17, where it was talking about the things that God gave us and it said, "Let them only be thy own." The concept of your heart being the jewelry box that every woman has in her bedroom where she puts all of the special things that the man that she loves or the person that she loves puts those things, gave her, or her mother or her father or somebody in her life, and she keeps them there because she goes there and she wants all of those special memories in one place. Well, for you and for me as the child of God, that jewelry box should be our heart. There we'll find the things that He and He alone gave me and you that are the things that I cherish and you cherish, and every one of them is so special. You ponder them. You look at them. You think about where you were in life when He gave you exactly that that you needed, the special things that God gives me and God gives you through His Son till we all get together again.

IV. The Sadness of Unrequited Love

Now today I want to read for you Proverbs 5:20-23. By my way of thinking, based on chapter 5 and what we've seen so far, I think this is one of the saddest messages in all of the Bible. I'm not going to preach this to you today. I'm really not. This is not a message that you preach. This is one of the saddest things in all of the Bible.

You know, in the Bible there's some really sad things that move me when I read them. I think about Zechariah 13:6 where one of the great verses that it talks about the Lord Jesus Christ and somebody comes up to Him and he says, "How'd you get the wounds in your hands and your feet?" Instead of saying, "Well, the enemies, you know, the world, this or that did this to me," you know what He says? He says, "I was wounded in the house of my friends." That's sad. Have you ever had your friends hurt you? Someone that you did everything for and you did everything there and you were always there and you gave of your time, you gave of your life, you invested in them and all of those things, and they turn around and they do you wrong and they hurt you? You know how that feels.

Now let me just clarify it, we deserve that because we're all sinners and I'm sure I've hurt people just like people have hurt me. I'm not feeling sorry for myself in that statement. I expect it. But not the Lord. Not the Lord. If anybody had a reason to stand there and have their heart broken, because He came to the nation of Israel, He came into His own and His own received Him not. He gave them everything that I already mentioned to you, and then He stands there with wounds in His hands and His feet and somebody says, "Lord, how'd you get those?" And He simply looks and says, "I was wounded in the house of my friends." There's some sad things in the Bible. There's some sad things in the Bible.

One who died for us, who loved us, who waits every day when you get up, when I get up, for the first words out of our mouth to start that conversation all day long, and we just, we don't. It's a sad thing. It's a sad thing.

I think sometimes down here God watches us saying, "Well, looking at that new car we got or that new truck, whatever it is, new boat, new whatever it is," and we say, "Man, I love that. I love that." God's standing up there just shaking His head and said, "What did that truck ever do for you? What did that house ever do for you?" You'll love this dress and then you're going to go around asking your husband if it makes you look fat and you're going to cause him to stumble and lie. The Word of God covers a mile or two.

Now look at Proverbs 5 here for a few moments. Let's look at verses 20-23. I think this is just really sad.

Proverbs 5:20-23

20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

22 His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.

23 He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

Now Father, I need this today, probably more than anybody, but I know that there's the reality of that is there's others here that need it too. But Lord, I need to say some things today and I don't want anybody here to thinking that I'm saying it to them. I'm saying it to me. If the Holy Spirit of God takes it and puts it on them, then that's okay with me, but that's not what I'm looking for today. I'm looking for a reevaluation of this great chapter. You know, the sad part of this, Lord, or the good part or the bad part, however you want to look at it, is that these people only have to hear this message once. I've been through it 50 times this week, and every time, Lord, it reaffirmed in my own heart, in my own life, Lord, that some things that we all need to look at, but I need to look at. So help us today, Lord. We give it to you. We love you. We know that you love us. Help us. Help me never to forget all that you've done for me, and I can't speak that for anybody else, but I can speak it for me. We'll thank you and praise in Jesus' name for sake we ask it. Amen.

Now look at verse 20. Doesn't that just break your heart?

Proverbs 5:20

And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

I mean, God's asking a question. He is saying here, after all I've done for you, after all God has done for me, for us, after all God has given me, us, all that He did to love us, to die for us, how He nurtured me, how He protected me, how He cared for me. 1 Peter 5:7, "Casting all your care

upon him; for he careth for you." How He orchestrated in our lives every circumstance to get me, us, you to Him. He's saying, "Why?" It's a question. Why? He did all that so we could love us and take care of us the rest of our lives. He did that because He wanted to be with us in an intimate way. He wanted to be the first love of our life. He wanted to be faithful to us and wanted us to be faithful to Him. Yet we'll so easily take all His goodness and enjoy all His blessings, lavish in His salvation, and just trade Him then for what we really want to do without Him being in our life. It's a sad thing today.

Listen, it broke God's heart. It broke God's heart. If you don't know this, then you're getting in the back door the wrong way. It broke God's heart to separate Himself from His Son for you and for me. The Bible says that Christ was the apple of God's eye. He said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." He said He was one like to grow up before me like a tender plant prophetically. For Him to take His Son and allow the world to do to His Son what they did, to make fun of Him, to make sport of Him, to smack Him in the face, to rip out His beard by the handful, to whip Him and to put a 300-pound cross on His back and spit on Him and laugh at Him. I guarantee you, probably by the time when they hung Him on that cross and they're laughing and saying, "If thou be the Son of God, come on down," and they're shooting the dice for His clothes, God watching that, it broke God's heart. It's the day that God looked over on the right hand of the throne and His Son was gone. In my own mind, and the way I see this, and the way I want to see this, I believe that when that Roman soldier who wanted to show off with his buddies because he wanted to get this over because he probably had a hot date down in the city someplace, picked up that spear and rammed it into His side, I think God's hand was raised to send down a legion of angels that would have wiped off the face of this planet for what they did to His Son. But as God's hand went up, God remembered Bob Alexander would have went to hell for the rest of his life. Forget you, you got to claim that for yourself. But He saw me in my sin without a Savior, and that is the only thing in my mind that stopped God's hand from shutting it down. If you can't claim that for yourself, you're in a sorry state this morning.

I guarantee you, Easter next week is Easter. Yeah, that's what we do. We have one day a year that we have a day we talk about Him dying for us. One day. Isn't that big of us? One day we'll stop our busy schedules for a while. One day we'll put aside for a while. One day of our life a year we'll go in there and we'll reflect on what He did for us and then walk out the door and go right back to doing what we were doing before and forget about it. That's modern-day Christianity. I guarantee you it breaks God's heart when I as a child of God, when we as God's people, will ravish ourselves with the things of this world, but will never ravish ourselves with the things of God. The Laodicean church in Revelation 3 has been called the church that made God sick, and I understand that concept, but I want to add to that, the Laodicean church, our church age, is also the church that breaks God's heart.

I talked last week about seeing things come full circle in life and understanding better why things are the way they are, why people are the way they are. In my 63 years of walking this planet, over 40 of them preaching the gospel, if I've learned anything about God's people over the years, it's the fact that some of them are the most selfish, self-centered folks on planet Earth. If I've learned anything, it's that God's people, some of them can be the most thankless people on this

planet. If I've learned anything, God's people, some of them can be the most unforgiving people on this planet. Oh, they will take God's forgiveness for themselves and their sins, but they'll never give that same grace to anybody else.

V. Three Infirmities

You know, in the Bible, the word infirmity is a word that says there's something wrong with us spiritually. When you go to the hospital in the military or the Navy anyhow, they call it the infirmary. The word infirmity in the Bible is a problem that we have, and the Bible lists three main infirmities that I have and that you have. We all have them, and these infirmities will always lead us to take God's salvation. Yes, we'll get saved, but then we'll say, "I'll take your salvation, but I'll reject Him when it comes to changing my life," and then I'll embrace the bosom of the strange woman.

You know, when He asked today, "Why would you do that, Bob? Why would you do that?" You know, the bosom is a reference to the heart. Old Testament saints went to where Abraham's, what Psalm 16 says, it's in the heart of the earth. He's saying, "Bob, after all I've done for you, Bob, after all I've given you, I've orchestrated everything in your life, I've died, I died for you, I mean, all the stuff, why? Why after everything I've done for you, why would you take your love and take it to the heart of a strange woman?" God in verse 20, He's asking that question. He says, "Why would you do that, Bob? After all I've done for you, how could you, Bob? Why would you? Why would you leave me for her, the strange woman who pretends to love me but really doesn't?"

You know, in the Old Testament with Israel as God's wife, that was the main message of the prophets. Did you ever read it? That was the message that Ezekiel preached. That was a message that Jeremiah preached. That was a message that Hosea and Isaiah preached, all of them. When we get into the New Testament where we are the bride of Christ, that's the message that needs to be preached today.

Now these three infirmities that man has are the key reason why we have issues and we leave our first love. Notice I didn't say we lose it, I said we leave it. Now I'm not going to get into these in heavy today, but the first one's found in Romans 8:26, and that's the one, our first infirmity, the Bible says we don't know how to pray right.

Romans 8:26-29

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

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

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

In any relationship, whether it's on this planet or whether it's with you and God, the first breakdown that always leads to different problems or other problems is the problem of communication. Many parents, many marriages today don't never even get there to start with. They have no clue. It's such a mess today and things that go on that they don't even have, they get married without any communication. But the first breakdown in any relationship is going to be its communication. Most of God's people never have learned how to pray. You see, communication with God is simple. When we read the Bible, God speaks to us. But when we pray within the Bible structure, then we talk with Him and we take prayers and we offer Him to God, but they're always based on the structure of the principles that guide us what we say. But you see, we've lost that today. I'm not sure that we have ever even had it.

You see, today prayer for us is an order form. Today prayer for us is a 911 call. When the doctor comes in and gives us a bad report, then we take it that we call God. You see, when all the things that go wrong in our life, that's when we get a hold of God. We use prayer to order things from God, to tell God what we want. We never use it to see what God really wants for us. We pray, "Oh God, change my circumstances." We never pray, "God, change my life through these circumstances." This is sad. I'd say the number one issue today is we simply biblically don't know how to pray according to Romans 8:26.

Second infirmity, and I said I'm not preaching on these today, I got a ways to go here and some things to say. Romans 6:19, we are flesh.

Romans 6:19

I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

Now we know that when you got saved, you now have an old nature and a new nature. That old nature is your flesh. Romans chapter 7, Paul had it too. He talked about it. He simply said, "You know what? The things that I want to do that are right, I don't do. And the things that are the wrong things that I shouldn't do, I do do." He says, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He struggled with it too. It's simply yielding your members, the body God gave you, to serve Him. My arms, my legs, my hands, the mind God gave me, and taking all of that and simply making them the servants of uncleanness. Now this is not our message today, but the Bible shows you very clearly the process. I've taught it over and over again in different ways, in different areas, the path, the process of overcoming the flesh, the process to now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness, not the things of this world.

Third infirmity, Psalm 77:10, and this is we forget God and what He's done for us.

Psalms 77:10-12

10 And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.

11 I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

12 I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

Now this one's a killer. It's simply forgetting and not remembering all that God has done for you. It can happen to all of us. Happens to me. We just get so caught up in the other things, and not all of them are bad, and we lose our perspective. We lose our focus. We lose the landmarks of what God has done for us. Then we get to that mode where we become complacent. We become lethargic. We become unthankful. We become selfish. We become self-centered. Then our life is all about our problems. Our life is all about what we want to do. It's all about all the busyness that we have, and whatever scraps we have left over, we throw to God like we do when we feed our dog.

He says in verse 10, "I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High." Do you remember the time, the way it was before you got saved? Remember the emptiness of that life? Remember the times you went to bed and just left the swing in this party you ever was at, but you were empty inside? You remember the times when you thought you were having fun, but when you got alone, there wasn't any fun to it? You looked down deep inside you and you tried to fill that emptiness with all the booze and all the drugs and all the parties and all the wild living you can, and after you got yourself filled up to the brim, you were still as empty as you were before. Remember those days? Remember the days before God came down to your life and made the difference, when He was watching you, when He was moving the things in your life to get you to a place where you could hear the gospel, when you and I didn't even know it?

Verse 11 says, "I will remember the works of the Lord." Now remember the day God put somebody in your life to win you to Christ. The work of God getting you His salvation from the cross of Calvary where He died for you to the day you got saved. You see, it's a personal thing. When Christ died on the cross, He cried out, "It is finished." What was finished was the work for you and for me to get our sins forgiven. So the rest of time down through history, the Holy Spirit of God who shows up in Acts chapter 1, the Word of God which shows up by 90 AD, and the church now in effect in Acts chapter 12 and 13, all begin to work together that every man and every woman gets to hear the message that you don't have to be empty on the inside. There's a bright spot at the end of that tunnel if you want to go that way and trust the Lord Jesus Christ. The world may be in darkness, but God will bring you into the light if you want to, the day God saved you.

Then He says in verse 12, "I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings." Now you see that's you thinking about what God has done and then telling other people about it. You know what's wrong with God's people today? 99 percent of them, we go through life as Christians, and you hear this all the time, we go through life as Christians telling other people what God will do for them, but the real message is not just what God will do for them, but the real message is what God has done for you. You know why God's people don't take that form? Because they have nothing to talk about. They've lost their families. Many of them have had more problems than

unsaved people have. How do you tell, how do you help some, how do you help some young family when struggling with their kids when your kids won't even come to church? You see, you get to the point in our lives, we get to the point where we don't have nothing to say. We want to, we can only go and tell people, "Well, God will do this for you. God will do this for you. Or you're having problems here, God will do this for you." "Didn't work for me, but it'll work for you." How ludicrous that is. You know why those things happen? Because we forget. We've forgotten. We forget what God has done for us. We get so busy with all the things that we get going on and do that we just forget the fact that all of these things God orchestrated in our lives.

I'm going to be honest with you, I can't remember these things in my life and not honestly give God everything in my life. You can't. You tell me how you can really understand all of what I just said here in these things and then still keep your life for yourself. Give God the leftovers. Give Him the scraps. Fill your life up with all you want to do. If there's any time left, "Well, I'll give God this or give God that," as long as I get what I need, as long as I want to do what I want to do, I'll work God in somewhere. That's what we do.

VI. The Consequences of Neglect

Look at Proverbs 5:21.

Proverbs 5:21

For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

This is a sad message, man. Now that's talking to God's watching us and what we do with what He's given us, and He's pondering why. This is the verse we started out with. Why? Why would you? Why would you take the love that I've given you and why would you give it, ravish it with a strange woman? It's not talking about a literal woman. It's talking about what this world has to offer. That's God watching us and what we do with what He's given us and then pondering, thinking shame to Himself, "Why don't you love me back the same way I love you, Bob? Why don't you do that?"

I've seen Christians all my life, not necessarily new baby Christians because they're learning the process, older Christians, the ones that have been around long enough now that you've gotten stagnant. Your life has come pretty much come full circle and it's very obvious where the disasters are and it's very obvious that something's wrong someplace. Your life now has come full circle and you get frustrated. You get emotionally all caught up with the thing. You know why? Because at the end of the day, the reality has set in.

I've seen Christians all my life stop growing after they got saved, go on 20, 30 years and yet just keep their life for themselves. Or they got so many problems in their family or problems in their marriage or problems in all of this stuff because they haven't done what they needed to do that they can't ever get to God. If they'll do anything for God, it's when it's convenient for them. They'll give to God when it's in their time frame, the scraps of life that are useless and worthless, the leftovers. They'll go to church on Sunday morning when they're not too tired. They'll come on Thursday night if there's not a ball game on. It's not that they're not saved. It's the fact that

they're truly saved. They've taken God's salvation, but they won't want to be bothered with the service after the salvation.

We got, I hate when this happens, it happens all the time in businesses. We got AT&T internet. They must have called us a hundred thousand times wanting to sell us AT&T. I just got it, keep calling me. They called me a thousand times. They told me how much faster it is. We had AT&T. What do we get? We got Comcast. We had AT&T. How much faster it is, how much better it is, how that AT&T, you know, is worthless, it's slow, it's like a dinosaur. "Get this, get this, get that, get this." They pushed it, pushed it, pushed it, pushed it, pushed it. They even said, "You know what? If you'll do it, we'll give you this, we'll give you that, we'll give you this over here, we'll give you free movie." I don't want the movie. "We'll give you this, we'll give you that." I said, "I just, if you're going to do it, just come and do it. You're going to save me a lot of money on my monthly bill. That's good. Come in and get it done." They put a stupid cable in my yard. It's been there now for four or five months. Squirrels are chewing on it. Dogs love it. God only knows when summertime comes and I got to cut the grass, how many times I'm going to run over that sucker. So we called them, "When you going to bury your cable?" Now look, they pushed us to get it done, but it's four months, five months later, they hadn't even turned in a work order yet. They said, "Who are you?"

My point is this: it's the service after the sale that counts. Are you with me on that? Are you sure? Because you ain't going to like this. Are you sure? Well, when it comes to God, it's the service after the salvation that counts. Told you you wouldn't like it. People will get saved, take God's salvation, and keep one thing that God saved them for and needs their life to be a help, and just keep it to themselves. Nothing for God will ever be a priority. But oh brother, when we want to go here, we want to go here, we're going to do that, boy, there's the priority. This is a sad chapter. This passage shows how after God and all that He does for me, just like He did for Israel, He sits there and ponders why I would do Him the way I do.

Now that's got to break God's heart. Nobody likes rejection. Nobody does. I don't. You know, you pour your life into somebody, you give them this, you give them that, you help them, you help do everything they were in their life, and you know they turn and in one split second they get a better deal and they're gone. They don't even say thank you. They don't even say, "I'm leaving, I'm going." They're just out of here. Sometimes it's deception. They're just gone. All those things and you sit there and you shake your head and you said, "What in the world just happened?" Now I got to preface or not preface, but I got to put a postscript on that. See, I deserve that because I'm a sinner just like they are. I've probably done the same thing to other people. So I'm not saying that to feel sorry for myself or to say that because, "Oh, poor," you know, that's the way it is. I'm just telling you this, I can understand you're doing it to me because I get the chance, I'll do it to you. But God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the sinless One who gave up everything for me, and I'll give up only what I don't want and let Him have the rest, the leftovers of life.

Back in Luke 13:34, it's very clear that Israel had broken God's heart. He's up there overlooking the city of Jerusalem one night and He's heartbroken over the indifference of the nation of Israel to Him coming of their Messiah. He says, "O Jerusalem, O Jerusalem, thou that killest the

prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Old Jerusalem, God has over you like a mother hen taking care of you and all that you've done. Old Jerusalem, old Jerusalem, broke His heart. Yet in spite of that, He went on to the cross. He went on to the cross for them as a nation, but also for you and for me as His bride. Don't ever think for a moment of time that we can't break His heart. We know that He got hungry when He was here. He wept when Lazarus died. He got tired. He fell asleep in the boat. Hebrews 4:15 says that I have a high priest that can be touched with my infirmities. He has feelings just like we have feelings. If He didn't have feelings, then He couldn't love us with the intensity that He loves us. Yet the Bible says He's without sin.

Now look at Proverbs 5:22.

Proverbs 5:22

His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.

Now that's a great verse because it tells me that we get taken in our own iniquity. The Bible says God tempts no man with evil. We get taken on our own iniquity when we don't do what's right. Now that verse tells me as a Christian with life living on planet Earth, I need somebody who knows more about life than I do. You as a pastor, I need people in my life who know some things that I don't know. Most pastors, they want to project that they can handle everything, they know everything, they'll do everything. That ain't me, pal. I know my limitations. There's things that I do well and there's things that I do terribly. But I've been smart enough to learn to find the people around you to do the things that you don't do well and have them do them for you. Delegate it out.

But I understand that we all need somebody in our life who knows more about things than we do. I need somebody like Gary who knows about cars because when my car breaks down, I'm ready to sell it. I have no clue what's wrong with it. I can pop the hood and look under that thing like you do, you know, and I look at that thing and I say to myself, "Well, there's the problem, an engine." I've always loved the guys and marveled at the guys that can, when a woman's stuck along the road, freeway someplace, he walks up there, you know, and he's got the skull in his back pocket and he's got his hat and he's got a greasy old suit out of work and he says, "Well, pop the hood, hon. Pop that thing up and look down in there." And he says, "You got a screwdriver?" She says, "Yes, I do." "Get in that screwdriver." He sticks that screwdriver down there, says, "Try it now," and it starts. I tried that one time, blew that screwdriver in half, burned my hand. I don't know what he touched.

I need somebody in my life who knows more about cars than I do. I need somebody in my life who knows about more appliances when they go bad than I do. I'm the only guy in the world when I lived by myself, my washing machine quit. I called a Maytag repairman because he don't do nothing anyhow. I brought him over there. This was many, many years ago. I paid \$40 to learn on a service call that you got to close the lid before it will start. I need help. I'm embarrassed to tell you this. I need help growing grass. I can't grow grass for the life of me. If I

had to grow grass to go to heaven, I'd burn in hell for all eternity. Every year I put it down. I go to the guy, you know, you always go to the hardware store, True Value, and there's always a guy in a red smock there and he says, "Can I help you?" And I plead my case. I got a yard, it's bare with grass. I'm trying to fix it. I want some grass that when I put it down at two, it'll be up by four. What do I do? I want the fastest grass, the strongest grass that'll outlive two labs running up and down on it and tearing it up. They always give me this. They always walk me back and say, "Well, this here is the best you can put down," and this and that. I buy it. I put it down. It goes nowhere. Birds feast on it.

There are so many things in life that I know absolutely nothing about. I'm lost and I need people who know to help me. Brother, when it comes to life and the issues of life with its pitfalls, its snares, its traps, I need somebody who knows more about life on planet Earth than I do. That's God in this book. He knows all the traps. He's the Ancient of Days. He knows that if I'm left to myself to figure it out in my own stupidity, it'll take me down. I'll get a stronghold in my life. I'll be bound with the cord there that He talks about. Proverbs 5:22 says, "holden with the cords of his sin." Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, "a threefold cord is not quickly broken." We saw the example with Samson where his sin bound him, his sin blinded him, and then his sin ground him. That's me and that's also you. We need somebody in life who knows about more life and the issues of life than we do.

Then He says in Proverbs 5:23, "He shall die without instruction." This is sad, man. Yet I have seen all my life, he shall die without instruction. You know, it's hard to grasp a child of God going through life totally without any of God's instruction in his life because he took salvation, but he or she will just absolutely refuse to give God anything meaningful in their life other than what is convenient in their time frame, rejecting everything that God has done and die without any instructions on life and the issues of life. But I've seen it all the time. I've seen him die as a dope addict all because they wouldn't listen to anybody. I've seen him die as an alcoholic when they're 40 years old, 50 years old, life cut short. I've seen him die because of all of the things that they put in their body. I've seen him die addicted to gambling. I've seen him die addicted to the world that God saved them from. I see it happen all the time.

As the verse says, it simply starts by, "in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray." We just think we know more about life than God does. I have a lot of parents that have teenagers over the years, and when those kids reach a certain age, you know, 16 or 17 years old, they always begin to challenge authority, and that's when you got to, you got to put the pedal to the metal. But I don't know how many times I've heard talking to a teenager where he thought or she thought they knew more about life than mom and dad did, and that is absolutely ridiculously not true. I've seen mom and dad struggle with that. I've seen mom and dads and kids go around and around and around on that where the parent would try to get their kid to understand that the parent, because they are older and been around a little more in life, that they absolutely do know more about life on planet Earth than that 17, 16, 18 year old does. That is true. But let me tell you something, I've seen the parents do the same thing when it comes to the Word of God in the Bible, that they think they know more about life and living their life than God does. That's the

way it works. Sad, isn't it? It simply starts with us taking God's salvation and then forgetting all that He's done for us.

I thought all week long in my own personal life, you know, I think that the saddest thing for me and my own personal relationship with God, after all God has done for me and all God has given me and all God's blessings in my life and God's hand in my life through some of the real stupid things in my life, for God to stand there and shake His head and look at me and say, "Bob, after all I've done for you, after all the plans I had for you." It's like a parent. I don't think any parent raising a child wants that child to grow up to be a drunken bum or a drug addict or a drug dealer. I bet you many of parents have stood there and shook my head and say, "This is not what I had planned for you." My greatest fear is God standing there and looking at me and shaking His head and says, "Bob, that's not what I had planned for you. I orchestrated everything in your life. I gave you everything I had for you to be everything that I wanted you to be. Why, Bob? Why? Why did you ravish the bosom of that strange woman? Why did you take to you the things of the world and give everything I've given you, everything I've created you for, the love to her? Why did you not love me back the same intensity? Why could you not be consumed with me as the same as you're consumed with everything else out there?" That's a tough question to answer. This is a sad sermon. This is a sad message, and I preached this to me today, but it obviously is all true for all of us. But I can't claim this for you. I can't make this mean anything for you. I can only make it mean something for me.

Somebody said one time, "A life with God is endless hope." Boy, that is so true. A life with God is endless hope. It's endless of all that God will do for you, with you, what He wants to give you. It's true that a life with God is endless hope, but it is also true that a life without God is always a hopeless end because it's a dead end street. It leads to nowhere. It leads you down the path to those strange woman and the evil man. It'll put you in that same boat where you'll give all that God has given to you and you'll start ravishing the things of this world instead of ravishing God. It'll go to you that you'll go through all of your life and never have read all 66 love letters that God wrote you. It'll be this, you went through your life and you never detailed out the Song of Solomon like we did a couple years ago in New Year's Eve, and the book's back there and it's a, it ought to be the best seller of all that we have because it's the one book that not only tells you what God wants to, how He wants to look at you and how He wants to love you, but details out how He wants you to love Him.

There comes a time in our lives when we have to face the reality if what we have with God is real. I'm not talking about salvation. I'm talking about the everyday events in your life. Is He the first and foremost thing that we wrap our world around? Is He the first thing in the morning, the last thing at night, and everything in between? That's the key.