

Proverbs 8:7-21

Sunday 7/20/2014

Years ago, I heard preachers say all the time, and I still hear it sometimes, that reading the Bible will solve all of your problems. That is not true. Reading the Bible will not solve your problems, but applying what you read to your life will solve your problems. That is what we need to learn to do.

Around the end of the last century, in 1999, all the Catholics, Protestants, and evangelical churches got together and put forth what came to be called the Catholic-Evangelical Accord. It was a document that they all signed; they met and got together, and it was a document that was a statement on how they would band together to evangelize the world in the third millennium, where we are living right now, in the 2000s.

Among the Christians who took part in that and signed the document was Charles Colson. Most of you older folks know who Charles Colson was. He was an advisor to President Nixon who got caught up in Watergate, spent some time in the federal penitentiary, and became a Christian. After that, he led great Christian revivals and did all kinds of things. Pat Robertson from the 700 Club, most of you know who he is. Bill Bright, who was the head of Campus Crusade. A man by the name of J.I. Packer, who was an Anglican theologian and a Calvinist, was in on it. Billy Graham was part of the program. Dr. Larry Lewis, who I believe is the Southern Baptist Convention's head of Missions, and Jesse Miranda, who was in charge of all the Assemblies of God, and of course, all the head Catholic people were there, and they all got together.

In the document they put out, it talked about five things they wanted to accomplish, and you can Google it; it is on Google search, you can find it. It started out by saying, "We affirm together," and it talked about that. Then it talked about, "We hope together," talking about what they hoped to do. It talked about, "We search together." It talked about, "We contend together," like contending for the faith. And then it talked about, "We witness together."

The whole concept was built around one fundamental aspect, and it was simply that Christianity in the third millennium is to be advanced in many diverse ways. In other words, any way you want it. It did not have one statement in it on the Second Coming of Christ. It did not have one statement in it on hell or the rapture or heaven or the death of Christ. It did not have one statement in it on how to win somebody to Christ. There was no Romans Road; there was not even a Matthew Turnpike. There was nothing in it that laid out anything about salvation or understanding God's wisdom and His Word. Nothing about the fires of hell, nothing about eternal damnation. There was not any verse, like Proverbs 11:30, that I gave you; it was not in there.

In fact, to me, the whole thing was kind of elusive because I wrote my history a little bit, and in the Council of Trent in 1545, the Roman Catholic Church called a council to pronounce 150 anathemas, that is, curses, on Bible-believing Christians. Here we are at the end of the millennium, at the beginning of 2000, and they are all trying to get together when every one of those 150 curses are still on the books as far as the Roman Catholic Church is concerned. One of them was, "If anybody says a sinner was justified by faith alone, let him be accursed." And here

we are all trying to get together. Welcome to the year 2000, the third century, that in my mind will most certainly usher in the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet every Christian evangelical, every one of these guys in America, thought it was a great thing. It was a document on evangelism without the Bible or any reference to the Bible as authoritative final authority, no reference to the blood atonement, but a reference that "you are okay and I am okay," and whatever we believe, let us just take that and through the diversity of our religions, evangelize the world. It was a movement that we see around us today to get rid of salvation as the doctrine of the Bible and make salvation an experience, make salvation a feeling, make salvation an encounter. All of the main Bible doctrines become secondary issues. Now it is diversity. This is what we call today progressive Christianity. That is where you leave the Bible behind. Everybody is okay. Do not fault anybody for what they believe because we all love God, and everybody is working together no matter what it is. This is nothing more than a worldly, Christian, pragmatic approach to the world. The end will always justify the means, and that is where it was.

I. Introduction to Proverbs 8: Wisdom Personified as Christ

We learned last week some great things, and we want to carry it on today. Today we are going to be in Proverbs 8:7-21. To me, and I have said this to you before, Proverbs chapter 8 is probably the deepest chapter in the Bible, depth as far as spiritually concerned. It is an incredible chapter. We talked about it when we went through the seven pillars. I showed you how that when we studied the doctrine of Christ, Proverbs chapter 8 forms the basis and the foundation for that, going way back before Genesis 1. Not today, but you will see it as we come on through this chapter. In this passage, the whole chapter really, it is really about Christ. It is in the figure of wisdom and understanding. What follows here is the layout of understanding and the wisdom of God, which is found only in the person of Christ. This will be our second lesson on Proverbs chapter 8.

Let me read it for you, and then we will pray, and then we will get into it here.

Proverbs 8:7-21

For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.

They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.

Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.

For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.

The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.

By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.

By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.

My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.

I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment:

That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.

Now, Father, help us today to glean from this all that You have for us. There is so much in here, and there is no way that we will get through all of this today. That is not our intent. Our intent is just to walk through verse by verse and to glean the great truths that You have for us. Lord, these are good people. They are here today, most of them, if not all of them, not because they love me or they love this church, though they do. They are here mostly because they love Your Word and they love You. They have a desire to grow and be more like You every day. They are all on different levels. Some move a little faster than others, but inside their heart, Lord, that only You can see, You know that they love You and they love Your Word. It is my job to help them on whatever level, to feed them, to give them, to be there for them, to bring them along in all that You try to do for them. And I thank You for the men and women in this church, the families that we have that will invest their life, that they will go out and they will take in and they will help and they will be there. That no task is too great, no responsibility is too hard, because they understand that at the end of the day, our job is to evangelize the world. And we will thank You and praise You today in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

II. The Plainness and Authority of God's Word (Proverbs 8:7-9)

I am big on breaking things down in the Bible because I am pretty stupid, and I have to kind of get it down where I can grasp it. I broke this section down into seven sections. I know seven in the Bible is the number of perfection. I am not that spiritual; I did not do it on that basis. It just happened to work out that way. But this is a great passage of scripture, and I wanted to break it down so we did not lose anything because there is a ton of good, solid material in here. So let us begin to look at each part of this, and it will look like a natural division, and I think it will kind of help you put it together. The first section we are going to look at is Proverbs chapter 8. We will not get through all of these today, but we will get through some of them. Our first section today will be Proverbs 8:7-9, and here is what it says:

Proverbs 8:7-9

For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.

They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.

If you are paying attention here and keeping score, so to speak, you will notice that again the Holy Spirit of God draws our attention to the word "words." Proverbs 8:8 and the words of God, the plain, simple, understandable words of God. I wrote a book a number of years ago on how to study the Bible, and I showed you that the key to learning the Bible is simply about 15 or 20 basic common words. When you understand what they mean in the Bible, and you always take the definition that the Bible gives them and apply that definition when you read the Bible, it pretty much unlocks the Bible. This will be the sixth time that you have found this here where he talks about words. He did it in Proverbs 1:2, he did it in Proverbs 1:23, he did it again in Proverbs 4:5, and then again in Proverbs 4:20, and then Proverbs 7:1, and then here. So we see that he puts a lot of emphasis on the individual words in the Bible.

A couple of Thursday nights ago, we were talking about the Bible or something, and I talked about the Flesch-Kincaid formula for reading. This is what at one time, I do not know if they still use it or not, but this is what the public school system used to develop the level of skill of the readings of their books. When it was applied to the King James 1611 Authorized Version, it came out that your Bible is written at a fourth and fifth-grade level, and 95% of it is one and two-syllable words. When they put it up against the New King James Bible, which everybody likes to go to today, they found it was a sixth-grade level. When they put it up to the ASV, it was a sixth-grade level also. When they put it to "Good News to Modern Man," it was a seventh-grade level, and when they put it up against the NIV, which everybody wants to go to today, it was an eighth-grade level. It shows you that the simplest book you could ever get your hands on in the form of a Bible is the King James 1611 Authorized Version. God uses plain words to speak to us.

William Tyndale, in 1532, we talked about him a couple of weeks ago, I think it was probably in the same question. He translated the second English translation into English for the common man. When Tyndale was meeting with some of his people and talked about what he wanted to do, they were somewhat in opposition; they did not think he ought to do it. The story goes on to say that he looked out the window and he saw a boy plowing in the field across the way. He looked at all these great learned men and he said, "Men," he said, "someday that plowboy will know more of the scriptures than all of the scholars in England." That was his goal, and he attained that goal because he put out a common Bible for a common man. That Bible was plain. It has always been plain.

The Bible is plain on the fact that there is no diversity on how you go to heaven. You cannot get to heaven by a number of ways. There is only one way. "Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way," the Bible says. You cannot get there by joining a church. If you get to heaven by joining the church in Christ, why did He die? He should have just said, "I am going up to heaven. Join a church." If baptism is what saves you, why did He die on the cross again? Why did it not just say, "Go to church, get baptized, you are in"? Why did He suffer and die on the cross? Because only through the blood of Christ can salvation come to you and me. See how plain that is? Nothing complicated about it.

The Bible never changes to fit society. That is the big movement in progressive Christianity: change the Bible to fit society. So we have all these new translations and all these new things coming out. The Bible never changes; it stands. The Bible is plain. In fact, that is really what is wrong with people with the Bible: it is too plain. It spells out sin just the way it is. We do not want to hear what sin is today. Hell is a plain word, is it not? But we do not like that. So in the new translations, we change it to Hades, kind of a softer approach. Damnation is a plain word; who cannot understand it? But we do not want to talk about that anymore, so we will use the word "condemn," a little softer. Sin is a plain word in the Bible. But we do not want to talk about our sins; we will talk about our shortcomings, our faults. The Bible talks about an unsaved man likened to a dog. I do not mean to be gross here, but a dog always returns to his vomit. All the way through the book of Proverbs and 2 Peter, you find it likened to a man and a woman going back to their sin. But in all the new Bibles, it is "regurgitate." When I grew up, there were drunks. They were drunks, staggering, blind drunks. But you cannot be a drunk anymore; now you are a chronic alcoholic. When I grew up, we had drug heads, dope heads, people who were strung out on drugs. We called it what it was. Now they are substance abusers. See how nice that sounds? You almost want to be one. When I grew up, it was called sexual perversion. Now it is called open-mindedness and progressiveness. When I grew up, homosexuality and lesbianism were what they were. Now it is an alternative lifestyle. The standard teaching today is that God did not destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of the homosexual activity that was going on. No, no, no, that is too plain. No, God now destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because there was a lack of hospitality in that city. So I love it. Next time my wife will not have people over that I want to have, next time your wife will not have people over to cook dinner, the cues are of sodomy. You see the trouble you get in when you just do not leave it plain? It is plain. I do not know what to tell you. That is why the world hates this Bible and has to get rid of it. And by the way, it is going to hate you and want to get rid of you if you believe it.

Proverbs 8:7 says, "For my mouth shall speak truth." Proverbs 8:8 says, "All the words of my mouth are in righteousness." Proverbs 8:9 says, "They are plain." In a Christian's life, this is something you want to write down and learn. In a Christian's life, when they start to go down the wrong road, and you see it from time to time, do you know what goes first in their life? Long before they leave the church, any church. You see somebody, and they are in churches for a long time, and then they do not come anymore, and they are gone, and they are gone by the wayside, and everybody says, "Oh, they left the church." That is true. But let me tell you something. Let me tell you what they left long before they left the physical building: they left the Book, the plain words. That Book is too plain; you cannot hide or pretend.

There are a lot of things in life you can fake. I get it. There are a lot of things in life you can pretend. But the funniest thing in the world is to watch somebody who is a Christian try to pretend they are spiritual when they are having all kinds of problems in their life. I love the police videos. The greatest thing in the world, the funniest thing in the world: did you ever see a man who is strung out on drugs try to pretend that he was not? His pupils look like pie plates. He goes through all of the cold and the sweat and all of their stuff, and then he or she is gone for an hour and comes back, and now they are just fine. It was the fresh air that helped him. Ever see a drunk on the police videos where the officer pulls somebody over for DWI, and the funniest

thing in the world is they will try to watch a drunk who is arguing with the police officer that he is not drunk walk a simple straight line. I have seen him stand up by the car and say, "Well, I have not been drinking," and he is sliding down the car. I have seen him try to say, "Put your finger to your nose." That man poked his eyeball out before he got his nose. The most hilarious thing in the world is somebody who says, "I am right with God. I am doing what is right," when you are not.

If you are saved and you get out of fellowship and try to pretend that it is okay with the Word, and it is a sweet time, and you are just having a time with Jesus, every time you go to that Book, you get nailed. That is why you do not read it. You can go read the concordance, and you will get a verse that will hit you between the eyes. You will go look at the map section and get clobbered. The Holy Spirit of God is not going to let you wander. I have seen it a lot of times. I have seen men that had a problem that they wanted to keep everything for themselves. I have been in churches where the preacher said one thing about money, and the man walks out and says, "Well, that is all he ever talks about is money." He said one thing in passing about it. You know what that man's problem is? We cannot hide it. We cannot hide it. I will tell you something else. It is not only plain to you inside that you have lost the joy, joy, joy down in your heart, but it is plain to everybody else.

1 Corinthians 8:3

But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

It also says, if you do not love God, it shows. When that Book gets into your soul, when that Book gets into your spirit and your life, and you are hitting on all eight cylinders, your face shows it. Your attitude shows it. Your countenance shows it. Your speech shows it. Your action shows it. Your family shows it. And your church attendance shows it.

Paderewski was a great piano player. He used to say that if I miss one day of practice, he used to practice eight hours a day, he said, "If I miss one day of practice, I can tell that I am not as good as I should be." He said, "If I miss two or three days of practice, the people, the music critics that listen to me, can tell I am not up to speed." And he said, "If I take a week off and do not practice, everybody can tell." You know why? Because when you get the Word of God in you, it changes you. If you are really saved, it changed you. You are so stupid that you do not understand that just as you changed to Him, everybody saw it. Here it comes: when you change back from Him, everybody sees it. What is the matter with you? That Bible is plain. There is nothing complicated about it. Nothing at all. I try to match my preaching up to the Book in a number of ways. But one of the ways I try to do it is plain. You may not like everything I say. You may not like anything I say. You may not like someone that you are shaking your heads for. You may not like part of what I say. But you will never leave this church saying to yourself, "I wonder what he really thinks about that." The Bible is plain, and Bible preaching needs to be plain.

I like the last part of Proverbs 8:9. Not only is it plain to him that understandeth, but it also is right to them that find knowledge. In other words, when you love God and the Word of God, you love it all. You do not just love the part that makes you look good. You do not just love the part that makes you feel good. You love it all.

Proverbs 27:7

The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

Everything is good to you. Not just the parts that make you feel good or make you look good, but everything, because it is right, and you love right. I did not say we always do right. But I am saying that you always love right. The knowledge of God is to know right from wrong and understand. Understanding is to want to do right with the things of God, even when we do not do them. It will be the thing that will always bring us back. I must say to you today that this is the missing element in Christianity. This is the missing element today: no sense among Christians between right and wrong. No sense of understanding what is right and loving right.

III. Wisdom Versus Worldly Riches (Proverbs 8:10-11)

> Section 2: Proverbs 8:10-11

Proverbs 8:10-11

Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.

For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

I say that this is probably, of all the exhortations in this chapter, it may be even the Bible, for American Christianity, probably any American, this is the hardest one: the great dangers of the blessings of God in our lives. We all want the blessings of God. We all want God to shower us with blessings, give us all the things in our life, take away all the negative stuff, make everything good. We all want that, but I will tell you something. There is a real danger in the fact of the blessings of God. We saw it Thursday night. Delano asked a question about the difference between the Laodicean Church and the Philadelphia Church. The difference is so clear when I laid it out. It is simply the difference of the fact that one church had nothing except the Word of God. The other church had everything except the Word of God.

Gold and silver in the Bible, when dealing with the world system, will always be connected to the worldly things that we all put a high value on.

1 Timothy 6:10

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

I know that the love of money, singular, is not the root of all evil, but the love of money goes back to the single thing that kills all of us, and that is covetousness. That will be the root of everything. The mistake Americans make is to think that the riches of this world, the possessions we have, will make you happy or make you complete or make you satisfied. But it never will. All you have to do is look at the people who have that kind of lifestyle on the outside, and on the outside, it looks good. On the inside, their personal life is an absolute disaster. How many movie stars who could buy whatever they want wind up committing suicide, wind up on drugs, wind up

in alcohol rehab places, over and over and over again? They wind up in divorce. They wind up with family issues. They wind up with great depression. Some of the most miserable people you ever saw in your life could afford anything they wanted to buy. God's people are the same way. We put our value systems on the wrong things.

There are many of God's people that take better care of their in-ground swimming pool than they do their own time with the Word of God. There are people, saved people, who spend more money on their lawns every year than they do to evangelize the world. You want an example of that? Come by and see my lawn. My neighbor lady begged me for years to get rid of the wood pile that was by my tree in the front yard because she was afraid it was going to have termites in it. So I finally did it. It was a big old bare spot there, and I cannot grow anything. I buy grass seed; I might as well just throw my money someplace else. I put it down, I do everything, and it does not ever grow. I cannot grow flowers. I cannot grow anything. I had an idea one time of starting a garden; I grew rocks. So I went to the place, and it does not sound like a big thing to you, but to a man like me who cannot do anything, it was a pretty big deal. So I go to True Value, and I get this old man who has been around forever, and I explain my problem, and he pulled me back in the corner, and he said, "Buy this, and here is what you do." So I went home, and I followed his instructions. You have to water it twice a day. You put it down, you rake it in, and then you put some more down and rake it in, get it underneath. That was a mistake that I made. I just throw it up in the air. I read Johnny Appleseed one time; I thought it worked for apple trees. It worked for grass. It does not. Four days later, little things were coming up. Watering it, blessing it, watering it. Nine days, it is that big. You ought to see it. I am not even cutting it. I will not touch it. I walked out the other day, and I was so excited I was yelling through the neighborhood, "I got grass! I got grass! I got grass!" And the neighbor said, "You are going to get arrested. You are trying to sell that stuff." He did not understand what I was talking about.

I have a man across the street that checks the oil on his car every day. Every day of his life, he checks his oil. Every morning, if you go out there between 8:00 and 9:00, the hood is up, he is pulling that dipstick, and he is checking that oil. I watch him, and I think to myself, "You know what? There is a man who will not get in that car to go to work without checking the level of his oil, and God's people just get up, get in the car, go to work, and never check the oil level, the Holy Spirit of God in their lives." I am talking about the true riches.

Luke 16:11-13

I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

I think that is a great verse. The thing that I want to bring to your attention here is a number of things, but the first thing I want you to see is down here toward the end of verse 9, it says that when he failed, because I want to say something to you folks in life, we are all going to fail. Nobody is going to go through life without failing. We are all going to fail. Some of us fail greater than others, but we are all going to fail. On a scale with God, it is all the same. We are all going to fail. The point he is trying to make is when you do, and it is a bit of sarcasm here. The point he is trying to make is that when you do fail, it will not be the riches and the things of this world that get you through. There will be some things that come up in your life that your money cannot fix. There will be some things that will come up in your world that your possessions will not get you through. There will be some things that will come up, and yes, I am preaching right now, in case you have not figured it out yet. There will be some things that will happen in your life that you will fail at, that if you do not have the true riches, you are cooked. That is what he is saying. Exactly what he is saying.

God's people today are absolutely so dysfunctional. What he is saying here is this, and it is the contrast between the unrighteous mammon, which is the things of the world, and the true riches, which are the things of God. What he is saying here is you cannot even handle the unrighteous mammon in your life. You are so dysfunctional, you cannot even get your bills paid. You cannot even do this. You cannot even handle this. You cannot get your family running right. You cannot do this. How in the world, why do you think I would entrust to you the true riches when you cannot even take care of the worldly things in your life? That is exactly what he is saying. It is the concept of stewardship. Stewardship is the ability to manage and control the things in our lives, not just the spiritual things. We talk about stewardship all the time, and so many preachers use that to beat people up over giving money, and that is all they focus on because that is all they are about. I have news for you. For a New Testament Christian, there are seven areas of stewardship that you better have under control, and not all of them have to do with the Bible. You have to have control of your own personal life, your family, your finances, because if you are dysfunctional in the little things, you are going to be dysfunctional in the big things. Nobody is dysfunctional in, "Well, I am dysfunctional in this in my life, but boy, I could really handle the Bible." Not according to the Word of God. You cannot.

1 Timothy 6:6

But godliness with contentment is great gain.

The reason we do not have anything or have what we need is simply because we have not done right with what we did have. Money cannot buy that peace that gives your soul the rest that it needs. As I said earlier, there will be some things and some needs come up in your life that possessions and money cannot fix, and the quicker you learn that, the better off you are going to be. That is the problem.

Man lost something back in Genesis chapter 3, did he not? We know that when Adam sinned back there, and sin was passed upon all man, that Adam became incomplete. Man now, you and I, before we were saved, was incomplete. This is what man does. He knows he is empty. He knows there is a hole inside. He knows that he is not complete, but he is not willing to look at

God and His death on the cross as the filling of that void in his life. So what he does is he tries to fill that void with all the things of the world. He thinks if he gets married, how many times have you seen a couple that were having marital problems? And they get the idea, "Well, if we have a child, that will fix the marital problems." They will not. No more than the hole in your soul, because if you are incomplete, it is going to be fixed by the world or what the world offers or how much money you have. You go out and buy a new car, and it is everything you wanted, and it is a Z60, 70, 48, or whatever it is, and you get in that thing, and you drive it around for a week, and you are on top of the world. And then it loses its glitter, and you are right back where you were before. You find a relationship, and now you are happy. You found the dream of my life. "Oh boy, she is everything. He is everything. I got what I want." For a short time, it looks that way until the reality sets in that it is not going to fix it. There is only one thing, ladies and gentlemen, that is going to fix the hole that is in all of us, and that is a personal relationship with Christ through the salvation through the blood of Christ. Nothing else is going to do it. It never will. The peace that passes all understanding and the contentment of life and joy can only be achieved by filling that gap in your life with Christ and His Word. But everybody tries to do it.

People try to think, "Well, the party life, going out and doing it," that will just lead you to the booze, and you get addicted to the booze, and you think that then your life is a disaster, or it addicts you to drugs, and your life is a disaster. Now, I am not against addiction. I may preach against drug addiction. I may preach against alcohol addiction or pornography addiction or any other addiction, but I want you to understand I am not against addiction. I have an addiction this morning, and I want to confess it to you.

1 Corinthians 16:15

I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

There is my addiction. You know what your problem is? You have the wrong addiction, pal. You got addicted to the things of the world. You need to get addicted to the things of God. I know how addictions go. I have worked with them all my life. You see somebody that is an alcoholic; they go for a day or two without having a drink. They come unraveled. Somebody is on drugs; they go for a couple of hours after they come down off the high. You can tell if they start going unraveling. You know why? You are addicted. Stick around me for about four or five days when I do not get in the Book. I will be just as rattled as you are. I have an addiction, but my addiction is the Book, the ministry. You put the wrong addiction in your life, and you think it is going to help you. It is not going to help you.

At camp last week, I enjoyed going up there and just kind of stepping back and not having any responsibilities and just watching everything. It always takes me back to where God started with me, which was at a camp, Camp Choff. Way back when, I had just gotten right with God, and Mel Shabaka was the camp director, and he took me out to that camp, and I spent every summer out there for the next three or four years, preached out there, got involved in all kinds of things, where I developed "The Gospel and the Stars" was out there. Everything that God did with me, He did in those early stages. It is where I met Dr. Ruckman when he used to come and preach

senior high camp. I would take my vacation every year, two weeks, and I would go out to that camp and spend it out there with those kids because that is where I learned and understood how it all went together. I will never forget one time there was a little girl there, I think she was from up in the Cleveland area someplace, just a beautiful girl, about 18 years old. She could sing like a bird, and they had her sing one night, and she got up there, and before she sang, she gave the greatest testimony of what God had done for her. This girl had been offered all kinds of record deals, and everything wanted her because she was an incredibly good singer. She got up there, and she told that testimony, and then she sang the song, "I'd Rather Have Jesus." I have never heard anything like it. You talk about heaven come down and glory filled my soul. At the end of that service, she was up there, you know how all the young girls are, they want to come up and meet her and know her and everything, and I was standing to the side there, and I was still just getting over what she sang. I listened to what she said, and she was coming up there, and the girls were saying, "Boy, that was a great testimony, and I love your song, and I want to grow up to be like you." And one little girl came up, and she said, "You know what?" She said, "That was the greatest thing in the world." She said, "I want you to know, I would give the world to have the testimony that you got." That little 18-year-old girl looked down and said, "That is good, honey, but you know what? That is exactly what it cost me. It was the world." That is what it cost her: the world. I am telling you, these things in this world may look like they glitter, but I will tell you something, like an old preacher said one time, "All that glitters is not gold."

IV. Wisdom, Prudence, and Hating Evil (Proverbs 8:12-13)

> Section 3: Proverbs 8:12-13

Proverbs 8:12-13

I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.

The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

We have a word that came in here that I want you to mark in your Bible if you do not have it, and it is the word "prudence." Prudence is wisdom applied in a more cautious way, to be prudent about something. Then it says in Proverbs 8:12 that wisdom will find out the knowledge of witty inventions. In other words, the Word of God will reveal all the phony stuff that man puts out to get himself around the truth of God that is out there, put out by, as we have talked about, the evil man and the strange woman and people void of understanding. They get into it, think it is good, think it is great, and all it is is a man-made, trumped-up concept to get you around the plain teaching of the Word of God.

The greatest book in the Bible that deals with this will be the book of Ecclesiastes. We are not going to go through the book of Ecclesiastes today, but the book of Ecclesiastes is a book that is written about "under the sun," everything that man does on this earth. The book of Ecclesiastes is not really about what God is doing; it is about what man is doing to try to get around God, and that is really what it is about. If you come through that book, you will find the ten vanities that go against God that man puts up: the vanity of wisdom, the vanity of labor, the vanity of purpose,

the vanity of ambition, the vanity of fun and fame and money and selfishness and covetousness and reward. All these things without God, the Bible says, are vanity, and all of them without God's truth will guide you to a dead-end street of life, which we see all the time.

Throughout the book, he goes into great detail on the witty inventions of man. I do not know if you know it or not, but there are 34 philosophies found in the book of Ecclesiastes, which pretty much covers all the bases of what man comes up with. The Bible talks about that there are many devices in a man's heart, but the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand. The word "philosophy" is a combination of two words. The first word is *philos*, which is the Greek word for love. The second word is *sophia*, which is the Greek word for wisdom. So you have *philos-sophia*, philosophy. That is where it comes from: to love wisdom. That is what it is supposed to be all about. In reality, man comes up with those things for one reason, and that is to get around the plain teaching of the Word of God. So they sodomize and critique them all.

➤ Here are some of the philosophies found in Ecclesiastes:

- In Ecclesiastes 1:2, he comes through pessimism, which is the teaching that all reality is essentially evil, and there is no good in the world.
- In Ecclesiastes 1:13, he comes through and lays out metaphysics, which is a science of belief that the universe is an orderly system. So Darwin based his theory of evolution on that when we know from the Bible that the universe is in chaos.
- He goes through in Ecclesiastes 1:16, Epicureanism, which states all knowledge is derived from experience, our senses, our feelings, our flesh. We see that all the time today.
- Then he goes through hedonism in Ecclesiastes 2:10, that pleasure is the highest plane of life, that all man does and should do is get to the point where he pleasures himself, and everything he does brings him pleasure and satisfaction.
- Then he goes through pragmatism, Ecclesiastes 2:25, and that is the fact that intellect, more intellect, results in truth. There is no real searching for truth. It is all up here in your mind that you are your own God. You become everything that you want. The pragmatic approach simply is that the end justifies the means, whatever we do.
- Then you have theism in Ecclesiastes 3:14. That is the basic belief that God created it all and then turned it over to an evolutionary process. We call it theistic evolution. You get over in Kansas, and they have a great debate between evolution and the Bible. They have taken a middle ground because everybody who stands on the Bible gets looked at like a fool and made fun of. So now they have come to the point where they do not want to be laughed at anymore, and so they come up, they get away with the creation concept, and now they talk about intelligent design. It sounds nice, sounds respectable. Intelligent design, that could be anybody. I just stick with God, let him laugh, and remember the great principle that he that laughs last, laughs best, but that is just me.
- He talks about paganism in Ecclesiastes 4, worship of the dead and contacting the dead. This will be the New Age movement, praising the dead more than the living.
- He talks about socialism in Ecclesiastes 6:2, the government taking care of the people. It all belongs to the government, no personal property, where we are headed in America.

- He talks about Gnosticism in Ecclesiastes 8, the mixing of Greek, Judaism, and Christianity thought to the common man. This is where the Alexandrian cult came in, and all that stuff takes place.
- He talks about modernism, and that is the fact that there is no right, there is no wrong, there is no reason for anything, everything is okay, it is all mixed together, and the Bible completely changes; this is your progressive Christianity.
- And then humanism, Ecclesiastes 11, you are your own God. Man is basically good and not evil and has the ability without God to rise up and solve his issues.

This is what Solomon goes through in this great book with a lot of other ones. At the end of the book, he says in Ecclesiastes 12:13:

Ecclesiastes 12:13

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Proverbs 8:13 says, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." In our text here, the fear of the Lord will lead a man to hate four things, and you want to get these down because they are written in the text here.

1. The first one is pride. Pride was the first sin listed in the Bible way back there in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 that Lucifer had that got him in trouble. Pride, you want to remember this, pride is inward. Pride is never outward. Pride is always inward.
2. The next thing he hates is arrogancy. Arrogancy is pride that is inward now revealed outwardly. Pride inside, when it manifests itself, it becomes arrogancy.
3. The third thing is evil. That is the lifestyle that once pride and arrogancy is left unchanged, and you get evil in your life, that is the lifestyle that pride and arrogancy will produce in time. You see it all the time. Follow the procedure. You can think about it all the time. You just never think about it in the context. Pride. That is when you or a person will not get right with God. There is some sin in your life that you will not get right, so you get prideful about it. Ever see it? Sure you do all the time. Maybe in your own life. I have seen it in mine, but you see it all the time. That pride is inward. But then people start to question. People start to see that you are not who you used to be. The change has already happened. You no longer love the thing. The joy, joy, joy has gone out of your heart. So now you have to defend yourself that you are okay when you are not. So the pride inside now manifests itself in arrogancy. You are right when you are wrong. And you will not get right. So your pride now turns to be in arrogancy. That defending your position of that stronghold drives you deeper into your sin. Now you start looking for other people who have the same problems you have because birds of a feather flock together, and you need a support group. This is where the evil way of life now comes into your world. So you went through pride, would not get right, defended yourself, turned to arrogancy, went into an evil life form, and now the fourth one:
4. The froward mouth. "Out of the abundance of the heart," your pride, "the mouth speaketh." See? Now see how easy that is? People in sin are not, I mean, it is just a four-point outline. They get prideful inwardly. They will not get right with God. They have to defend

themselves. Outwardly it turns into arrogance. Then they stay that way, will not get right. They get into an evil life form, and then pretty soon what is in the heart manifests itself out of their mouth. It is simple.

V. Counsel, Strength, and God's Sovereignty (Proverbs 8:14-16)

> Section 4: Proverbs 8:14-16

Proverbs 8:14-16

Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.

By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.

By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

There are a couple of great things in here. The first thing I want you to mark down in your Bible if you do not have it, that doctrinally this points directly to the Second Coming of Christ. You ought to be able to see that. It shows us that God is in charge of all history, leads to the end result. That will be Christ coming. The judges there are the twelve apostles who sit on twelve thrones judging Israel. You find that all through the Bible, and that is what you got in the doctrinal sense. But yet in a practical application, it simply states a great truth. This is something you want to get down. Forget the doctrinal, even though that is important to understand your Bible, but getting the doctrinal and missing the practical is the wrong thing to do in this particular case because the practical thing is I want you to see is this: "Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength."

We all want the strength of God in our lives. We all want that. But I want to tell you something. The strength of God only lies in your wisdom and understanding of God. This is why God's people are so weak today. This is why people cannot get past their problems. They want to solve their problems, but they do not want to do what they have to do to solve their problems. They want the miracle spiritual pill. They want the love potion number nine. They want the spiritual magic formula that you take, and all your problems go away. They do not want to take responsibility, even when they do take responsibility. They do not want to do what they need to do. They will say, "I want to change my life." They will say, "I am tired of the way it was." They will say, "I do not want to do this anymore." But when it comes down to discipline and structuring themselves into a structure that will bring them out of that kind of lifestyle, they just do not have the strength to do it. The strength of God, I am going to say it again, the strength of God in your life and my life will only come from your understanding and the wisdom of God. You do not get in that Book, you are not going anywhere. It is just that simple.

It also says that if the kings and the princes, if the nations and the kingdoms of the world only exist because God allows it, and He through them ultimately will get the honor and the glory, good or bad. If that is true, and it certainly is, what makes us think that we can do whatever we want and get away with it? God is going to get the honor and glory out of everything we do. You

are either going to go the hard way or the easy way. Years ago, I used to work at a mall when I was a teenager, and it was F.W. Woolworth's. I was a dishwasher, still in high school, my second job. It was an open mall at the top; it was not like the enclosed malls you have today. It was just kind of a long L-shaped thing, and it had support poles. I was not really serving the Lord at the time; I had not gotten right with God yet. But I was loading dish trays up and looking out the big windows. This woman was going down the mall; she had her boy, and she had come out of one of the stores down here. Evidently, the kid, who was probably about, I do not know, nine or ten, maybe I am tough with kids' ages, he was just a little guy, but old enough to know better. He must not have got whatever he wanted in the store. He was crying and squalling, making a scene. The woman was obviously embarrassed, and her job now was only one thing: get this kid to the car where I can kill him, throw him in the trunk, whatever I have to do. So she had this kid by the arm, and this kid, they were going down there, and she was pulling, and the poles were about as far from here all the way down. That kid pulled a pole, wrapping his arm and leg around there, squalling and screaming, and she could not pull him off. She got him loose, she got him to the next one, and he wrapped his leg around that pole. I looked out the window, and every pole, they hit every pole. Every pole until they got down there. Why she just did not knock him unconscious and call 911 or whatever, but pole to pole until she got to the car.

Years later, in the ministry, I thought to myself, "You know what? That is exactly how God gets some of His people home to heaven." We are hanging on pole to pole with what we want. Screaming, whining. God, like that mother, loving mother, caring mother. I do not know what she did when she got him home, but in there, she was very much as in control as she could have been, but that kid was just hanging on, squalling and screaming from pole to pole. I thought to myself, "Man, I have seen a lot of Christians go home to heaven just like that, whining, crying, screaming, because what they did not get, hanging on from pole to pole to the things of this whole world." It is incredible. It is one of those things where the Bible says that God has vessels of honor, and God has vessels of dishonor. God is going to get the honor and glory out of our lives if we are His children one way or the other. We are either going to enjoy the ride, or we are going to go from pole to pole, but He is going to get it out of us. He is going to get us home to heaven. That is one of the great things about the doctrine of eternal security. Most people cannot grasp this today. When you got saved, back in the Old Testament, when Israel made their covenant with God through Abraham, God made them a promise. No matter what Israel has done, and no matter how God has come down and whacked them, and you talk about going from pole to pole, screaming, God is always going to keep that promise to them. When you got saved, you did not get a covenant like Israel did, but you got salvation through the blood of Christ. God took you into His family, but He gave you some promises. You know what one of those promises is? He is going to get you home to heaven no matter what He has to do. It may be in a casket. It may be pole to pole. It may be in a wheelchair. It may be walking up with your head high and your Bible under your arm, proclaiming the truth of God to everybody you see, but He is going to get you home because He made a promise to you.

Titus 1:2

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

He is going to get us home. Whether you get the honor and glory as a vessel of honor, or He gets the honor and glory as a vessel of dishonor, He is going to get the honor and glory.

VI. Conclusion: The Transforming Power of God's Word

This chapter, Proverbs chapter 8, is a great chapter. It is loaded. Here is what I want to say to you. Do not get disconnected from me just yet. The practical principles of the Word of God in the form of Christ personified as wisdom and understanding. The Christian life is not you getting more of God. The Christian life is God getting more of you. We live in a world that wants to change the Bible. I live in a world where the Bible wants to change me. That is where you have to get, but you have to be willing to let it do that. It is about getting to the place in your life that you see the true riches. It is about realizing in a world of witty inventions, the wisdom and understanding of God, His words are truth, wisdom, Proverbs 8:7, and all the words are righteous and are plain and they are right. When we get to where we need to be with God, we do not make excuses. We simply do right to the best of our ability, and when we do not, we do not make excuses. We know that we are the problem, not God, not the circumstances, not some other person. We are our own lives, and we are in charge of our own lives, and we need to take responsibility for them. It is the principles of the Word of God that are going to get you through. We are all going to fail, but it is the Word of God that gets you through those failures. Without it, you are left to the witty inventions of man, and you will be destroyed.

Let us have a word of prayer. Do not forget the folks are going to be back.