

I. The Destructive Nature of Pride

It is good to have you here today. Last week, if you remember, we were in Proverbs 14:3-8 and really had a good study on pride. Pride is something that you probably cannot hear too many sermons about. I was kind of surprised last week that throughout the week, as I talked to people and saw people, I had a number of people thank me for the message and said, "I really need to work on that." I will be honest with you, I did not say anything at the time when they told me, but I thought, "You were the last person in the world that I thought would have a problem with pride." But it just goes to show you that it is something that we all have to deal with.

We learned a couple of things. Specifically, it talked about the rot of pride in a man's mouth. We saw that pride becomes a power in our life, something that we really have to struggle with and that can really take control. We saw that pride will be the root of all of our problems because fundamentally, when you have a problem, the best way to deal with it is to get right with God and fix it. But when you will not, it is because of pride.

We also saw that pride will blind you. We talked about how so many of God's people—and you see this in a lot of Southern Baptist churches, and in fundamental Baptist churches too—Southern Baptists were famous for deacons. They have been deacons for thirty-five years, the most unspiritual people on the planet, and probably in many cases not even saved. Yet, they always had that spiritual facade that they were something that they were not. That is pride. Pride will blind you.

The next thing we saw is that pride will keep you from getting right with God. It will always go against whatever the Holy Spirit of God tries to tell you and convict you of. Of course, when you get blinded to it, then you actually get yourself to believe that you are doing what God wants you to do when you are actually not. We saw then that pride will destroy you in the end. It is a thing that the Bible talks about: that pride comes before destruction, and it happens all the time.

The last thing is that pride will take you from the structure that God has put in your life. That will be your church. That will be your relationship with God, and your relationship with other people. I showed you that the first example, and really the definitive chapters and the model in the Bible on pride, would have been in Ezekiel 14, Genesis 1:1, Isaiah 14, and Ezekiel 28.

I also took you to Proverbs 6:16 and showed you the seven characteristics of the devil—character qualities or character flaws, I should say. Of course, number one was a proud look. I showed you how that pride was the first sin in the Bible. It started with Lucifer, who was beautiful in everything that God made him, and had all of the wisdom of God, and got everything from his spiritual Father. Then, because of pride, it lifted him up because of all of that. Then he turned on God and went against God.

Now the Bible says in Job 41:34:

Job 41:34

He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.

We saw that our pride will always be our number one source of our issues because it, as I said, was the first sin in the Bible. It comes in our life and it starts in our lives basically from three things:

1. When we start to question what God said. When we look at the Bible and the Bible says one thing, but we decide we know better in our life than God does, and we do something else.
2. When we question His wisdom in any matter. The principles in the Word of God are there for a reason. They show you the direction of life. When somebody thinks that their direction is better than God's direction, it is going to be because of pride.
3. Questioning God's authority over us. God has put—and Paul talks about this to young Timothy—He has put a structure in your life to keep us, all of us, doing what God wants us to do. When we question that authority, when we step outside that authority, then that is when we start to have some problems.

II. Introduction to Proverbs 14:9-11

Today, we are going to move on through three more verses here: nine, ten, and eleven. Again, we will see some tremendous principles for our lives and how it keeps the victory that we have in Christ. I want to read Proverbs 14:9-11.

Proverbs 14:9-11

Fools make a mock of sin: but among the righteous there is favour.

The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.

The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.

Each one of these verses has a really good principle within it. We are going to look at each one and apply it to our lives as Christians. I want to focus on just three things today:

4. In verse 9, it talks about the fool. We want to talk about the fool.
5. In verse 10, it talks about the heart. So we want to talk about that.
6. In verse 11, we want to talk about the house.

III. The Fool Who Mocks Sin

Let us look at Proverbs 14:9. It says, "Fools make a mock of sin: but among the righteous there is favour." This verse is one of the truest principles of life that you are ever going to see, and it is one of those simple, foundational concepts that is true in everything in life: a fool looking and seeing their sin and then making a mockery of it before God.

If there is any place that you see this today, even among God's people, sometimes it astounds me—the things that people do that they are proud of that are totally against everything in God's Word. I received an article today from a man in Canal Fulton, Ohio, who sent me a very nice article out of the Canton Repository. He tells me he is my disciple online; he follows us online all

the time. I have never met him, but I have talked to him on the phone a couple of times. He actually sent me an article that I will cherish probably for the rest of my life. It was an in-depth article on when Billy Sunday came to Canton, Ohio, in 1933. The whole article is about Billy Sunday, what he preached, where he preached—places that I am very familiar with, and I never had a clue. Billy Sunday only preached in Canton two times: once in 1911 and then again in 1931. The article goes into great depth and shows pictures of it; it is incredible.

Billy Sunday was the man who single-handedly brought in Prohibition. Wherever Billy Sunday went, he preached. He preached on a variety of subjects, but he preached on booze and alcohol. Of course, he preached it to the point where, through his preaching—the way the country was back then at that time—he single-handedly turned this country into a dry nation. For the next fifteen or twenty years, the only booze you could drink had to be made in a bathtub someplace, and it was illegal to have it. It is an incredible testimony to the power of God in a nation that would still listen to God.

Yet, I look around me today and I see churches that talk about making a mockery of sin and now have social drinking. They talk about it as long as you do not do it in excess, and as long as you do not become an alcoholic, and as long as you do not go too far with it, then it is okay. I want to tell you something: in my forty-some years of dealing with people, I never dealt with or met an alcoholic that ever knew he was an alcoholic. They always thought that they were not and always knew they could stop, and were blinded to the fact that they were completely out of control with it.

We see it in churches. Forget the world; we see it with God's people. Some of the stupidest stuff people post on Facebook or on their social media, where they claim to be Christians, they claim to be a child of God. But when you look at it, they have a beer in one hand or a glass of wine in the other hand, and it is all a mockery. Billy Sunday must be rolling over in his grave.

I remember about twenty or thirty years ago, D.L. Moody was a great preacher in Chicago, and he really had brought that town to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and his influence was incredible. About twenty years ago, when Chicago was going through some of its roughest times—and Chicago today is an absolute cesspool, as most big cities are—a man in the Chicago Times had put an article on Chicago's problems and listed all of the deaths, all of the alcoholism, and all of the problems. Then, with a great shadow of a bulky man with a hat on, standing with a Bible under his arm, that kind of darkened the whole article. It was an actual image of a man. He said, "Chicago needs another D.L. Moody."

That is exactly where America is at today. That is exactly where Christianity is at today. We, as God's people, claim to be saved, take the very principles that God gives us, and then make a mockery out of them before God. The greatest example of this will be America itself. We have talked before how America was founded on God's principles, how the Word of God was written into its founding documents by the Founding Fathers. All you have to do today is go to Washington, D.C., and you will find that on every great government federal building, you will find scriptures and Bible verses over all of them.

I knew a man one time who took all the verses off the buildings in Washington, D.C., and he simply enclosed them into a message and preached on the sinful ways of America. It was incredible. Washington, D.C., is the most corrupt, godless city on Earth, and yet it is filled with references to God. We talked a couple of weeks ago on Thursday night about the stones in Joshua 24 that were going to be a witness. You go over in Luke 19:40, and Jesus says, "If you guys would not have proclaimed Me as King, the stones themselves would have cried out." You stop and think about that. You stop and think about what a witness it is going to be against the capital of this country, which has built her city on the Word of God and put them everywhere you see it.

Down at 17th and Constitution Avenue, behind the bushes there, in front of one of the federal buildings, there is a statue to Daniel and his wisdom with God. In the Library of Congress, you find reference after reference and picture after picture, and inscribed in the walls, images of Moses and the Ten Commandments. It is right there on the Library of Congress. It is Proverbs 22:28, "not to forget the old landmarks." You have a statue of liberty to worship. Right in Washington, you have a painting in the Hall of Congress called "Judea" that is a picture of Israel and her relationship with God. You find in the Congress Psalm 16:1 on the wall where they are asking God to preserve us, "O God, for in Thee do we trust." You go over to the Supreme Court, and you will find twelve distinct images of Moses and the law of God etched in the walls, in the cement, in the stones, claiming and asking that the wisdom that Moses had would be given to the wisdom of the Supreme Court. Something went wrong there.

There is a picture of the Pilgrims when they landed in Plymouth with an open Geneva Bible, showing how important the Word of God was to the men who founded this great country. In the Library of Congress, there are walls of the library right on the wall with Psalms 119. In the face of all the arguments in Missouri and Kansas in the public school system about evolution, the Library of Congress on the wall has Psalm 19:1-4, "The heavens declare the glory of God" in Washington. The Washington Monument on a capstone says, "Praise be to God." There are ten inscriptions of the Bible on it, and in the cornerstone is a King James 1611 Authorized Version. You see God on the Jefferson Memorial, Isaiah 40 inscribed on the Lincoln Memorial. The White House still has the prayer mantle of John Adams on display.

You go to New York and the UN building, and a verse on the UN building—the most godless, perverted group of people against the nation of Israel and against God you ever saw—but there on the wall is Isaiah 2:4 about the millennial reign of Christ, of beating swords into plowshares. Everywhere you go in that city, you find the footprints of God that were in this country, and right in front, under their nose, every one of those organizations makes a mockery of God today.

In our school system, at one time, they read the Bible; they started with prayer. I remember when I was in grade school, at Christmas and Easter, they actually brought a preacher in who told the story of salvation. Our country, at one time, had the most incredible value system in the world, and it made it the greatest nation on Earth, but now that is all gone. America is now absolutely falling apart in families, in churches, in schools, because they mocked the very godly principles that made this country great. America is mocking at sin, and in the face of all that history with God and His Word influencing this country, they pretend like it is not even there. Every day they walk into those buildings, they go down that hall, they make their corrupt judgment, they turn

things around with God under the very Word of God that made this country great. Someday, someday, when Jesus comes back, those walls, stones, and rocks will cry out.

You have heard me say many times, based on the book of Judges, the worst thing that could ever happen to a man or a nation or a church is for God to quit injecting Himself into that person. Our mocking of sin as a nation, as a society of people, has now brought us to that place in history. God did it to Israel; He took His hand off of them, and they went into captivity of the wicked nation that hated them for the next three thousand years, and they are still under their bondage today. God has done it to the United States. People look around and they see terrorism, and they think it is just because of the Middle East and a religion. It is not because of any of that. It is because this country, which was once founded on the principle of God, has turned its back on the very God that gave them everything that we have. Just like Israel, God always used the nations that hated them to judge them.

When 9/11 happened, I remember one of the guys on the 700 Club talked about the fact that it was God's judgment on America, and everybody went ballistic against him because they cannot conceive—they blinded themselves through pride. We cannot conceive the fact that this country has totally and completely rejected everything about God and God's people. What you are seeing around our country is only going to get worse.

On August 23rd, 2005, George Bush, with his famous "Roadmap to Peace," took Gaza and the West Bank away from the nation of Israel and gave it to the Muslims. That Gaza Strip and the West Bank were part of the land grant that God gave to Abraham. It is the Jews, and he kicked them out on that very day, August 23rd. When he signed that paper, that very same day, Hurricane Katrina formed in the Gulf, and over the next week, destroyed the Gulf Coast nations of this country, and nobody even saw it or had the ability to connect the dots and see why.

A study of God's movement in America will reveal—and I have told you this before—seven great awakenings in this country from 1700 with George Whitefield up to the early 1950s, moving east to west across this country. Seven great awakenings where God injected Himself into this country to keep this country where it needed to be. We as a country have trampled the blood-stained banner of Jesus Christ under our feet, and we replaced the Word of God and the principles that God gave us with gay rights, with the liberal movement, with civil rights, with human rights, with political correctness, with liberalism, with socialism, and all the godlessness that comes along with it.

Isaiah, so many hundreds of years ago, prophesied about this day in Isaiah 5:20 because he saw it with Israel. He said there was a day coming when evil would now be called good and good would now be called evil. He said in Isaiah 59:14 there was coming a day when truth, as we know it, would fall in the streets. Hosea saw in Hosea 4:1-3 when he said there is a day coming when there is going to be no truth, no mercy, and no knowledge of God in the land, and we are here. We are here simply because in our pridefulness, we have mocked the righteousness of God in our sin.

IV. Favor Among the Righteous

Now look at the last part of the verse: "but among the righteous there is favour." This is favor with God, the blessings of God in your life, in your family's life. Nothing in this world will be better than the favor of God in your life and the life of your family. I am telling you a dying truth: I do not care how much money you have, how important you think you are, what material possessions you own. Nothing in this world will be better and greater than the favor of God in your life and the hand of God on your life and on the life of your family.

At Christmas time, I watch things. Many times, Christmas is such a false illusion. In one way, it just breaks my heart, but I think to myself, "What are you going to do?" I am out walking around, and you see families having Christmas dinner together. They all get together, or they will go out and eat, and for a moment, as you look around that table, you think, "Wow, what a nice thing, our family is all together." In so many cases, that is an illusion. It really is. Your family is not together; they are there to eat, and when they are done, you will go your way, and they will go their way. There is no spiritual bond there, no ministry together, no favor of God together. It is just Christmas, New Year's, Thanksgiving dinner.

I like the word "favor." I like the word "favorite" because every Christian should look at himself as God's favorite. I really mean that. I know what I am about to say most of God's people do not have a clue and probably do not understand it, but you know that God has favorites. He will save anybody, and He loves all of us, but there are some of us who have more favor with God than others. You know that. People today, because they are so shallow in the Bible, they just think, "Jesus loves the little children," and because of that, then everybody has to say, "No, that is not true." You know that is not true. It was not true in the Bible.

Take the twelve apostles. One got more favor than the other eleven. One of the other eleven was a demon-possessed phony. Two got some—Peter and James. Eight got the minimum, and they are a picture of Christianity today. Only one really got the favor of God. Could all have had it? Sure, they could have, and you could have it too. It is not like God picks and chooses who He wants. There are some qualifications for that.

Look at Mary and Martha. Mary and Martha, in an inspirational application, are a picture of two types of New Testament Christians. Mary had the favor. Martha had all the trouble. Look at Israel; out of all the other nations on the planet, God showed them favor. Look at churches. Churches that are Bible-based, in the line of Antioch, and believe the Book, have favor versus the ones that are not. If you cannot see that, you have been hanging out with the wrong crowd.

I tell people all the time, "You are my favorite person," and they will say, "You say that to everybody." That is not exactly true, but many of you are my favorites. That is what God does. Why can't I do it? People do not get it. They will say, "Which one of your daughters is your favorite?" They think that kind of puts you in an awkward situation. It does not. I look at it the way God looks at it. I am going to explain it to you so the next time I tell you, you will not just say, "Well, you say that to everybody." I will slap you next time I say that. I am going to educate you here just a minute. Some of you are unteachable, so listen carefully.

They will say, "Which one of your daughters is your favorite?" Like I am in a fix now, and I just simply say, "Well, Kelly is my oldest favorite daughter, and Jamie is my youngest favorite

daughter." They say, "Oh, you have two? I bet it is hard to choose which one is your favorite." No, not at all. They are both my favorite. Buddy is my favorite male lab. Daisy is my favorite female lab. See how easy that is? It is not hard. You all can be God's favorite. It is real easy.

You know how He does it? The same way I learned it from Him. I watched Him do it with me and everybody else, and then I just said, "I got it. I am in." He sees different things in each one of you, and He looks at that and He says, "Man, I like that. I have never seen those qualities in a person like that before." That person is My favorite based on those qualities he is willing to give to Me. Everybody will have one or two or three things that make you special that only you have.

Unlike most of God's people, when they look at people, they look at the downside. I hear it all the time: "Well, I do not like him. I do not like her." I bet there are people out there when they see you say, "I do not like you either." I never look at people that way, and maybe it is just me, I do not know, but I never look at people that way. I always try to look for exactly what God sees because I know in every person out there who is saved, if you have the Holy Spirit of God, you have qualities in you that God sees. My job is to try to see those qualities too and try to develop them. Maybe you will not let them be developed; that is on you. Maybe you will never let God bring you to the place where you ever get to where you have those qualities exposed where God can really use them, and you will give them to Him. I get it.

Many of you are my favorites in my life because you are so unique, you are so special. Some of you have multiple things.

- Some of you have an incredible sense of humor, and when everything else has fallen apart, you will see the funny side of it. I like that. I need that.
- Some of you have an incredible ability to survive. I have watched you come through things in your life that would have folded up a normal person, and when I see that in a person's life, I am saying to myself, "That is a quality I want to be around. You are my favorite person."
- Some of you have a toughness to face adversity. Things will come up in your life, and where most people are over in the corner shaking and throwing up, you just pick it up and move on in life. I want to be around that. When I see that, that is my favorite person.
- I have watched some of you, and you can have multiple of these. I am not just saying you only have one. Some of you have four or five of them. Some people can have them all, maybe. But if you have just one, you are good to go.
- I have seen some of God's people who were the most giving, caring people you ever saw in your life, and they do not do it for show. They are always doing it behind the scenes where nobody sees. I see it, and I think to myself, "What God must think." That is a quality that makes that person a favorite of mine.
- Some of you are open. Whatever you see is what you get. Maybe I have met people who were not far along in the Bible yet, that maybe they will get there in time, but maybe they are just a new Christian, and they are working through some things, and you do not see a lot of spiritual depth to them. But I will see a quality that they are what they are, and they are always open and transparent, and you see, as I always say, "What you see is what you get." That is a quality I look for.

- Some of you are great with people. Some of you have great wisdom and understanding in dealing with people. Some of you, I classify as my go-to people.
- Some of you have a great love for people. You are very compassionate toward them. I see that. That makes you unique. You have never met a stranger. You meet somebody for the first time. I used to say about my dad, he never met a stranger. My dad was a favorite for everybody. "Hi, buddy!" Everybody. I do not think my dad had an enemy in the world. I got a lot of traits from him. That was not one that I got. I have a lot of enemies.
- Some of you are very courageous. I have watched you in the face of something you had to decide to do that maybe involved your family or involved something that could have been very easy to go a compromising way. I just stood back and watched, and when you made that decision, when you did what was right, when you knew no matter what the family was doing or where the family was at, you knew what the Word of God said, and you kept it in that thing. Wow. You are my favorite.
- Some of you are rock solid on the Book. You have been around for a while. You know where you stand. You are unmovable. I like that.
- Some of you are great fathers, great mothers. I watch you with your kids. You do a great job. I like that. You are my favorite.
- Some of you have great compassion. You are my favorite.
- Some of you have a great balance. You are my favorite.
- Some of you have a great husband or a great wife. You are my favorite.

Each one of you will have special and valuable qualities to me, and because we are in the work of God together, that quality or qualities that you have will make you my favorite because there is nobody else like you. Nobody else like you. Where so many people just look at people and stereotype them every way, God does not look at us that way. That is how you all can be God's favorite without anybody getting left out, because God sees down below the stereotype, and He sees inside those very character qualities that so many of you have that God says, "You are My favorite. You are My John. You are My James. You are My Peter." Let me tell you something: if you are good enough to be God's favorite, you are good enough to be mine. You are special to me simply because you are one of a kind, and God allowed you and me to minister together, and that to me makes you my favorite.

I have no secrets. If you want to know what makes you my favorite, just come and ask me. I love to tell you. If I just change and ask about the weather or what you got for Christmas, then it is like a guy walking along the beach with God one day. God said, "You are My favorite. I really love you." He said, "I love You too, Lord. I want to do anything You want me to do." He said, "Really, Lord?" He said, "Yeah." He said, "Well, I always want to go to Hawaii, but I hate planes, and I do not like to be on the water. Lord, would You build a bridge from the West Coast all the way over to Hawaii so I can just get in my car and drive?" The Lord kind of snickered and said, "Well, I mean, I am God, but you realize the work that has got to go into that, and I just do not think I could. Do you not have something else?" He says, "Well, yeah, I do. I want to understand women. I want to know how they think. I want to know what they think. I want to know why they are the way they are." He went through this whole list, and God got real quiet, and God said, "You want that bridge to be a two-lane or a four-lane?" If you come and ask me, you want your

bridge to be a two-lane or a four-lane. I would never do that. I did a lot of you and make you feel good.

An old man used to say his favorite verse was in Psalms: "Lying is an abomination in the sight of God, but a very present help in a time of trouble." Favor with God, Proverbs is filled with it.

Proverbs 3:4

So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

Proverbs 8:35

For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD.

Proverbs 12:2

A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.

Proverbs 13:15

Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.

Proverbs 14:35

The king's favour is toward a wise servant: but his wrath is against him that causeth shame.

For a child of God, nothing is better than to be God's favorite. That is a great verse: favor in the Lord.

V. The Heart's Bitterness and Uninterrupted Joy

Now look at Proverbs 14:10. It says, "The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." That is an incredible verse. It really is. It is a great verse in understanding how to help people and understanding a lot about yourself, understanding the things that people go through. Some of God's people will go through some tough times, and we all want to help them.

The first part of that verse says, "The heart knoweth his own bitterness." When we go through some great trial in life, there are always people who want to be there for us, and thank God for that. That is a great thing. But the truth of the matter is, only you know the depth of your trial and your pain. Only you. We have here the people ministry, and I have worked with about eighty or ninety people to get them online and being able to really get in to help people through their problems. But even with all of that, those people we work with, they themselves only know the depth of their pain.

Sometimes, honestly, I have been in situations where there is just nothing left to say. Some preachers, you can always spot them, and a lot of Christians, they are famous for their ability to keep on speaking long after there is nothing left to say. In dealing with people, you get all the principles that relate to their issues, and you try to be understanding of where they are at. But

even then, you cannot get on a level of their hurt or their brokenness. They only know their own heart and the depth of it.

In really three ways that I cannot see:

- They themselves only know the depth and know if they are going through this because God wants to strengthen them, and that they are totally right with God.
- Or they only know the depth that they are not where they need to be with God, and He is having a little "come to Jesus" meeting with them.
- Or sometimes, only they will know if they are going through what they are going through for somebody else's benefit.

I have found that in either case, my job, even when I cannot get in on the level where they are at totally, is just to walk through it with them, to love them through it, to be there for some key moment when God wants me to lift them up. I think the loneliest place in a hospital—and every time I go to the hospital, I always pass by and I always think this—the loneliest place in the hospital has to be the waiting room where people wait for an answer to come back on the fate of a loved one, where moms and dads sit there in quiet.

I used to go there when I would see somebody, and I would go into the waiting room, and there would be eight or nine people in there, and you could tell that there was heaviness in their heart. I would always give them little Johns or Romans or something for them to read. I never tried to invade where they were at, unless they asked me. But I think it is the loneliest place in the hospital, that waiting room. I have sat in those waiting rooms with some of you, when you lost your mom, you lost your dad, or you went through some tough time in your life, or somebody in your family. I have sat there four or five hours, and all I was doing was waiting for maybe that two or three minutes that God put me on cue to be there, to give you what you needed.

I have come to the place in my life, in a spiritual sense, I may not be able to solve your problem. I may not be able to always get on the level where you are at. I will try to get as close as I can, and I will certainly walk through with you, but I promise you this, spiritually speaking, I will always be in the waiting room. Because that is the loneliest place of your life when you are waiting, and somebody needs to be there.

Then the last part of Proverbs 14:10, and this is a great thing: "and the stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." It is a great contrast. Too many of God's people will allow others to steal their joy. Christianity is filled with people who have no joy, and they do not want you to have it either. But when you are God's favorite, and you know it, He will give you something that He will not give anybody else. This is where I feel bad for so many of God's people. They never, just never see it; they never understand it.

Many of God's people today never have a time in their Bible when it is just you and Him. Early in the morning, late at night, or sometime during the day when the house is quiet, and it is just you and God. It is almost like you are standing there with your open Bible, and you are studying it, and you are reading it, and it is almost like the Holy Spirit of God is standing over your shoulder with His finger pointing exactly where He wants you to go. He gives you some

incredible truth, and He only gives it to you. He did not give it to your neighbor who is a Christian. He did not give it to somebody in your friend circle that is a Christian. He gave it to you. You know why? Because you are really special to Him. If you make the effort on that level, you will always come away with something special.

One of the greatest truths I ever learned about life in the Bible, and God, and my relationship with Him, is simply this: God will always take care of those who find the right way to take care of Him. In my life, you may take my house, my car, all my earthly possessions, but you will never take my Bible, and you will never get my joy. Most of God's people, unfortunately, have neither, because I am God's favorite, and He gave me some things that nobody else can touch. We are so foolish when we let people who do not have any joy—and they are out there—want to come and rob you of your joy. You never let that happen. You cannot intermeddle with those things, my joy. That is our joy in the Lord.

VI. The House of the Wicked and The Tabernacle of the Upright

Now look at Proverbs 14:11. It says, "The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish." Here is another great contrast. The wicked, he just has a house. But the upright, he has a tabernacle.

The unsaved, worldly Christian just has a house—2 Corinthians 5, a body. It will be furnished with all the things of this world in a spiritual sense. His whole life, his house will be built all around his possessions, worldly, earthly things. In his life, spiritually speaking, he will find his happiness, or try to find his happiness, in these temporal earthly possessions, but never joy. Happiness is a word that comes off of the word "happy." When you have happiness, it is when you are happy. But when you are not happy, then you are unhappy. Joy is so great because joy does not have any beginning and an ending to it. Joy is just simply based on your relationship with God. That is why you find so many people who are depressed. They are happy today, but they are not happy this afternoon. They will get a new car, they will get something for Christmas, and they are happy! But by nightfall, they are unhappy again. Happiness happens because of the happenings of life. Joy comes because of your relationship, and nobody can take that from you.

In time, those things that he has, those earthly possessions that he has built in his house, they will fail him. In reality, there is no real satisfaction to his soul in those. It is all an illusion. At some point, his whole world will be overthrown and collapse on itself. The house of the wicked shall be overthrown. It has no foundation. It has no real structure. It has nothing of any substance.

One of the greatest examples is found in Matthew 7:24-27:

Matthew 7:24-27

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

One guy built his house on a rock, and it sustained everything the world could throw at it. The other one built it on sand. When the winds came, and the things of this life, it collapsed. In verse 27, the last part says, "and great was the fall of it," and it always certainly is.

But then it says, "But the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish." I want you to notice that his house is more than just a house; it is a tabernacle. I always want you to see that his dwelling just does not get him through day to day. The Bible says it flourishes. It gets better and better every day.

The Bible says in your tabernacle you should have some furniture.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

There are some furnishings you need to put. In the world, we clutter our lives up, do we not? We have a TV in the bedroom, a TV downstairs, a TV in the garage, a TV in our living room. We have couches here, couches there. We open the clothes, the shoes fall out, smother you, you do not find you for a week. We clutter our lives up with all of these things that we think are going to make us happy. I am going to tell you something: there is nothing wrong with having those things in balance. But never think for a moment that they will make you happy.

For a Christian, you only need seven pieces of furniture. It is clutter-free. You only need seven. Based on 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Exodus 25 and 26, the upright has just seven pieces of furniture in his tabernacle. God lives inside that tabernacle. The furnishings, here it comes, we think they are for us; they are not for us, they are for Him.

I want to tell you something, you better get this straight: the joy you have in your own life that comes from God will only come because of the joy that you give Him in His life inside you. When you provide Him with the furnishings that are the desire of His heart, you will get the desires of your heart. When you make Him comfortable and happy in your tabernacle, you will be comfortable and happy in everything that you do. When He comes inside you and He has all day long the joy of the seven things that He loves, you will have all the joy in your life of the things that you want. It does not work any other way. We as God's people think that we can forsake this, clutter our lives up with all the things that we have, and then actually wonder why we are not happy. Providing joy to God who lives inside you will be the key to your joy. You

give Him no joy, He returns the favor. Our joy is simply based on the joy we give Him. We only give Him our trouble so many times and never give Him what He wants. Is not that amazing? When you know that God has some things that He wants, and we refuse to give Him, and all we ever do is just give Him our problems.

VII. The Furnishings of the Tabernacle and God's Joy

I have told you about the seven pieces of furniture many, many times, but since it fits into the message today, the victory of God is simply found in these seven things. If you find a guy or a gal who does not have the victory, they do not have these seven things going in their life. Of course, they are kind of deep; you do not get this with just basic things in the Bible. But there are seven joys that you give God that God gives you.

7. The first piece would be the brazen altar, found in Exodus 27. Made of brass, out in the outer court. The first joy is the brazen altar: joy in the day that God saved you. That would be a day that you never forget in your life. That would be a day of rejoicing for the rest of your life around that brazen altar, to the fact that God saved you. There is joy around that brazen altar every day of your life, the fact that God saved you.
8. The second piece of furniture was right outside before you went in. It was called a laver of water, found in Exodus 30:17. That provides the joy of my continual fellowship and my ability to get clean when my fellowship gets broken. When my fellowship gets broken because I get dirty, the washing of the water by the Word, getting clean with God, there is joy in that.
9. The third thing, once you moved inside the second compartment, was the seven golden candlesticks. It is found in Exodus 27:20. That is joy in the Holy Spirit of God in my life to lead and guide me. John 16, the great New Testament definitive chapter on the Holy Spirit, tells you the seven things that the Holy Spirit of God does for you. There is joy in that.
10. The fourth thing is the showbread. Exodus 25:23, a picture of the Word of God. There is joy in the Word of God, that my sustaining in my journey of this life is not of this world.
11. Then you have the altar of incense. Exodus 30:1. Joy in my prayer life, that I can talk with God without going through any mediator, any man. I do not have to go through a priest or confess to this or go through this. I have access with God through Jesus Christ 24/7. There is joy in my ability to have prayer and communication with God.
12. The sixth piece of furniture will be the golden censer. That golden censer was incense off the altar of incense, but he carried it with him wherever he went, and he shook it back and forth, and it filled the smell of the room wherever he went. You will find that in Leviticus 11:12. That is a picture of you, me, and praying without ceasing, that wherever I go, I can pray to God anytime, any place, anywhere. I do not have to be in church. I can be driving my car down the street. I can be running. I can be doing whatever I want. I can be sitting in a deer stand, not on Sunday morning. I can be anywhere I want to be.
13. Then the seventh piece of furniture was in the Holy of Holies, the Ark of the Covenant. That will be Exodus 25:1-22. That is a joy in my depth with God.

Here is how it works: many of God's people are saved this morning, and they rejoice in the brazen altar. Many people go to the next level, as many of you do here, and you learn how to use the candlestick, the showbread. You do have a prayer life. Your spiritual world and the joy of it is in that second compartment. Some of God's people never get past getting saved. They never get into the ministry. But then you have people that get into the ministry. They understand why the showbread is over here and the candlesticks are over here. It is completely dark, and the only light coming on that bread is from the candlestick. They get it all. They understand it.

Then you have some of God's people that get to the point in their life—not many do—but they get the depth of God. Ephesians 4 called it the fullness of God. To get the depth of God and the fullness of God, to understand God in the way that He wants to be understood, you have to go behind the veil. Not many of God's people get to that level in their Christian life. Some of them never leave the brazen altar. They do not grow one inch past the day they got saved. Some get into the second and do some great stuff. But if you want the depth of God and the fullness of God, and understanding the real joy of a relationship with God on His level, you have to go behind the veil. You have to get back there where very few people ever go, where it is just you and Him. This is where He will show you the things that He will not show anybody else. This is where you will be able to look at George Bush's "Roadmap to Peace," or you will look at 9/11, or you will look at the Middle East today, or you will look at this situation and that situation, and you see it. You talk about it all the time. You see it from God's standpoint. You know why? Because you are behind the veil. You flourish.

VIII. The Midas Touch of the Christian

Most of the kids' stories that you hear today are all Bible-based at some point. Bob Jones Sr. used to say that every bad thing in this world is a good thing twisted. There is a lot of truth to that. You have a lot of nursery rhymes that you tell your kids, and your kids grow up learning a lot of stories, and they are all Bible-based. "Mary Had a Little Lamb, and its fleece was white as snow." And you had Snow White, who got poisoned by a wicked witch and died and could never come back to life until someday her prince came and kissed her, brought her back to life. There was a day in your life, in my life, that we were dead in trespasses and sins, and we were dead as Snow White. But one day my Prince came and kissed me, and He gave me the kiss of life, and I am alive today in Jesus.

In kids' stories, you have the story of old King Midas, a king that everything he touched turned to gold. Yet, Psalm 1:1-3 says:

Psalms 1:1-3

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

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

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

This is the Midas touch for a Christian. A time in your life where everything you touch turned to gold at the judgment seat of Christ. In the story of King Midas, his touching gold was his demise. When he got the ability to touch and turn everything to gold, every time he wanted to eat something, he would pick up an apple because he was hungry, and it would turn to gold, and he could not eat it. He would get starving to death and grab a turkey leg, and before he could ever get it into his mouth, it would turn to gold. In the nursery rhyme, this is where they get off the Bible cue; that is a bad thing.

Let me tell you something. For you and for me, having a Midas touch, as in Psalm 1:1-3, is the greatest thing in the world, because I do not want to eat any turkey legs of this old world. I want to digest the gold of heaven, brother. When you touch everything and it turns to gold, it just shows you that nothing in this old world sustains you anymore.

Then there was a second tragedy in King Midas' life. The world always has to ruin a good story. His kids ran in to see him one day, whom he loved much, and he went to hug his kids. And yes, you guessed it, his kid turned to gold. We look at that and think, "What a sad thing." I look at that and think, "I hope every one of you in this room has the Midas touch, that when you touch your kids, they turn to gold at the judgment seat of Christ." They turn to gold, brother. They flourish. Everything in your life, because you are behind the veil and you are God's favorite, your leaf never withers. Whatsoever you do, it shall prosper. Because you have the right furnishings in the tabernacle. The right furnishings in the tabernacle give joy to God.

Some of God's people need to have a garage sale. Better yet, they need to have a fire sale before the fire comes and takes it. The seven pieces of furniture in your tabernacle are:

14. The brazen altar
15. The laver of water
16. The seven golden candlesticks
17. The showbread
18. The altar of incense
19. The golden censer
20. The Holy of Holies (the Ark of the Covenant)

You put those seven things in your life and get the clutter out. You will be God's favorite. Whatever you do, whatever you touch within your family, within your life, within this world, will turn to gold at the judgment seat of Christ.