

I. Introduction to Proverbs and the Sermon Text

Today, we are back in the book of Proverbs. We learned from the very beginning of Proverbs that it is about the issues of life. Up to this point, we have seen how all of the Proverbs will not only fit into our daily lives, but everything throughout life. We have also looked at it from the practical side, but then I also pointed out the doctrinal and the inspirational. I think that those things are important to have a good balance.

I know of no other book, and I know I have said this many, many times throughout the course of our study, but it bears saying again, I know of no other book in the Bible that does what Proverbs does. It forms for me not only the foundation of the rest of the Bible. A couple of weeks ago, we looked at Proverbs 12:10, where it talked about the righteous man regarding the life of his beast. Then I took you to Matthew 15 and showed you how that sets up the whole aspect of the New Testament teaching.

So, not only does it set up the foundation for the rest of the Bible, but it also sets up the foundation for the rest of our lives, because Proverbs 4:23 talks about that out of our heart comes the issues of life. Our heart needs to be where God wants it to be.

Today, we are going to be in Proverbs 12, and we are going to look at verses 11 and 12.

He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.

The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.

Here are two verses that I think form a great example. Many times, we will read through the Bible, especially Proverbs and Psalms, but really anywhere in the Bible, and we will see a verse like this, that you actually wonder, "What can you get out of a verse like this?" I do not mean to use these terms in a bad way, but the verse seems mundane, it seems bland, it seems generic in its content.

Many times when we read the Bible, we will read a verse that when we look at it, we think it says, "I grasp at it in one reading, it just says some general truth." But every verse in the Bible, you are going to find that verses like this are absolutely loaded. You have to really look to see and unearth some great principles here that have much to offer.

Today, we are going to talk and use contrast when it comes to the Bible. Contrast in the Bible is one of the ways that God teaches you; another way is association. God will teach you things in the Bible by the things that are the same, but then He will teach you in the Bible by the things that are opposite or different. Much of Proverbs, as we have seen, will be built around contrast because it is about the issues of life. Life is a contrast. Life is an issue where you have good things you have to deal with and you have bad things you have to deal with. Life is a contrast, so the book about life is built on contrast.

II. Opening Prayer

Let us open up with a word of prayer. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We ask You today to give us wisdom and insight into all that we see and endeavor to try to learn and do today. We do love You, Lord, and we ask You to forgive us where we have failed You. Put us under the blood today that we might be able to receive the things that God has for us in His Word. We will thank You now and praise You for all we do. In Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it, Amen.

III. The Principle of Work and Labor

He says in Proverbs 12:11, "He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding." There is a contrast for you. From a purely practical standpoint, it simply states that man will get his food by working. That principle goes all the way back to Genesis 3.

In Genesis 3:15-19, when Adam and Eve fell from God's grace and now they live in a world that we are in today with a curse on it, God told them that from this point on, man was going to have to go to work. Up to this point, God had everything prepared in a beautiful fashion. There was no work, there was no labor, nothing they had to do except enjoy the fellowship and the beautiful creation that God had for them. Now, suddenly, it all changes.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

There is where you find the concept of working for a living. Any success in life will be simply determined by two things:

1. Your attitude. People with a good attitude usually wind up being successful in the things they try to do.
2. Your work ethic.

I think one of the problems that employers find today in trying to hire the generation that is out there today is the fact that they do not have those two aspects. Their attitude is terrible, and they have a terrible work ethic. If you want to be successful in what you do, if you want to get ahead in what you do, wherever you are working, there are two things that you can improve so easily

that will help you get a better situation at work: your attitude about what you do, and your work ethic.

We are living in a world today where that is a stark contrast. Nobody wants to work. Nobody has a good attitude about work, and everybody grumbles about it. I think that those are the two fundamental things. It takes hard work today, and that is something that most young generations today do not understand.

Along with that, in every society, especially in the society we live in today, you find people who just simply will not work, and they want to live off of everybody else. Now, I am not against welfare, and I am not against unemployment. I think when a man or a woman who works is legitimately out of work through no fault of their own, I think it is a good thing to help them. I think that they need to be helped and brought along. They have done a good job, they have worked hard, they are out of work because of no fault of their own. Maybe it is a downturn in the economy, or the place went under, or whatever. I think that welfare and unemployment are a good thing, and I do not have a problem with extending it for a while and helping people out. I think they are good things.

But you know as well as I do, those things get abused. People take advantage of the system. Welfare fraud in this country is well over \$2 billion a year, if not more. You have people who will not work, and they will always be a burden to those that do the work.

Nikki was working with a girl one time, and this girl, if I can use the word, was pretty worthless, pretty lazy. She did not work, her husband did not want to work hardly at all, and they did not have a very good time and they did not have a very good attitude about things. But the one thing they got down was that verse in Genesis, "Be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth." It seems like when they do not get the work ethic verses down, they get that reproduction verse down. She was talking about how great this free medical care she was getting was. It is all right to have children and all this when you do not work because the free Medicare and all the free medical stuff you get is just absolutely wonderful. Nikki said, "It is not free, I am paying for it."

That is the way it works in life. People will not work, somebody else has got to pick up the burden of it. There is nothing free when it comes to society. If somebody says, "I am not going to work," or somebody says, "I am lazy and do not want to work," somebody is going to have to pay for a society that feeds them and gives them what they want when they do not want to work. That is just the way it goes today.

Along with Proverbs 12:11, which is a great verse here, you have another verse in Proverbs 28:19 that goes with this one. It says in that verse, it is almost exactly the same:

He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough.

In the Bible, these are called companion verses. Thursday night, you saw another example. Somebody asked a question about John 3:16. I laid out John 3:16, and we all know John 3:16. But then I took it to the second John 3:16 in the Bible, which is in 2 John 3:16. When you saw the comparison of the two verses, they were almost exactly the same, except the second verse

added more insight and light into the first verse. This is what you have. These verses are very important. Here is one verse that says one thing, and then you get the companion verse that says almost exactly the same thing, but a few things are changed, and it sheds light on the first verse. This is how the Bible interprets itself. The Bible says that the Bible has no private interpretation when Peter wrote that. Getting both verses together will give you a great principle for life, and also a great principle for your spiritual life and your relationship with God and His Word.

IV. Christianity as a Work for God

When it comes to your Christianity, the Christian life, Christianity, you can define it in many ways. But if you want to get down to the lowest common denominator of what Christianity is, what God had designed it to be, why God saved you in its infinite form, Christianity is about a work, a work that you do for God, nothing more or nothing less.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

It tells you in that verse that if you are going to learn your Bible, if you are going to learn how to rightly divide your Bible, you are going to have to be a workman. You are going to have to work at it. Last week, I talked about your body being like a house, God's temple, 1 Corinthians 6:19. I showed you about the structure and building it and the wiring and the power coming in and all of that stuff. A house will require two things, and your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and your spiritual house will require two things:

3. You have to build it. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 10 that in building your house, you need to be wise in what you do. He says in that verse, you need to be a wise master builder.
4. You have to maintain it. Most of you young kids, even you young couples, do not own your own house yet, but when you buy a house, you will realize that the greatest thing that you have to do with that house after you get it and it is yours is you have to maintain it. That takes work. You have to maintain your spiritual body after you get saved, and that takes work.

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

That is how you maintain and do maintenance on your spiritual body after you build it the way God wants you to build it. The Word of God, the Bible, is likened to a hammer in Jeremiah 23:29. In Judges 5, the Word of God is likened to a nail. You are going to find in Daniel 2 that the Bible is likened to stones. In Deuteronomy 32, the Bible is likened to rocks. Jesus is called the stone made without hands in Daniel 2. He is called the rock in Deuteronomy 32. In Matthew 21:42, He is called the chief cornerstone in the building of God.

In your spiritual growth, in its simplest form, you recognize that Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of everything in your life. In the spiritual building of God in Mount Zion up there in heaven, Christ is the chief cornerstone. In the nation of Israel, He was the chief cornerstone in the building of the nation of Israel. They rejected it. When they rejected it, the rock that God gave

them, the cornerstone that God gave them to build their nation on, it became the stumbling block to them. In your life, in my life, it is the same way.

When you build a building, you start with a cornerstone. That cornerstone is the place where all the other components of that building are tied into. In a spiritual sense, that cornerstone is Jesus Christ, and it is the day you got saved. Your spiritual growth is nothing more than recognizing the day you got saved, Jesus Christ was the spiritual cornerstone of your life. Then the rest of your spiritual life, everything you build, you build into that spiritual cornerstone. When you do not, the same thing that happens to the nation of Israel happens to you. That cornerstone that God gave you to be the strength of your life becomes the stumbling block of your life. That is just the way it works. It is not hard. These are tools and materials you build something with, but it will take work. When they built the temple in Solomon's time, the Bible says it took seven years to complete that.

Your salvation in its simplest form is the fact that God saved you and He saved me to do a work for Him.

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

That is the day you got saved, and He will perform it until the rapture of the church. There are so many examples of this in the Bible. In Matthew 20:1-8, you have the story there. It is a parable, really. You have the parable of men whom God down through history called to work and labor in His vineyard.

For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

Most people do not know this because they never probably get to this level of the Bible. In your Bible, there are five distinct different ways to get to the approximate time of the second coming of Christ. When Paul wrote to his people and he said, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, about the times and the seasons. I have no need to write unto you." He is expecting them to understand. I am not telling you that you can get the day and the hour and the time and the year. I know you cannot do that. But the Bible does not want you to be caught unawares when the Lord comes back. In the New Testament, there are five distinct different formats that you can go through that you will actually get a very close time associated with when the Lord is coming back. This is one of them.

This is built on a 12-hour work schedule, which starts at six o'clock in the morning and runs to six o'clock in the evening, 12 hours. Six o'clock in the morning in the Bible is called "even." Six o'clock in the evening in the Bible is called "even." It shows you that it is a 12-hour period based on another 12-hour period making a 24-hour day. It is called the "even." The Bible says that He sends out workers in the "even." There is a key to figuring this out. My purpose is not to lay this out to you in detail this morning, but there is a key to all of these, and the key unlocks the time element.

He sends His first workers out in the morning at "even." That will be 6 a.m. in the morning when the first workers go out. Using our key to unlock this, that will line up about 33 A.D. back in your history of the Bible. Then the Bible says the third hour, that will be 9 o'clock in the morning, He sends in another group of workers. Using our key, that will be around 500 A.D., or the beginning of the Dark Ages in history. Around 12 noon, the next one is the sixth hour, He sends another group in. That will be around 12 noon. That will bring us up, using our key, to around 900 or 1000 A.D., right in the middle of the Dark Ages. He sends some more workers in in the ninth hour. Using our key, that will bring us up to about 1500, the beginning of the Reformation. That will be the ninth hour, 3 p.m. Then the fifth one is the 11th hour. That will bring us up to about 5 p.m., just one hour away from the Lord coming back. Using our key, that will tell you and me that the last workers that God called to do a work in this vineyard went in in 1837. Then at 6 p.m., "even," 12, "even," six o'clock, the Lord comes back. It shows you that 12-hour work schedule.

That little parable tells you, when you get the keys, that the last workers went to work in His vineyard in 1837. We live in 2015 today. We now understand, according to that, that we are the last of that shift. The last work shift, the very last group of that work shift, that is us. A couple of weeks ago, when I was preaching about something else, I told you how that in Chicago, they have the famed Doomsday Clock that they keep, and they call it the, when it hits 12 midnight, they say the world is going to end. In their mind, and I told you this a couple of weeks ago, they think some natural disaster, some meteor is going to hit the planet, or some comet is going to smack into it, or some natural disaster is going to wipe off life on planet Earth. We know, the Bible knows, that it is not a natural disaster we need to worry about, it is the Lord coming back we better be worried about.

But I am showing you that the world itself, the unsaved world, knows and feels something impending that is going to happen. It has always amazed me, the unsaved world can see it. They can set up a Doomsday Clock, and they say that when this thing hits 12 midnight, and they keep moving it with every world event. The whole unsaved world feels that some impending doom is right around the corner. They do not have a Bible, they are not even saved. But God's people who have the Word of God in their safe, we are just living our lives like a party, party, party. We feel no impending element that is going to impact your life in this world and change it all. The unsaved world sees it. I told you that time, a couple of weeks ago, that they got the Doomsday Clock set at 11:57, three minutes in the unsaved estimation to the end of the world. God's people who have the Word of God and have these five things that are in front of them and many other things, we live our lives like we are going to live forever. It is incredible to me.

People who in a physical life are lazy and will not work will come to poverty. Many times, they wind up being homeless. We deal with it every other week. We try to help people, and I have been asked by people, "Why do you help people down there that will not help themselves? Give them food, give them this." People have asked me that. Of course, they missed the point. I am not going down there to feed them. I am going down there to tell them about the Lord Jesus Christ. Feeding is the second thing. The Red Cross goes and feeds them. The Salvation Army

goes and feeds them. All the other organizations feed them. I go down to feed them, but my feeding them is a pretense to show them the gospel. That is the difference.

In a spiritual application, for people who claim to be saved, people who will not grow and in time do a work for God, you realize that they come to the same spiritual poverty level. Just like the people next week that we are going to go down that are absolutely homeless, there is a lot of God's people today that are just as homeless spiritually. They have no church home. They have no place where their spiritual gas tank gets filled. They are homeless in every sense of the word. What brought them to that point? The poverty. What got them to that poverty? Their laziness in doing a work for God. You see it all the time.

Just like in society, when somebody does not want to do any work, "I will not do any work," the rest of society that does the work has to pick up the load and bear the burden like we talked about. It is true in a spiritual sense. It is true in ministry. It is true in every church. Somebody has to pick up the load when you and I as a Christian refuse to do a work for God. The work is going to get done. The work has to get done. But when you have a church of 500 people and only 40 or 50 people are doing it, and a church load requires more than that, somebody is going to have to do double duty and pick up the load. That is just the way that it is.

The simple truth about going back to learning the Bible that gets you to the work of God and its principles, it will take work. It will take hard work. Most people today will never do that. In the end, it is spiritual, and they end up in spiritual poverty. When the really tough times come, they have to rely on somebody else to carry them through, just like the people who will not work. When they get hungry, they have to look for that food truck to come back to give them something to eat because they choose not to work. When a child of God refuses to work, to learn the Bible and work to do the work of God, when the tough times come in their life, they just stay and wait for somebody to come along with a bread truck to help them out of their problems. So it works.

In 1920, the Great Depression came. If you have seen pictures of that or newsreels going back at that time, a lot of men and a lot of women were completely out of work. It was a terrible time. I know they compare the recession that we went into as the worst one and liken it to the Great Depression of the 20s. Let me tell you something. America has never seen a time as desperate as it was in the Great Depression in the 20s. I have seen pictures of long, long, long, long, long bread lines with men just standing in line for hours to come through to get bread. Yet I see God's people, Christianity, in the same spiritual bread lines. They have lost everything in life. They have no work. They have no spiritual home. They have lost everything spiritually. They are destitute by their own choosing, I might add. So when they get hungry, when they have a need, when they have a problem, the bread line forms. We are talking about the people ministry. Things that I want to take and teach you. You know why? Because the bread line never gets small in Christianity. There are always going to be people out there who have not done the work, refused to do the work. Now they are homeless spiritually. They are struggling spiritually. Our job is to help them and give them the bread that they need.

Right now, as a new Christian, and many of you are, I want to make this very clear. As a young Christian, you need to live off the spirituality of older Christians. Nothing wrong with that. That is absolutely okay. You just first get saved, and the first couple of years of your life, you begin to grow and begin to get there. There is nothing wrong with living off somebody else's spirituality. Not a thing. You will get close to a woman, or you will get close to a guy, and you will buddy up with them, and they will help you, and you will go to them for almost everything, and your phone will call them maybe four or five times a day or whatever. That is absolutely okay.

But at some point, you need to establish your own spirituality. At some point, you need to stand on your own two feet. I am not giving you a time frame, because everybody is different. I would certainly say by being five years, you ought to be on your spiritual feet. You ought to be taking somebody else at that point and helping them.

The Bible says in Philippians 2:12-13, and here is a verse that is misused all the time:

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

That verse is always used to teach somebody that you have to work for your salvation. They use that all the time, and they just simply cannot read. First of all, these people are already saved. He is writing to Christians. He is not writing to lost people. He is writing to saved people, and he is telling them, "Hey, look, God has a work that He wants to do in you. He saved you, Philippians 1:6. He started that work, and now you, now that you are saved, have to take the Word of God, the church, the Holy Spirit of God is inside you, and you work through the things in your life, and you work through, and you work out your own salvation, because salvation at the end of the day is for one purpose: a work."

Look at verse 12. Paul says, "I was once with you," his presence, "but now you are on your own." There needs to be a time in your Christian life that you stand on your own, that you do not have to run to somebody every time you have a problem. Again, if you are a young Christian, or you are an older Christian and you are doing it, I am not telling you not to do it. If you are a young Christian, I know in most cases you will grow to that point, but if you are an old Christian and you are still struggling, my encouragement to you is to get the help that you need to get to that point where you can be laboring for God as a Christian.

You have to work to learn the Bible. I wish there was an easy route, an easy way to do it, but there is not. You have to work, you have to put in the time. There is no fast track to it. There is no set of cassettes. There will be some things out there that will maybe help you get to where you want to faster, but there is nothing that will take the place of you just doing the work. I have taken through my teachings on the website and the things that we have written back there, I have taken the labor of 40-some years of my life that I have learned and I have put it in a fashion that will help you learn it easier, help you define things quicker, and help you pick things up quicker, but at the end of the day, that is all I can do for you. You still have to do the work.

You have to work to build a relationship with God. If you are married here today or you have a serious boyfriend and girlfriend issue, you know that that relationship just did not happen. You had to work at it. After you get married, you really have to work at it. It is something that the rest of your life you have to work on. When you build a relationship with God, it takes work. You do the work within your own salvation so you can do the work of God that He has in you that He wants to accomplish. When you do the work, Proverbs 12:11, when you till the ground, when you sow the seed, then you get the satisfaction in life that only can come from the Word of God. "He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied," the Bible says. He is satisfied by bread, the Bread of Life.

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

You have to do it now.

V. The Manna: God's Word and Our Response

I think one of the greatest examples of this is found in the book of Exodus. I think the book of Exodus is probably one of the most premier books in the Bible for a young Christian. I am not saying just reading it through and getting the meat of it. I am saying stepping back and looking at it. The book of Exodus is probably the only book in the Bible that I know of that chapter by chapter, or in some cases, sections by sections of that book, will show you the whole Christian life from the day before you got saved to the day you got saved, and then put every event in your life just the way that it needs to be. All around the nation of Israel coming out of Egypt.

It starts out by showing that Israel down in Egypt, Egypt a type of the world, under a hard taskmaster, Pharaoh a type of the devil. It is a picture of you and I before we were saved. The bondage, the burden that we were under, the absolute entrapment of this world, Egypt, and how it did nothing good for us. Its only desire was to crush us and to kill us and to make us slaves. But Israel cried out, did they not? When they cried out, God heard their cry. God sent them a deliverer, Moses. Moses is the type of Christ in the Bible. Just like you and Israel and me. When we were under the pressure of the world, we cried out, and God sent us a deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ. That deliverer comes down to them. Moses, he goes and contends with the devil, Pharaoh. In Exodus 12, he leads them out. You know how they get let out? By the blood of the Lamb. You know how you get out of the bondage of the world? You get out through a deliverer by the blood of a Lamb.

After that, Exodus 13, 14, 15, 16 talks about their sanctification, talks about their prayer life. A chapter on their baptism. It is incredible. But when you get to Exodus 16, probably the single greatest chapter in the Bible, in the events of things in a Christian's life about the Word of God. It is an incredible thing. The children of Israel and you and me. When they leave Egypt, they head for the Promised Land. It is a picture of you and I getting saved and heading for the blessings and the things of God. But now they are in what the Bible calls the wilderness of sin. When they get into that wilderness of sin, the water is bitter, there is nothing to eat, there is no food, and it is a picture of a child of God. Once they get saved, the world now has nothing for you ever again.

What you used to drink has lost its sparkle. What you used to eat does not taste good anymore. But now you are in a dilemma because you are here in the wilderness of sin with nothing to eat.

What did God do? God supernaturally brought food to them in the form of manna. That manna is a picture of the Word of God, God's supernatural gift to you and me in our wilderness journey. They are told to gather that bread every morning. Also, when you read the story, you will find that the people that loved it went out and gathered it, but they always had the mixed multitude with them, did they not? Numbers 11, other places in the Bible, the mixed multitude were those who went along with them, but they got as far away from what God was doing as they could. Every church will have its element of mixed multitude. Just like the mixed multitude back in Exodus 16 and the mixed multitude in any church today, the mixed multitude despised the manna. They wanted to go back to Egypt where they could have the garlic and the leeks and the melons and the fishes. They forgot about the hard bondage and the burden of baking bricks and Pharaoh's brick furnace. They forgot about the burden and the whippings and the beatings and the long hours. That is such a picture of God's people who forget what God has done for them and then want to go back to the world.

What was gathered when they went out to get it had to be used that day. The manna was to be eaten. He never intended them to get a bowl of manna and put it on a coffee table so everybody could see they had a bowl of manna. He intended them to take that manna, pick it up, to eat it. When they ate it, they got the spiritual strength that they need to endure their wilderness journey. You and I are in a wilderness journey. This whole world is not my home. I am just traveling through. My home is laid up somewhere beyond the blue, as the old song says. It was food for strength. It was food for their existence in a hostile land.

As a supernatural gift, God brought the bread, the manna, right to where they were. They did not have to go find the Dead Sea Scrolls in some cave someplace. They did not have to go to some monastery in the Sinai Peninsula or the Vatican or someplace. No, no, no. When God brought the supernatural bread of life to sustain them, He brought it right to where they were. You have in your hand today the Word of God, the manna from heaven, that God brought right down and dunked in your lap. Praise the Lord.

The Bible says that it came down like snow. While they slept at night, when they woke up in the morning, it was all around the camp. That is a picture of the church age. The church age is a picture of the night. The church age picture is the fact that while we were in the church age, God brought that manna right down to where we were. In the morning, when they got up, the first thing they did was pull back that tent flap, and there around them everywhere was the Word of God just laid out right there for them. That brought on a decision. Every day of your life, you have to face the same decision. Because once they were up, God brought it down and there it was. The decision was, "Am I going to pick it up and eat it? Or am I going to trample it under my feet and just go on with my day?" That is the decision every one of us makes every day of our lives.

And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less.

What a statement. That statement rang true back in Exodus, and it rings true right today. God gave you the manna from heaven, He brought it right to you. It is the spiritual strength that you need. Some of you will gather more, and some of you will gather less. It is incredible. But the thing that I wanted you to see is even though God brought it to them, He brought it supernaturally right to where they were. It did not fall in their mouth. They had to labor to pick it up. They had to get a basket, get a pot, get a bag. They had to go out there and stoop over and labor to pick up that bread so they would have it to eat. It took work to get it. Just like today, some of God's people will gather more, and some will gather less.

VI. The Net of Deception and Vain Persons

The last part of Proverbs 12:11 says, "but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding." Going back to our companion verse in Proverbs 28:19, we want to get the whole scope here. It says, "but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough." That is an old English word, old English phrase, "poverty enough." That is more than you can handle. We use it in a different fashion today when something keeps coming and we do not like, we say, "Enough already!" That is what they are saying. "Poverty enough."

Have you ever noticed, and this is a phenomenon that, unless you are paying attention and really keeping score, you probably do not see, have you ever noticed the polarizing effect that the Bible has on people? It is incredible. Have you ever noticed in our world, we have people who, "Oh, I do not like God, I hate God," "Oh, I love God," and somewhere in between, "Well, I kind of love God," or "Today I do, tomorrow I will not," and all these things. But have you ever noticed in the Bible, that is never found in the Bible? You realize that in Proverbs, there is a wise man and a foolish man, and there is never anything in between. You notice in the book of Proverbs, it is a wicked man and a righteous man, never anything in between. In the book of Proverbs, it is a harsh woman, a strange woman, and a virtuous woman, nothing in between. That is incredible to me.

One of the things that we all have to work through, and many times on a daily basis, is with God, it is either light or darkness. We like to be in the gray. With God, there is no gray. Spiritual lazy people, have you ever noticed how they all hang out with other spiritual lazy people? It forms a contrast, just like the book of Proverbs. Christians on fire and doing a work will always hang out with people like they are. People with understanding in churches, they will see that and they will say, "Oh, that is a clique." You are absolutely right. You get an A. In every church, there are two cliques. There is God's clique and there is the devil's clique. It just works that way. You want to go clique, clique, clique, clique, clique in the middle. There is no clique, clique, clique in the middle. It is either light or darkness. You are either on fire for the Lord and trying to do or want to do, or you are making your way to move that way, or you are just lazy and you just do not, you want to come to church, you want to have a fun time, but you do not really want to take anything serious when it comes to God. That old book divides you and me out, brother. I do not know why you would miss that. When you start reading your Bible in Genesis 1, you do not go three verses that in chapter 4, He said, "God, the light of the light from the darkness," and it never gets back together.

I always tell you and warn you, people do not listen to me, but I always try to tell you and warn you that you will become who you associate with. My old grandmother used to say in the old adage, "Birds of a feather flock together." It is hilarious to me over the years, I have had parents that had kids that were, how do you say, worthless, lazy in every aspect of spirituality. It is always, and I understand this, as parents, it is always easier for us when we look at our children and our children fail. It points a finger back to us. So it is always easier to blame our failure of our children on somebody else. I mean, that is just human nature. We all struggle with that.

One of the things as a parent, you need to learn to deal with is whatever your kids do, what you train them to do. I know every kid makes mistakes and some kids will make terrible mistakes. The way you see the training is when they really screw it up, how they respond to you in trying to get them back on track, that is really the key. But they will always blame the laziness of their children or the problem with their children on other worthless kids that he or she hangs out with, that they, through that influence, made them that way. Honestly, the parents many times, they never have a clue, they never get it. They never see that your child shows the bums that they hang out with because he likes the bums that he hangs out with. Nobody put handcuffs on him and said, "Go with this worthless person." He looked at that worthless person, he looked at the alternative, and he said, "I want to be like that worthless person." In time, he becomes like that worthless person. By the way, before you put your name in for a mother of the year, who taught them that value system of choosing friends? I guess that is somebody else's fault too.

You talk about a lack of understanding. In our passage today, you see the great contrast of life, the polarizing effect of the Word of God. Proverbs 12:11 says, "a man void of understanding." In Proverbs 28:19, it says, "a man with poverty enough." Here is a person whose life is an endless maze of heartache, disappointment, broken relationships, shattered dreams, completely dysfunctional. Or the contrast to it, Proverbs 12:11, "a man who is satisfied with bread." And Proverbs 28:19 says, "a man who has plenty of bread." You see that simple contrast? This Proverbs is very simple in a physical sense and in a spiritual application. Real satisfaction only comes from the Word of God in your life and plenty of it. You have plenty of it because you did the work to get it. You labored to pick it up.

Have you ever noticed how the world will always take the word "bread" and associate it with physical money? "Man, I ain't got no bread today." "Hey, you got any bread?" "Yeah, I got some bread, man." That is a counterfeit. That is taking what will never satisfy you and putting it into a context of something that will satisfy you. All the money in the world will never satisfy you. There is only one bread that will satisfy you when you get plenty of it, and that is the Bread of Life. That is the comfort of the real Bread of Life that will fill you up and give you plenty.

When I was a kid growing up, I do not even know if I have it today because I never paid attention, but they had what we called Wonder Bread. Wonder Bread used to have a slogan. It said, and it was supposed to be better than all the other bread. It probably was not, but it was a marketing tool. It said, "Wonder Bread, building strong bodies 12 ways." Little did I know that the real Wonder Bread is that book. Salvation is of the Jews, and that book will build you through the nation of Israel strong 12 ways. Salvation is of the Jew, the 12 tribes. The Wonder Bread that God has for us.

Now look at Proverbs 12:12: "The wicked desireth the net of evil men, but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit." It says, "The wicked desireth the net of evil men." Doctrinally in the Bible, you will find this a lot in Psalms. You will find it in Ezekiel, probably Jeremiah, some of the other places. Wherever you find the word "net," you will want to watch it because most of the time, it is going to be connected and give you the context of the Tribulation Period and the Antichrist when he sets a net, a trap for the nation of Israel. Many times, it is like setting down a net for a bird. In the analogy, the net is the Antichrist's trap, the bird is the nation of Israel. You just want to watch that, a net to snare you. It shows that the world system is made up of wicked men that simply want to set a trap for you in everything they do. A trap that will trick you and get something from you. A net, a net to snare you.

In life, if you see any example of this, and I could give you many, but for the sake of time this morning, I get the greatest example in America, just America's form of advertising. It appeals to the lust of the eyes. It appeals to the basic covetousness that we all have inside in our own nature. It appears for us to focus on what we do not have and never being satisfied with what we do have. It is this net that spreads more lives, snares more people than anything else. You see it in the TV commercials. You get a two-hour movie you want to watch, and they edit the movie. You know why they edit the movie? Because they have a half hour of commercials in it that they break up. All through that movie, you see those commercials, you have to endure to watch something, and they want you to buy what they have. You hear it on the radio. You read it in newspapers and magazines. You see it in the billboards along the highway. It makes you think that you cannot live without having one of these. So you spend your money on something that you really do not need.

You know the billboard down around the freeway? They run anywhere from \$2,000 to \$3,000 a month. That sounds really expensive. When is the last time you saw a blank one? You know why people do it? Because they work. When we sit here and watch the Super Bowl every year and have a great time, everybody vies for the commercial time. You know they spend millions of dollars for a 30-second ad during the Super Bowl. Millions of dollars, millions of dollars for a 30-second spot. You know why they will do that? Because they know people watch it. You come away from a Super Bowl or come away from watching television or whatever and you think that you just cannot have a good time without old Bud showing up. Budweiser. Good friends, good times, and low in brow. You see, it is the net of deception.

It deceives women into thinking that a certain kind of lipstick will make you prettier, or a certain hair color. Changing your hair, now you are a new person. You make people say, "Oh, I did not recognize you with your hair." But I will tell you what, you can do all you want. Your dog still knows who you are. All the time. I have dressed up for Halloween before and tried to scare my dogs. Put on the ugliest costume I could. Walk downstairs, they are both snoozing on the thing, and I will say, "Hey," they look up, tail wagging, come down, they know who I am.

It is the net of deception that you think a perfume will make you more irresistible, or cologne will make you more desirable. So they call it "Passion," "Obsession." You actually think, you are deceived. "Buy this and everybody will see you as passionate." I have had women think that a new black dress will make them look thinner. I have had guys say, "I wear black because it

makes me look thinner." Hey, that does not make you, hey, if you want to do something at worst, call David Copperfield. He makes 747s disappear.

On your computer, you get trapped in some of the most ungodly stuff you ever saw in your life. Terrible bad doctrine. Any conspiracy theory you ever want. I saw last week that Caitlyn Jenner is really an alien from another planet. I kind of believe that one. All the filth of this world in your own home, some people stay on that computer 24 hours a day, and you can get on there and you can buy stuff. You can do this, you can do any one. It is all a deception, and it is all a trap. That is why, if you have not figured it out, they call it the internet.

You see it in Christianity. I talk about it all the time. You think that building a hundred-million-dollar church building will make you a better church. You really do. You think when you get this and you get the sound system and you get this over here and this over here and you have all these great things in here, that, "Wow, we are now really a great church." It is a deception. It is a net of deception. Because "the wicked desireth the net of evil men." The net of deception that waits to snare all of us and deceive us into thinking that the things of life will really satisfy us when the only real satisfaction comes from bread and plenty of it, that you worked hard to get, a labor of God and a work of God.

I thought about this last week, and I saw it in some of your eyes, and I know, last week we had the trap shoot on Saturday, which was an all-day event. Then we turned right around, had church that Sunday morning, and had the anniversary Sunday, and that was an all-day event. Then Monday morning, you are right back to work again. I know I saw it in many of your faces, and I know I felt it too. I was absolutely worn out. I was just absolutely spent. All day Saturday, plus everything else I had to do, get ready for Sunday and all the other things, and then all day Sunday and then all of that stuff. I was worn out. But I thought to myself, "I am really tired, but it is a good tired." My mom used to have a saying, when I had hurt my leg and I was always not the best kid doing chores around the house, when I would hurt my leg and I would go in and I would say, "Mom, I really hurt my leg." Her standard answer was, "Well, you did not hurt it doing anything for me." I love it. "Mom, I really hurt my..." "You did not do it." "It feels better already, Mom." You have got to get a tent and go on the road.

There are things that we were worn out with doing the world we used to do, was there not? I know we get tired sometimes, get worn out, but there is something about getting worn out doing a work for the Lord. It just does not compare with being tired of getting a work for the world. I thought about that. Thought about that a lot.

VII. The Root of the Righteous and Strongholds

Now look at the last part of Proverbs 12:12: "But the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit." The roots of a saved man yieldeth fruit. In life, as in anything, it will all go back to what you are rooted in. Here again, we have another great contrast.

The Bible says in 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.

Hebrews 12:15 says:

Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

Getting your roots down in some things is definitely not a good thing. Roots go down deep. Roots are always under the surface. Nobody else can see them. In 1 Timothy 6:10, this talks about the love of money, covetousness being the root problem. You see the example that he is probably making a reference to here is back in Joshua 7 with Achan, who stole the gold and the wedge of silver and the Babylonian garment. The Bible says back there in Joshua 7:21, "When I saw them, I coveted them." Then he takes them and he hides them in the tent floor so nobody can see it. Hebrews 12:15 talks about bitterness, the root problem. The root problem of bitterness is unforgiveness, not being able to forgive others. It all comes because of the roots that we put down deep in our life.

Then you have two more verses about being rooted in the right thing that form our contrast.

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Getting rooted in the things of God in your life, rooted and grounded. You have to root yourself, get those roots down deep. You have to work at doing that. You have to be a wise master builder, build yourself a workman. He says in 2 Timothy 2:15 that a workman is one who needs not to be ashamed, that being ashamed is a judgment seat of Christ.

Notice the four dangers for a Christian in a church:

- Philosophy
- Vain deceit
- Traditions of men
- Rudiments of the world

Today in Christianity in churches, this is what has replaced the Word of God. In a practical sense, dealing with everyday problems, when we talk about the struggles that we all go through and there are people who develop strongholds in their life and they get them in their life, we are simply talking about roots. A wrong root system. You take a tree and plant it in your backyard. After two or three years, you can pretty easily dig that tree up and get it out of there. You decide to move it, take it out. But you take that tree and put it in there and you wait for 10 years, 15 years and try to dig it up, you will dig up the whole neighborhood. The roots have gone down

deep. They have attached themselves to other roots, to rocks, to foundations, and you will never get it up out of the ground.

In the Bible, there is a definite process to breaking strongholds. You do not deal with strongholds like you deal with everything else. A stronghold is about not just dealing with the surface stuff. In your garden variety problem that you go through in life, we deal with it on the surface. When you have a stronghold, you have a root problem. In breaking any stronghold, it is going to take three things:

5. A lot of time.
6. A lot of work.
7. A biblical process to get it done.

Somebody says, "What is the greatest advice that you could give someone that has a stronghold?" The greatest thing you could ever learn about a stronghold is simply this: It took you a lot easier to get into it than it ever does to get out of it. While you were getting into it, it was fun. While you were getting into it, it was pleasurable. You enjoyed it. But then there comes a time in your life where it starts to take an effect on you, a drastic effect. Now you want to change it. It is like going out in my backyard, I have a tree that is that big around, and through the erosion of the water, I can see those roots going out to my neighbor's house, up the back to my house. I look at that and I think to myself, "How in the world would you ever dig this up?"

Somebody says, "Well, I struggle with my stronghold and I cannot get over it." The greatest thing you ought to do when you struggle through a stronghold, the greatest thing you ought to learn, and maybe this is why God lets you go through it, is because you are not smart enough to pick it out. The greatest thing you ought to learn about this stronghold will keep you from ever getting into another stronghold. One, how easy was it to get in it, but how hard it was to get out of it. That does not ever keep you from getting into another one. You are in trouble.

Let me say, I preach about strongholds and talk about them, they are a very bad thing, and they are, but here is a contrast for you. Not all strongholds are bad. You can have a stronghold of the world in your life, that is bad, or you can have a stronghold of God in your life, that is good. The one you get by following vain people and no work for God and leads to poverty, through your void of understanding, and you get a stronghold in your life and you get caught in the net. The other one, you get the book, through being a workman, and you grow, you build yourself as a wise master builder, you get plenty of bread, you get satisfaction, you get understanding, and you get rooted in the Word of God and it becomes a stronghold in your life.

Sometime, if you do not have time to do it, go back to 2 Samuel 23:14. There was a story there right in the middle of David and his mighty men of valor. The Bible says that David is in a hold with all of his mighty men of valor. Down in the valley is where all the Philistines are. That hold where he is at is right next to Bethlehem. Bethlehem means the "house of bread." In that hold, they have the advantage of going down and whacking the Philistines any time they want, but the Philistines do not have the advantage to ever come up and whack them. You know why? It is God's stronghold. When you build the right stronghold in your life through the right work, the

right bread, and the right things you put in your life, you are free to whack the world, but the world never gets back to whack you.

Look at the last part of Proverbs 12:12 again: "But the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit." The roots of a saved man yieldeth fruit. Why? Because the Bible says in Proverbs 11:30:

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

VIII. The Judgment Seat of Christ and the Fruit of Our Labor

After all that we have said, and all that we have talked about, at the end of the day, the real satisfaction for a child of God will be simply looking back and seeing what you did with the salvation that God gave you. I cannot emphasize that enough. In Luke 19, you have the parable of the pounds where every man got one pound from the Lord. The Lord comes back and the guy says, "Lord, You gave me one pound, I invested wisely, got You 10." The other guy says, "Lord, I got one pound You gave me, I just kept it, did not do anything with it." Looking at the work of God in your life and what it really has produced. There is no greater satisfaction.

You are going to have all the money in the world, you are going to have all the things in the world, you are going to have all the friends in the world, you are going to have everything that the world offers. There will be no satisfaction completely in your life until you have the work of God in your life that you can look back and you can see what you did for the Lord based on what He did for you. I am not talking about your life being perfect and not having some mission and not having some problems, do not misunderstand me. I am talking about a consistency of a work. Simply taking what God has given you and reproducing it in others.

This is the big reason why God's people, if you ever noticed again, just by observation, people who never really do anything for God, have you ever noticed about 50, 60 years of age, they start to have all kinds of issues? There is no satisfaction, there is no work, there is no real bread in their life. Now they start having physical issues. Now they are having psychological issues. Now they start having spiritual issues. Now they start having emotional issues. They have been saved now for 30, 40, sometimes 50 years in some cases. If they really stopped along the way and really understood what God did for them and what they have not done for God, they would have a heart attack. There is simply no defining work of God in their life. Their finances are a mess, their children are a mess, their marriage is a mess, their lives are a mess, there is absolutely no reproducing of anything spiritual in their lives for over 30 years. Now those roots have gone down and attached themselves to many foreign objects underneath the surface. Now there is no joy, now there is no happiness, there is certainly no satisfaction, there is no bread, and most of all there is no fruit. It all goes back to the fact that there is no work, the reason God saved us. Philippians 1:6, God began a good work in you, and then someplace along the line you went on strike.

The Bible says in Ephesians 4:30:

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

When you and I got saved, the Holy Spirit of God comes in and seals us until the Lord comes back. 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 years, He lives inside you and me. He sees all that I cast my eyes on. He understands all the thoughts that I allow in my mind. Psalm 139:2 says, "He understands my thoughts afar off." He endures every bad decision I make. He is forced to look at things that are absolutely against everything that is His holiness. He is forced to hang out with a crowd that I choose and hear His name being dragged through the mud and terrible things said about Him by His name. He is forced to taste the beer, to smell the smoke, to experience the drugs that we put into our bodies. God put Him inside me to do a work, but we drag Him through the sewers of life by where I go and what I do. He was put in me for a work, but He has to endure my laziness, my lackadaisical lifestyle that I choose to pursue. He wants to reproduce Himself through me, my children, my family, my friends, and wherever He sends me, but He is forced to watch as I destroy everything He wants to accomplish in my life through my lackadaisical, workless, thankless attitude. It grieves Him. Do you get that? It grieves Him. Galatians 2:21, Paul says, "I will not frustrate the grace of God."

That grieving over 20, 30 years will manifest itself into many areas of my life now. My physical life, my health goes. I will become an emotional basket case, depression and anxiety. My spiritual life, there is no victory. There is no completeness. There is no satisfaction. There is no joy. There is no nothing. You go to your doctor, he sends you to a shrink. You tell him, "Well, I have good days and bad days, and some days I cry. Some days I am happy, and some days I am not happy, and I just go back and forth." He has no idea that for 20, 30 years, you have grieved the Holy Spirit of God that is in you. So he says you are bipolar. I used to call it manic depression because a bipolar person has mood swings from high to low. Manic is high, depression is low, and they swing back and forth. They have upgraded it now, you are bipolar. Northern hemisphere, Southern hemisphere, Northern pole, South pole. Two different natures, two different mood swings flying back and forth.

Years ago, I had the opportunity in a debate before a bunch of college kids. A lot of them were saved, but I debated this unsaved psychologist. She was a woman, and the teacher was a saved man. He set it up, and he wanted to give us both opening statements and then wanted to go back and forth about, I believe the Bible was the only solution to man. She thought that psychology, education, and all the junk that she had there was the way to go. It was a hilarious time. I got it on tape someplace. They videoed it. She gets up, and I opened my opening statement, "I believe the Bible is the Word of God," and I just, I said, "We ourselves are at different ends. I believe the Bible." I went through my deal, and she got up and went through hers. Somebody asked a question about bipolar. Sometimes in life when you get into these things, if you are smart enough, God just hands it to you on a plate. You have got to be smart enough at that point to have the guts to take it and knock it out of the park. She just delivered it to me. Somebody says, "What about bipolar?" "After all, what about bipolar?" She says, she was trying to be so professional yet down on their level, "That is an excellent question. Look at it this way. How many have ever been down to the Southern Hemisphere?" About half the crowd had been someplace down there. She said, "Look at it this way. Very simple illustration. In the Northern Hemisphere, when you flush your toilet, it flushes left to right. When you go to the Southern Hemisphere and you flush your toilet, it goes the other way. Now think of that as bipolar. The whole world goes left to right.

But when you really have some problems, you start to go opposite to the real world. The job of psychology, the job is to me, is to always get us to going in the right direction, like in the Northern Hemisphere, when you flush your toilet." Everybody applauding. Such a simple thing. She looked at me and did not say it, but looked at me and said, "Match that." I mean, I knew the body language. She did not like me, and I did not like her. If she was a little bit bigger, I would beat her up in the parking lot afterwards. She looked at me and she says, "Pastor," oh, I hate when they say that, "Pastor." So I got up and I said, "That was a great illustration." I said, "And she really proves my point. In the Northern Hemisphere, the toilet flushes left to right. In the Southern Hemisphere, it flushes right to left. Her way, you know what, either way, you are still in the toilet. My answer will get you out of the toilet. It is God's Word." I really got a hand of applause on that one. I will tell you what, she just sat down. In fact, she did not have much fire the rest of the day.

But either way, you are still in the toilet. So he puts you on drugs. Now he gives you Prozac. He gives you Zoloft, anti-depressants. To calm you, to help you, sedate you, slow your depression down. For 20, 30 years, you are a legalized drug addict. In one sense, they are right. Every Christian is bipolar. You have an old nature and a new nature. The old nature lives down south. The new nature lives up north. They do not get along. The more one you feed and hang out with, there is one that dominates you. That is not hard to figure out. It is just that simple. The Holy Spirit of God in you desires to live up north. You keep dragging Him down south. That is all. That is all it is. The work that God saves you for just never gets done. After years of it, there is no coming back. The roots are down too deep. The strongholds are too oppressive. Yet the answer is so easy. The answer is simply plenty of bread. Saturate your mind with the Word of God. Be saturated with a work for God. "He that telleth the land shall be satisfied." "He that telleth his land shall have plenty of bread."

I simply leave you with this. 1 Corinthians 3:9-16. Our work for the Lord. This is a judgment seat of Christ. Look what it is built on. Look what it is based on. Somebody said one time, "Well, your church is all about work." Amen, brother, you bet it is. A work for Him.

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

The judgment seat of Christ is about one thing. It is about a work that you did or a work that you did not do. God saved you to do a work and labor in His field, His vineyard. At the judgment seat of Christ, you will find the two contrasts, the Proverbs 12:11-12. One who would not do the

work, the other one who did do the work. One was satisfied and filled with plenty, the other was destitute and homeless and in poverty.

In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

Titus 3:8 says:

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

IX. Closing Prayer

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus, and we do love You today. Thank You for all You have done for us and all that You have given us. Thank You for the...