

Proverbs 23

Sunday 6/17/2018

We have been in Proverbs 23, and we were off last week because Jim Lake was here and he spoke to us. We got a blessing out of that. We have seen so far a small section of Proverbs 23. We have been talking about the end result of our walk with God. I have talked about how we as parents endeavor to establish God's heritage through parenting. Psalms 127:3 talks about our very children being God's heritage and His fruit.

We are talking about how God's plan to reach the world is the family, and ensuring that through our walk with God, what we do with the Bible, and what we build in our family relationships, establishes your family in the ministry so that God's good work in your life will go on after you and I are gone until the Lord comes back. We got a verse on a Thursday night that fell right into this, Philippians 1:6, where it says:

Philippians 1:6

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:

We looked at that and focused on the fact that the day you got saved, God began a work in you that He wants to continue until the rapture of the church. Then I brought up the point: How does that happen? How does that work if you die 20, 30, or 40 years before the rapture takes place and you go off this earth and do not live here anymore? How does that work go on? The answer to that is, it goes on through the legacy of your family. As you understand that you, as a mom and dad, through your walk with God, establish that concept, then God takes it from there.

There will be no greater joy or rejoicing, and that is really where we started our study. It was with Proverbs 23:24 that said, "The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice." We talked about that from a physical aspect of being a human father, but also from a spiritual aspect of the people that you work with and establish in the ministry. As I have told you many, many times, there is no greater joy or rejoicing in all the world than that of your children standing by your side and ministering the Word of God with you.

As a side note for the kids who are here this morning and going into camp, and for the parents who are here, as I have said many, many times, we have a very, very young church. There are a lot of young people here, a lot of young kids. Some of your kids in the next three or four years will be growing up and moving into the challenges of being a teenager and then going on into adulthood. If I can, as a side note before we delve into this and try to put it all together, allow me to give you just five little things that I think you ought to try to work on and remember, and try to communicate this within your own family, but certainly to your children. I am trying to communicate it to you as parents.

I. The Legacy of God's Heritage

1. Without a doubt, make sure you marry the right person. Nothing on this planet will destroy your life and your work for God more than being yoked to the wrong person, marrying

somebody you never should have married. Getting into a relationship, stepping outside the guidelines of the Word of God because you are lonely, you want somebody, you cannot wait, and so you take control of your life, you manipulate the circumstances, and look what you got today. I say that to you young kids, every one of you, that you need to be patient with what God wants to do in your life. You need to realize that God will bring the right person in His time into your life. When you step outside that, you are going to get the wrong situation, and the devil would just love to accomplish that in your life.

2. Work together within your family. Understand, when we came through the child thing, I gave you some homework, how you can on a weekly basis sit down and communicate the great truths, and work together within your family.
3. Train those kids to work with you. Bring them into what you are doing. Allow them to see what God is doing in your life and then just bring them automatically along with that.
4. Establish your life and your family as God's heritage. Allowing your children to know the overall game plan. Yes, they are my daughter, they are my son, they are my children, but they are also God's heritage. There is a bigger picture here. There is more to the Christian life than getting married and finding a good wife or a good husband and having children. You are the key to the continuation of the good work that God started in you, but it has to come through your family.
5. The church and parenting have to go together. There will be things that you face, things that you do not understand, things that you come up against, challenges. Why make the wrong choice? Why make the bad decision? Why just try to handle it? If you are not sure, then you find out how to deal with it. The reason for that is because with the Word of God together, there is nothing that we cannot do with it. There is no problem we cannot solve. There is no issue that we cannot fix. It is only when we refuse to use God's tools that we fail in what we attempt to do. We fail to use the Bible. We fail to use the church. We fail to utilize the pastor to help figure it all out and put it all together.

II. The Wisdom of God's Heart

Today, based on what I just said and where we have been, we want to move on. What we want to do today is to tie the last two or three times that we were together and put it all in a little package. We want to understand the concept of the father and the mother greatly rejoicing over a child who in life has made and learned to make good, wise choices. They have come to the point where they do not make bad choices anymore. The context of all of this will be a child who has God's wisdom to make his mother's heart joyful because they are watching the investment in their life of where they are going. Now, because they have done their work understanding the concept of God's family, we are moving along and seeing it actually happen.

Let us read today Proverbs 23:26-28. It says this:

Proverbs 23:26-28

My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit.

She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men.

Let us pray. Father, we thank You and praise You today for the Lord Jesus. We love You. We ask You, Father, to help us to put together the Word of God in our lives, to give us what we need. We ask You now, Father, to open up our hearts, open up the Word of God, and give us all the things that we need today to accomplish the purpose of God in the challenging task of raising our children as God's heritage and seeing the fruit and the joy and the rejoicing because we understand the overall plan of God. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us look at Proverbs 23:26. We are just going to take these verses. Proverbs 23:26 says, "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways." When you just read that, it does not look like much. It does not look like there is really a lot there that we could spend an hour talking about, but I guarantee you this is an incredible verse, and it is loaded with what we need to look at today. Of course, he starts out there, "My son, give me thine heart."

III. The Heart of the Matter: A Historical Perspective

Back in the 1960s and 70s, long before most of you were born, we had the war in Vietnam. The war in Vietnam was a tragic war. Some 25,000 young American boys lost their lives. It was a very confusing war to most people. America experienced her first defeat in all the history of all the wars that she fought. We won the Civil War, we fought World War I, the Spanish-American War, the Mexican War; we went through all of those things. World War II was a stunning victory. We defeated the Germans in Europe and the Japanese in Japan, and it was an absolutely incredible victory. But then what happened was Korea came along, and we neither won nor lost Korea. It was a stalemate. We never got a victory there. Then a little bit of time after that, the Vietnam War came along, and we got our rear ends kicked. We lost the Vietnam War. We spent 25,000 young men's lives, never accomplished anything, and the moment we left, all that we tried to stand for and all that we tried to do collapsed within 20 minutes. Today, Saigon, which was the base there for the American warriors, became Ho Chi Minh City and completely went communist. Everything fell apart. It was a war that we probably could have won in six months. It was a war that could have been very easily won, but every time politicians get in it, every time there is a hidden agenda that keeps the thing going, it was a war where nobody wanted to win it and nobody wanted to fight in it. It was a very tragic time for America, and the loss of life of young men was incredible. There is probably not a town in this country that did not lose somebody or multiple young men to that.

Now we are in a war in the Middle East. It started in the 90s when we invaded Kuwait and took down Saddam Hussein and all of that in Baghdad. We have been in that war ever since, and we will never get out of that war. There will be no end to that war. America has never learned the lessons that the war we are in now has no end to because we are not fighting a nation. As much as people do not want to hear it, they do not want to listen to it, they do not want to believe it, we are fighting a religion. That is not going away. If Jesus comes back, or whenever He does come back, if it lasts another hundred years, two hundred years, we will still be fighting that war, and no one will win it. It is incredible. One of the most incredible studies that you will ever take

through history is to study that war in Vietnam, the war that nobody wanted to fight in and the war that nobody really wanted to win.

After World War II, we saw the rise of Russia, and we entered into what is commonly called the Cold War. The Cold War lasted from about 1947, 1948, somewhere in there, probably maybe even 1946, all the way up to the collapse of the Russian Empire under President Reagan in the 80s. It was called the Cold War because it was not a hot war. We were not fighting on battlefields. It was a war of two nations trying to offset the other one without actually going to war. We got the atomic bomb in 1945. The Russians got it shortly thereafter. That was supposed to be the great deterrent. Nobody wanted to use the atomic bombs because they knew the total destruction. They sent five over to us, we sent ten back to them, and before you know it, the whole world is a wasteland. That was supposed to be the deterrent, and it has been the chip on the table. This is why we do not want North Korea to get nuclear weapons, or Iraq, or Iran, because they will use it because they do not understand the concept.

It was a Cold War, and America took one position and Russia took another. From 1945 to 1980, three-quarters of the world fell under communism. They moved into China after World War II. They moved into North Korea after World War II. They took over 95% of Europe. All of those countries over there were at that time communist. When World War II ended and the Russians got it, they were allowed to get into Berlin. It split Berlin into four sections, and they had the west side, we had the east side, we had the west side. 99% of South America went communist. Daniel 7:5 talks about the rise of the great bear. That prophetically is a picture of Russia, and it says, "arise and devour much flesh." That means that during that time period that I just gave you, three-quarters of the world got devoured by communism.

America tried to counter that, and of course, she went into Vietnam. China, Vietnam, and Korea were all held by Europeans before World War II. When the Japanese came in, kicked out the Europeans, the Japanese had those nations, and after World War II, when the Japanese were booted out, the Europeans tried to come back in, and they did not want them. Communism was on its way, and it spread into those nations, and that is why we have the conflicts. In 1960, up to about 1973-74, with the war in Vietnam, America tried to counter the Cold War. America put together a plan to build free democracies around the world, and the way she had to do that was to defeat communism. So we got into Korea right after World War II. Then we got into Vietnam; the French were in there, they could not do it, so then America got into it.

There was a term that was born during this time, and the term was that America was wanting to build "little Americas" all around the world. They thought if they did that, communism would never get a foothold because who would not want to live in a free democracy versus the chokehold of communism? Sounds good. So America came up with the idea that if you wanted to get these nations not to go communist and you wanted to get the people on your side, they coined the phrase "the winning of hearts and minds." That is the phrase they had: win the people's hearts toward democracy, and the country will follow.

During Vietnam, a guy by the name of General Harkins, one of the leading generals in the early part, would give his troops pep rallies on why we were fighting in Vietnam and why we should

fight to win and all these things, though nobody ever wanted to. His analogy was one of the goofiest analogies that I have ever heard in my life. I guess in the day it made sense with what they were trying to do. He said, "Why are we fighting in Vietnam? Why are we putting our lives on the line to help these people that we do not ever know? Because inside every Vietnamese is an American trying to break out." So we were going to defeat communism by unlocking the American dream that was in everybody in Vietnam. What a disaster. What a failure it was. What an absolute failure.

So we launched a program through the CIA and military to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people. It was a tragedy. It was a disaster. It was really the main reason we lost in Vietnam. America had a superior mindset that American culture, American society, capitalism as we know it, free democracy, was the greatest thing on this planet. We would solve all the world's problems if we just made everybody like America. Little did they know that the book of Ecclesiastes says fundamentally, on paper it may look different, living in each country it may look different, but from the Bible standpoint in the book of Ecclesiastes, there is no difference between communism and capitalism as far as God is concerned. You do not bring peace and solve man's problems by giving him everything he wants.

Truth of the matter is, just as a side note—there will be a few side notes today—under that oppressive reign of communism in those communist countries, and all the freedoms that we have in America, during the same time Christianity flourished unbelievably under the iron curtain more than it did here. Because when you give God's people everything they want, you lose God's people. When God's people run to the person, you got up this morning and maybe you decided to come to church and maybe you did not. Maybe you decided to go to Bible study or maybe you do not. It is no big deal to you because you got it all. But let me tell you something, when you decide in a communist country you are going to go to church that morning, you probably got an 8 out of 10 chance you are going to be put in prison and tortured and probably killed. It eliminates the phony Christians, and there is nothing wrong with a good strong persecution. That is what made the book of Acts and the early church; that is a powerful instrument of God. We as American Christians, we have so much, we have everything. We just do not like persecution. We do not like the bad times. We disdain and hate it so much that we have come up with a theology that if anything bad happens in your life, it is of the devil, and if everything good happens in your life, it is of God. I can probably say this just on an everyday basis, without you screwing your life up, just going through the course of life, probably the good things in your life come from the devil, and the bad things in your life will come from God. But it was that mindset, that superiority mindset, that America is going to win the hearts and minds of all these people, and then they will come and they will follow and they will become little Americans.

Learning the lessons from history will apply to the lessons of your life and my life to this very day of who is going to win your heart and mind, because that is really the issue today. If God gets your heart, your mind will follow. The reason why you are not following Him today is because He does not have your heart.

At the end of World War II, Europe was devastated, Japan was devastated, China was devastated, all of those countries where the Japanese Empire had taught were in ruin. One of the great

principles about Christianity is that when some catastrophe happens in somebody's life or a country, that is the time that people are open to the gospel. He put General Douglas MacArthur as the man who was going to be challenged with rebuilding Japan. They asked him, President Truman said, "What do you need to rebuild Japan?" He said, "Send me 10,000 missionaries." America was sending Benny Goodman, rock and roll, Coca-Cola, baseball, hot dogs. That is what we sent him instead of what they really needed. We thought even back then that if we just made them a little America and brought our culture over, gave them baseball, gave them football, gave them hot dogs, gave them Coke, gave them rock and roll, gave them all of those things, that that would just win their hearts and their minds would follow.

I will be honest with you today, you see the same mindset in Christianity with modern-day missions. As far as I am concerned, modern-day missions has fallen on its face. The men and women we turn out to be missionaries today for the most part have no clue of anything historical about missions from the Bible. There is the idea in American Christianity, just like the idea that we had back in the times of the Cold War where America had a mindset of superiority, Christianity in America today has the mindset of superiority. We think that our brand of Christianity in America is the only brand. So when we send a missionary to Mexico, Latin America, wherever the case may be, one of the first things he does is try to get rid of their culture and make them little Americans. He will not become one with the people. The missionaries down there will have a little missionary compound that is away from the people. They will have an American flag on the pole. They will wear the little American lapel pins. They will celebrate Thanksgiving, they will celebrate all the American holidays, and they actually think that they could go in and be one with those people, maintaining their own, and bring that culture and build in them what we have in America. It is a disaster. It is a disaster.

The whole idea of winning hearts and minds was completely messed up because it only applies to the Bible. We as God's people, we do not build nations. We as God's people, we do not build churches. We got the idea from that movie, Field of Dreams, "if you build it, they will come." So we build great buildings, great churches, great edifices, great big buildings with everything they want, and sit back, and yes, the people come. But that is not a church. You do not build buildings any more than you win hearts and minds any more than you do building a nation. You build hearts and minds by building families, one family at a time.

The Bible teaches that the key to man following God and surrendering his life to Him and giving Him his heart will be his heart attitude toward God.

Proverbs 23:7

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:

Luke 10:27

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

Matthew 6:21

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

We really try to make being a Christian hard, do we not? We work 24/7 trying to complicate it all so we do not have to see how simple loving God really is. Proverbs 23:7 says that you and I are what we think about. Philippians 2:5 says that we are to "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." I want to tell you something, when God gets your mind, He will get your heart. Hearts and minds. It is not about nation building. It is not about church building. It is about you getting God's mind and getting God's heart, and then you follow Him.

So let us look at these verses today. In Proverbs 23:26, there are three things I want to look at. First of all, I want you to realize that this verse doctrinally is obviously the nation of Israel. Historically, as we know, it is Rehoboam, Solomon's son. Inspirationally, it will be me and you. These verses are loaded, and they are a goldmine of truth on how to keep your relationship with God on track once you finally get it.

IV. Three Aspects of "My Son, Give Me Thine Heart"

- "My Son" (Fellowship in Darkness)
- "Give Me Thine Heart" (Free Will Choice)
- "Let Thine Eyes Observe My Ways" (Observing God's Ways)

V. The Allure and Danger of the Strange Woman

Now look at Proverbs 23:27-28:

Proverbs 23:27-28

For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit.

She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men.

This strange woman, who is a whorish woman, we know now from our time in Proverbs, she is one of the sub-themes of the book of Proverbs, along with the evil man. In fact, they are portrayed in Proverbs and throughout the Bible as a husband and wife. Inspirationally, obviously, it is any whorish woman. Historically, it will be Baal worship, as we talked about Thursday night, to the nation of Israel, found in 1 Kings 17 and 18. Doctrinally, it will be any false religion or any political system, but the devil runs the world through the Roman Catholic Church. In the Bible, the two great pictures of this are in 1 Kings 18, Ahab and Jezebel, husband and wife. That will be the definitive passage on it. When you go over to Revelation 17 and 18, she is called the Mother of Harlots. That is a whore. Of course, we know Revelation 17 and 18 paints her as the Roman Catholic Church. No question about that.

I said all that to say this: I am going to call you on all three cases. All three of these applications represent somebody who will beguile you and then will destroy you. Yet at the same time, all three come into your life by catching your eye. Pleasant to look at, we call it eye candy. The

Bible calls it the lust of the eyes. It is covetousness, seeing what you do not have and then going after it, or what you think you cannot live without, or what you think will really make you happy. The Bible says when Satan beguiled Eve in Genesis 3:1-6, it says it was based on what she saw. Genesis 3:6 says, "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes." Sin started the fall of mankind that put the world into the lake of fire, if it would not have been for Christ, started with somebody looking at something, thinking it was really good and pleasant and nice when it was not.

First and foremost, years ago, I worked at the Hoover Company, which made vacuum cleaners, washing machines, stuff like that. I never forgot this. I lost my job about 1973, the recession hit, and they laid everybody off, and I did not have a job. My brother-in-law, who ran a grocery store, a family grocery store called Laverne's Market, he took me in and said, "Hey, I want you to come and work for me. We are family, and I want to make you a produce manager." That was fine, I mean, I needed a job, and he paid me a decent deal, but I knew nothing about produce. I mean, I did not know anything about it. So he says, "Well, I am going to send you to a seminar that a guy teaches on produce, selling produce." I have heard a lot of seminars that never went on fruits and vegetables, but he is the boss. I drove down to Pittsburgh at the Marriott that morning, and I met this guy, his name was Fred Sumpren, I cannot remember, I am sure he is dead now. He put on one of the greatest, most unbelievable presentations of how to sell produce, fruit to people. He said, and it was so true, and I never really looked at it until I went back after I took the seminar, he said, "People buy fruit by how pretty it looks." Did you ever go to a produce section, and it has those big beautiful cases, and then there are mirrors in the back that reflect the fruit? He showed me the false things that they put in the rack. So instead of having to put five boxes of fruit out that will go bad, to make it look big, you put these false things in, and then you put just a little bit, and it fills it up like you have 28 pieces of fruit, looks like you have 6,000 in there. He showed pictures of some of the grand places where he says when a woman has her shopping cart, when she comes around the corner and she sees that long aisle of produce with the greens and the oranges and the reds and the purples and this and that, all of that stuff, she just loses it. She will buy stuff that she does not even need. She says, "It is the most beautiful thing you ever saw in your life." She would come around that corner, and then he says, "Then you wet it down so it sparkles in the light." She comes around that corner and she sees the cantaloupes and the apples and the oranges and the rhubarb, and you match the colors. She walks around there, and it just catches her eye. She will go back and get another shopping cart just for the produce.

So I tried it. We had a little store, but I had a whole, probably about from that wall there down to the sound booth, and that was my produce section, maybe not quite that long. Boy, I did it up. I had these little old ladies coming in, and they are saying, "Wow, this really looks nice. This is beautiful. You have such fruit. I mean, this is wonderful." I said, "Well, thank you very much. Would you buy something instead of just walking around the store?" It was incredible. I found out that I could get old lettuce that was stale and put it out, and they would still buy it. I did not want any shrinkage. I was small enough already. I put it into the Bible. I would get that old dead lettuce and all that stuff, and I would be putting it on Monday morning under cold water, and I would be singing, "Revive us again." I would be trimming lettuce. "Let us pray." I was great, and

I learned that they bought because of what I looked at. That is the concept here. It says what it does. That is it.

The world system, it looks great, does it not? Everything you see out there, everything. The world glitters and gleams and shines and sparkles, and fireworks go off, and fire comes up and smoke. "Oh, that was that church." It just looks so spectacular, and you see it, and you say, "Oh, that will make my life better." It never shows you the drug abuse, the alcohol, and all the stuff that goes with it. You look at world religion, walk into those churches. I have been in Europe before. Some of those cathedrals were built back in the 1200s. When you walk in there, people whisper because "God is here." It is almost irreverent to talk, say, "Hey, how are you doing? You want to go eat after?" "Shh. Shh. It is a holy place."

Years ago, Mel Shabaka and I were in Germany someplace when we were going with a bunch of people. We were in this cathedral. We split off of everybody. We wanted to find what was really going on in that place. We were down in the basement. There was this big hole dug down here, and we were thinking it leads to the catacombs. We wanted to go through the catacombs. But it had this big steel thing on it, a big steel plate, like they put over the roads when you have a hole. So he and I lifted it up. We did not know who was going to, because we could not, one of us could not hold it. We needed somebody else. We were not deciding how we were going to. We were looking for something to prop it up with. We were holding up that way, but up here, and all of a sudden Mel says, "There is somebody coming." And he lets go. Well, I knew it was not going to crush me, so I let go. That thing came down. It sounded like an atomic bomb went off in that church. Smoke came up, was rolling up the stairs from the dirt. Mel and I were laughing so hard. We got out this way and went up there. Here comes the priests and the nuns and the monks and everybody. We are up there. "I do not know. Something really banged downstairs. I do not know whether you guys better get down there and check it out." When you walk into those places, it is almost like, "God, she heard."

The big edifices today, they are designed to catch your eye. "Everything you need is here. We got a restaurant. We got a Starbucks. We got McDonald's. We got a playground. We got all that." They got a snack bar out there on Thursday night. We got a coffee pot back there on Thursday night. We just do not have a Starbucks sign. You are laughing, but you will pay \$4 for one of those. You can have ours free. The only hot dog you get at those places free is the guy preaching. You walk in there. "Wow. Now this is a church. If you build it, they will come." "We got a restaurant. We got a gymnasium. We got racquetball courts. We got a workout place. We got a coffee spot. We got everything. We got everything here, but the Bible." That does not seem to bother anybody today. But it looks great. All of these things, doctrinally, historically, and inspirationally, catch your eye.

See a hooker walk down the street there, and she has a short miniskirt on, she has her hair fixed and all this stuff. You are saying, "Wow, she really looks hot." On the outside, she has AIDS, herpes, gonorrhea—that is not a city next to Guatemala, that is a disease—on the inside. But it looks good, does it not? You get caught up in it because she catches your eye. You see that and you say, "Wow, that is really what life is." I am telling you, you need to observe. You need to see what is real and what is not, what works and what does not.

You are laughing at me about that. But look at Proverbs 7:6. There it is. This is more graphic than what I just said.

Proverbs 7:6-18

For at the window of my house I looked through my casement,

And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding,

Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house,

In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:

And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.

(She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house:

Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.)

So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him,

I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows.

Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.

I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt.

I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves.

It looks good, see? It looks good when you are stupid and do not have any understanding of it. Proverbs 23:27-28 says she is a deep ditch and a narrow pit. Let me just tell you something. We know what it is. It can be somebody, it can be most generally what we are preaching at. It can be the world system or the religious system. Plainly speaking, once you fall into the world of sin and the world of false religion, it is hard to get out of it. Ditches in the Bible are not a good thing. They are on each side of the road of life. Just like driving your car, you never get where you are going when you get off into the ditch. When you get false and bad teaching of the world or you get hooked up to the world, this is where you wind up in the ditch of life. The ditch in the Bible is about going through life with the wrong heart attitude, and you wind up in the ditch.

Let me say this to you, so there is no misunderstanding. I can hear it now. "You do not understand my problem." Let me give you a good verse that will help you. Probably not, but it is in my text, so I have to give it to you anyhow.

Psalms 7:15

He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made.

Do not tell me your excuses. That verse says, you dug the ditch you fell into. Nobody dug it for you. You walked up in life. You walked up in this. You went to church and you saw it. You heard

it, you saw this. You said, "Boy, this will be good." And then you said, "Where is my shovel?" Here you are 10, 15, 20 years later, you are in a ditch so deep you will never get out.

Matthew 15:14 says, talking about getting bad teaching and bad doctrine or getting into the world system:

Matthew 15:14

Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

There are your churches. Those are the churches you go to and invest your life in and do not give you the truth or the Word of God. There is the world system for you. The blind leading the blind, and you both wind up in the same ditch that you dug. This is why, plainly, simply, it is not hard, it is not complicated. This is why so many of God's people try so hard to get back to God, and they just can never get there. You dug the ditch too deep.

I have had people in my ministry whom I love greatly. I have watched them for 10, 20, 30 years, sometimes since they were born. I have watched them never be able to get to the place where they just give God everything. Their ditches are dug so deep that every time they try, they will come around. They will come around about every three or four years. They will come around and they will say, "I am sorry," "this or that," "I did this," "I screwed up here." I will take them back and say, "Hey, come on in and get this." They will do fine for a while. Then you do not start to see them again. Then you see them over here or with this person or with that situation. You try to tell them. Now where they were listening to their pastor, now you are their enemy. Pretty soon you do not see them. You just see the dirt coming out of the ditch. Ditches over their head. They will go there for a while. Then they will try to crawl back out. They will come out for a little bit, and then they will go right back into another ditch. Their whole life is just falling back into the ditch that they dug. The bottom line is they will not come to the place in their life where they ever give God their whole heart. They will come back to church. They will come for a while. They will get involved in this. They will get involved in that. They will do that. Then suddenly you do not see them anymore. They are gone. They are out now. Or they are in the mode where they are sporadic now. Pretty soon they are going to be right back with him. Right back with her. Right back someplace. Now something else is going to take the place of what you once loved here. Do not tell me. I will tell you one time you are headed for trouble. You blow me off. Welcome to your ditch. You dig it too deep. You will never get out. You will pry out for a while, and then you will get halfway out, and then the old world grabs your legs and pulls you right back down again. It all comes down to where your heart is at. Where your heart really is. If you have a changed heart, how do you go against the church God puts you in? You have a changed heart. This is not just me, any church. But if you have a changed heart, how do you go against the very God God gave you, who once in your life you listened to and wanted to follow? Now you just got a better deal, sweetheart. Now you are listening to him. Digging your way out can be tough. When you get into the world's ditches or the religious ditches and you are an unsaved person, that ditch leads to a pit, the bottom of this pit, the lake of fire. I told you the verse was loaded.

VI. Increasing Transgression Among Men

Look at Proverbs 23:28: "She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men." That is a loaded verse too. Only a study of history can reveal how patient false religions are to lie in wait, to strike at you, or how the world system is. The devil in Job 40-41, Isaiah 27, and other places is called a serpent. The Bible says he will not conceal his power as coming forth, or the face of his garments. The devil, like a serpent, camouflages himself. You can walk through the woods and not even see a rattlesnake is right there until you hear the rattle or a copperhead. They blend right in. When a snake hunts at night, he may not move 10 feet from his den. He just stays motionless all night. He is patient, waiting for prey to come by him, and he will grab him.

Once your heart leaves God's Word, once your heart leaves God's heart and you give it to somebody else, you can no longer see what is all around you. Now you have no spiritual discernment. The devil will camouflage everything around you to make it look like it is good and wonderful and beautiful and that you cannot live without it. Your preacher, your church, your family will try to talk to you about it, try to show it. You will just get an attitude. Because you do not have His heart anymore. The world, religion, the devil just patiently waits, counting on you being impatient. The number one issue with God's people is they will not wait on God's timing for anything. Some of you kids will not wait to get the right husband. You will just have to make it happen because you just cannot live without one. You will get a good one. You will not wait on God to learn the Bible the way God wants you to learn it. You will not wait on God to train your children the right way. Now their life, their family, the very plan that God had for them is in a ditch. As a parent, I am going to tell you, the single most important aspect of life to teach your child is patience.

I honestly do not understand what is wrong with some of God's people. Your daughter is 16, and you let her dress like she is 25. I do not get that. She will be 25 quick enough. You do not need to look like you are 25 when you do not have the emotional stability to be 25. I watched them, I watched them just put their kids on a silver platter and carry them to the world. They will not wait for the right guy. They will say, "Well, I am getting old, I am 17 years old, and I am almost going to be an old man." They will not just let God be God in His timing. In truth, I am just telling you, in truth, all you have done as a parent is reproduce your impatience that got your life in a mess into their life, and now they are going to be a mess. It is not hard, it is not complicated.

Look at the last part of Proverbs 23:28: "And increases the transgression among men." There are two great principles here that need to be seen and understood.

➤ Two Principles of Increasing Transgression: