

I. The Hardening of the Heart

If you have your Bibles this morning, I would like to invite you to turn to Proverbs 29. Last week we started Proverbs 29. We got through verse 1, and I showed you how that probably by now you will understand that verse 1 is one of the most powerful verses in all the Bible. It deals with the state of man in his understanding of God, and God dealing with him, and God calling him, and God reaching out to him.

We talked about how man has a problem. The Bible calls it a sin problem; it calls it an infirmity. You are going to find that in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, all the examples of people with issues of blood, or leprosy, or blindness, or whatever, will all be a picture of our spiritual infirmity and the problems that we have. We talked about how man has a sin problem, but God has the remedy. Of course, that remedy is God's salvation.

Verse 1 focused on how man will continue to reject the calling of the reproof of the Holy Spirit of God. He will turn his back on it. In fact, the verses that we looked at, verse 1, talked about him stiffening his neck. We later laid that out as hardening of his heart. I showed you how that in the Bible, the stiff neck will always be a reference to man's will as he rejects God's will in his life or what God wants him to do, and then he follows his own will in his own life.

We see that a lot today. You would think that that would just be for unsaved people because you would think that when a man or a woman gets saved, they would generally change their life. But unfortunately, that is not always true; it applies to saved people also. I gave you a number of Old Testament verses on it and how that in time, you, in your heart, in your mind, in your will, will completely reject God's Word to any authority in your life.

The Bible was very clear that there comes a point in a man's life or a woman's life where the remedy of God is no longer in effect. Certainly not because God pulls it away—God is not willing that any should perish or all should come to repentance—but because man rejects God's truth for so long. The Bible talks about how he sears his conscience. The Bible talks about how he gets turned over to a reprobate mind. I showed you in Ezekiel 14 where the Bible clearly says that if a man sets up the multitude of idols in his heart and rejects the clear teaching of the Word of God, that in time God will give that man the lie that he wants to believe, and He will answer him after the multitude of his heart.

It is a tremendous, tremendous concept, completely unknown today, never preached on, never taught, but certainly one of the most powerful and at the same time one of the most terrible concepts anywhere in the Word of God. Let me tell you something: saved or lost, the worst day in your life will be the day that God leaves you alone. If you are a saved person, it will be the day that God takes His hand off you and lets the world have you, and He will do that. If you are an unsaved person, it will come to the point when you come so far and you reject God's truth. As I said last week, light rejected becomes lightning, and you get the answer after the multitude of the idols that you set up in your heart.

This is true of the unsaved, and this is true of the saved. In both cases, though they are going to two different places—one is going to hell, the other one is going to heaven—they both deceive themselves. It will come a time when God's remedy will no longer apply to you because of the hardness of your heart, and you have turned your back on God for so long you just cannot get back to Him. You see examples of this all through the Old Testament. It is an incredible concept, and one that we need to heed and realize that it can happen to any one of us.

II. Righteous and Wicked Rule

Today we want to look at a couple more verses and get what we can from them. It will be Proverbs 29:2-3.

Proverbs 29:2-3

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.

Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance.

Verse 2 starts out and it says, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice," but then the contrast: "But when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn." This will go along with a couple of weeks ago, we saw in Proverbs 28 where it says a wicked man will rise up and man will hide himself. A couple of weeks ago, we looked at that.

Of course, we want to look at this as it lays out doctrinally. Obviously, this will all be dealing with the millennial reign of Christ and the Antichrist's rule. "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice" will be doctrinally a reference to Christ coming in the millennial setup where He has a rule of iron and people rejoice. "The wicked beareth rule, the people mourn" will obviously be a reference to the Antichrist and his seven-year tenure when he overtakes the world and becomes the false Christ, or as we know him, the Antichrist.

III. Doctrinal, Historical, and Inspirational Applications of Psalms

You will find that all throughout the book of Psalms, you will find a reference to the first part of Proverbs 29:2. This will be what we call the Millennial Psalms. Every book of the Bible has a natural breakdown. The key to learning the Bible obviously is to learn the books, and the key to learning the books is to learn the natural breakdown by which God has set it up. The book of Psalms probably is one of people's favorite books in all of the Bible. Who does not love the book of Psalms? It is a great book, but most people do not really understand how Psalms kind of goes together.

We know from our studies here in the Bible that every verse in the Bible, every chapter, every book will have a doctrinal application which has to do with the prophetic side of it. It will have a historical application which deals with the historical side of it. It will have an inspirational

application that deals with you and me in our lives. To rightly divide the Word of Truth, you have got to have those three down as we teach them to you here.

You will find that in the book of Psalms, Psalms is probably one of the easiest books to understand. There are three things happening in Psalms, whether it is historical, doctrinal, or inspirational. Doctrinally, it is a picture of the nation of Israel. You will find three kinds of Psalms in the book of Psalms:

- You will find the Psalms that are great times of tragedy, great times of turmoil. That will be the nation of Israel in the Tribulation period.
- Then you will find that there are times when somebody is praying for deliverance. That will be the Second Coming of Christ and Christ coming back to deliver the nation of Israel.
- Then you will find what is called the Millennial Psalms. That is where people are rejoicing and having a great time because the Lord has come back. That is what ties into Proverbs 29:2.

Some of the more famous ones are Psalms 95, Psalms 96, Psalms 97, Psalms 98, Psalms 99, Psalms 100. Get up into Psalms 101, Psalms 104, Psalms 105, all the way up to about Psalms 150. You will find that those Psalms start out with the Lord on the throne, "happy are thy people," "blessed is the Lord." It will be what we call a Millennial Psalm. It goes along that when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. So doctrinally, it is Israel going through the Tribulation, praying for their deliverance at the Second Coming, and then into the Millennium.

Historically, it is David. We all know that David went through some tough times in life. The Psalms that he puts in there during that time are what he is going through. Then there was a time when David got delivered, and you find the Psalms of thanksgiving and him praying for God to come down. Then there are times in the Psalms when David has the victory now and he is thanking God. The Millennial Psalms are just thanking God for what God has done.

The inspirational is the same thing. We all go through deep times in our lives. We all go through troubles, and we are naturally drawn to those Psalms that are a picture, doctrinally, of Israel going through the Tribulation because we are going through our own personal tribulation. There are times when we want God to put an end to it. There are times we want God to come down and deliver us from that. So we will gravitate to the Psalms that deal doctrinally with Israel asking for God's deliverance. Then there will be times when God comes down and does deliver, and it is just a hallelujah time. We thank God for all that He has done, all that He is doing, and we really give Him the honor and glory and the praise. Those will be the Millennial Psalms and will come to the realization that when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. So Psalms is the great book that lays that out for us.

When it is talking about the wicked bearing rule, as I said, it is talking about the man of sin, the Antichrist, doctrinally. You will find in the Bible, we have studied it many, many times, that there are 18 men in the Old Testament that when you study their lives, when you look at how they rule or how they reign or what they do, they will foreshadow and picture in type the coming man of sin, the Antichrist. It starts with Cain in Genesis 4 and runs all the way up to Judas in John 17. In between that, you have guys like Nimrod, Pharaoh, Balak, Sisera, Abimelech, Saul, the list is

endless. All these guys have one thing in common, one common thread that ties them all together, even though they lived hundreds or maybe a thousand years apart. It is the fact that when they were in rule, they put their people under a great burden. They put them under a hard bondage, and the people mourn. The great contrast is for you and for me is that you can live your life with Christ and the Word of God and its principles, and you can rejoice because of the authority of the Word of God that you have, or you can live your life under a cruel system of the world that is going to put you under bondage.

Historically, this verse will be any ruler down through history who was a hard, wicked leader and punished his own people cruelly. In ancient history, it would be like the Pharaohs or Sennacherib or Nebuchadnezzar. A little bit later on, the Roman Empire was very cruel for its time that it was in power. We see it a little later on, we see it in our own modern day history with places like England. You could go through all the kings of England, which is quite a weighty little thing to go through. But some of the more prominent, you had a guy named Henry the 8th. Henry the 8th killed everybody who got in his way. It was his way or the highway. He killed every wife that he had. If she did not give him a boy, he cut her head off. Henry the 8th was a terrible king. Then after him, one of his children, Mary Tudor, who later became famous as Bloody Mary, she killed everybody too. Those are examples of bad ones.

Then you have coming to the throne, Elizabeth, who was a great queen, saved, born again. Then later on, Queen Victoria, and there are a couple of good ones. There is good or bad, but I am going to show you a contrast. Queen Victoria, she reigned for 63 years. She has been said by many historians to be the greatest queen that England ever had. During her time was right in the middle of the Philadelphia Church Age. We studied that yesterday at Bible Institute. It is when England went to the four corners of the earth. Under her was a great expanse of power and colonies in England. As I said, the saying was that the sun never set on the English soil. She was everywhere. It goes because you had a queen, Queen Victoria, who believed the Book and allowed that Book, the King James 1611 Authorized Version, to go to the ends of the world.

You want to compare that with people like Napoleon, people like Stalin, people like Hitler, people like Franco, Tito, Tojo, Castro, Putin. If they say that wrong in Russia, you will be in a gulag someplace, they can guarantee you. Guys like Idi Amin, who in his own country just killed thousands of people. You will get the picture. In our own political world, you have the Democrats and the Republicans. Democrats are always painted as the liberals and the bad guys, and the Republicans are always painted as the conservatives and the good guys. So it is in everything. It is in everything. Inspirationally, it will be a reference to Christianity and a number of ways it references Christianity.

IV. The Problem with Man-Made Rules

Now we have seen from our past studies over the last couple of months, we have been talking about churches, been talking about pastors, but talking about how that in many cases, like the Bible talked about, we are to be no respecter of persons or catered to rich people. Yet we see that all the time in churches. We have come to the conclusion that in many cases, pastors and churches are no more different than the politicians of the world today.

Some of them actually are like little third-world dictators. They try to control every aspect of your life. The job of a pastor is not to control your life. The job of a pastor is to teach you the truth, get you to fall in love with the Book, get the Holy Spirit of God working in your life, and let the Holy Spirit control your life. But so many times they do not want to do that.

I have seen it all my ministry, almost 50 years of it now. The Bible only makes two distinctions of two kinds of churches.

- In Revelation 3:7, you have the church of the open door. That is a church, if you read that passage, that had the Word of God, and God set before them an open door, and no man could shut it. That was during the great Philadelphia Church Age when the King James Bible literally went around the world four or five times, probably a time when three-quarters of the known world had come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. It was the church of the open door.
- Then you have in Revelation 3:20, when we move into the Laodicean church period, which we are part of today, the church of the closed door.

Revelation 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

It is a picture of the church today, throwing Jesus Christ right out of it because they dump His Word. I am going to tell you something: if you want the blessings of God in your life personally, if you want the blessings of God in your family, if you want the blessings of God in your church or whatever you are doing, get in the Book. The Book will change everything about you and change the perspective of everything that you need to do if you follow it and you follow its principles.

You will find within these two churches basically two kinds of pastors. We will talk about them here in just a little bit. One, through authority, the people will rejoice because he is given them what God wants. The other one tries to put them under some kind of burden. In this system, they will try to control every aspect of your life.

I have never understood why pastors think that they have to control their people. I mean, I realize there has to be an accountability system. I get that. Most pastors want their people to be accountable to them, but they do not want to make themselves accountable to the people. It is a two-way street. In this system, you will find pastors in churches and even Christians who will try to put you under a false bondage to control your life. They are actually no different than Nebuchadnezzar, Stalin, or Castro. It puts you under a hard rule. They will put you under a system of rules to follow that actually have nothing to do with the Word of God.

I have seen pastors that were so intimidated about people that were in their church, that they were so insecure in themselves, that they always are telling everybody what great things they are doing for God so their people would think they were really spiritual. On top of that, if anybody in the church could preach better, teach better, or had any kind of inkling at all that they were better in anything than the pastor, he found a way to get them out of the church, or at least put them

under such bondage that they could never look up. I have never understood that. I have never understood what would make any pastor come to the place where he would be intimidated by his people.

I am going to tell you right out of the box, I expect you to be better with the Bible than I am. I expect you to preach better than I do. I expect you to do things better than I do. You want to build people around you who do things better than you do. If everything rises and falls on one guy, then it actually rises and falls on one guy. To me, everything rises and falls on leadership. The job of a pastor is to take and train as many leaders as he can that will pick up the burden and, yes, do things better than he does. Some of you do things a lot better than I do. It is a thing where that is the way it is supposed to be. That is what you are supposed to do, and I am comfortable with that because that is the way it is supposed to go, and that is the way it is supposed to be.

I have seen them put them under a system that we all call legalism for a better term. I call it a Dark Ages Christianity. Legalism is a system of rules that they put you under that really have nothing to do with the Bible. Whatever church you go to, the rules will change. You will never know an absolute set of rules for what they try to put you under. Yet, the tragedy is that I have met many of God's people that all their Christian life, that is all they have ever known. I call it a Dark Ages Christianity.

You say, why is that? Because during the Dark Ages, the Roman Catholic Church controlled the world or the known world. Her people under the bondage of the rules of Rome suffered tremendously, absolutely suffered beyond belief. They were told by the Roman Catholic hierarchy that this was the best life on planet Earth that they could ever have. For years and years and years, the people labored under that bondage of those rules and the systems of the religion that you had to follow the rules, and you had to do this, and you had to do that. There was great penalty if you did not do that. For you to get right with God and you wanted to make sure you were repentant, you had to crawl up the cathedral stairs, which maybe were two, 300 stairs, on your knees until your knees were bloody. That was the way you made penance back to God. You had to hurt yourself, cut yourself, mutilate yourself. Through your pain and agony, you hopefully found some kind of mercy and grace with God. It was a corrupt system. But they were told for over 1000 years that this was the best life on Earth, and they actually believed it.

Then you know what happened? God does a lot of things a lot of different ways. He knew the Reformation was coming, and He knew that the Philadelphia Age was right down the road. So He had the Crusades. When the Crusades happened, all of the people in Europe went to fight for the Roman Catholic Church, went to these far countries that they had never seen before, maybe never heard of before. When they got to those countries, they saw a lifestyle that was a thousand times better than what they had. They went into Asia Minor and saw silk, and they saw this, and they saw inventions, and they saw that. They saw the people living a lifestyle that they could only ever hope to have. When they went back, they were not satisfied. God used that along with Martin Luther and the other reformers to break the back of the Roman Catholic Church because people saw there was another world out there other than the bondage that Rome was putting them under.

I want to say to you today, there is another world out there, or the freedom you have in Christ, that you do not have to be in the bondage of a system that tries to hold you down. It is kind of like the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic priest wears a Halloween costume so he can present himself to be spiritual. The Baptist puts you under a set of rules that you wear that will make you look spiritual. Of course, you cannot legislate morals. You just cannot.

I realize, do not get me wrong, and we will get into this here in a little bit, I understand how it works. But I want you to know that there are no rules that are going to keep you from making you spiritual. There are churches that will not let the women wear slacks when they come to church. Hey, I have been in churches like that all my life. I have heard every argument. They go back in the Old Testament where the Bible says that the woman is not to wear that which pertains to a man. I get that. But if you can look at the context, that is dealing with lesbianism and homosexuality. The truth of the matter is, if you want to take that verse and say that a woman should not wear that which pertains to a man, okay, then we will go with that. Back in the Old Testament, in Bible times, every man wore a short skirt. So if you are wearing a skirt today, do not take this bad if you are. If you are wearing a skirt today from the Bible standpoint in the Bible time, that argument will not work because that is what a man wore. My point is this: you cannot legislate morals.

I think when you in the morning, when you get up and you are coming to church or you are going to work, if in your heart and in your mind you are dressing to please the Lord, whatever you have on is going to be okay. When I preach, I go after your heart. I do not go after a set of rules. You cannot legislate it. Every church is different. You go to every church, they are going to have a different length of dress. You have got to go down to your ankles. It cannot be above the knees. Who would want that job in the ministry of the church, measuring skirt lengths? But you cannot legislate it.

You say to a woman, "Well, when you come to this church, all you have to do, you have to wear a dress." Okay. She wears a dress, and then it is up to her thighs. So then you say, "Oh, nope, you have got to wear a dress, but it has got to be long." So it is a dress, and it is long, but it is so tight, it looks like a skin diver's outfit. So now you have got to say it has got to be long, it has got to be a dress, and it has got to be loose. Then she wears one so flimsy a mosquito could fly through without breaking his wings. So now you have got to say it has got to be long, it has got to be thick. Come on, man. You cannot follow those kind of rules.

It is like a kid one time, he said, "I want to have some chocolate." His dad says, "You should not do that. You ought to give up for Lent. Give up chocolate for Lent, son." The kid said, "Dad, you did not give up anything." He said, "I did too. I gave up drinking liquor." The boy said, "Dad, I saw you drinking a beer last night." The dad said, "Well, I gave up hard liquor." The kid said, "Okay, I will just give up chocolate." You get around it any way you want to. If a change is not in your heart, if you do not do what you do because of the relationship that you have that you love Him, there is no set of rules that is going to make you spiritual.

I have been in churches and know of churches where the guys are all required to wear a suit and tie. I have nothing wrong with that. I understand that, and I get it. I have been in churches where

the guys, when I go to preach, they all wear a suit and tie. I do not have a problem with it. It is a thing where if a guy is given to that and he wants to wear that, I am good with that. Here is the problem: do not think that encasing your flesh in a suit and tie is going to make you spiritual. It will make you look nice. Every once in a while you guys around here will wear a suit and tie, and I get upset with you because you look better than I do. But I have no problem with it. But let me tell you how extreme it goes.

I had a pastor friend of mine, and they were so legalistic on those kind of concepts that I asked him one time—I was good friends with him, and we were buddies, and I preached at his church, and he was a good guy. I really liked him. He is retired now, and I do not know what he is doing, but he was a great guy. I asked him one time, I said, "I heard something that is true. I just want to know if it is true. We were driving together. I said, "I heard that you and a bunch of pastors went out skiing in Colorado, and I heard that you wore a three-piece suit underneath your snowmobile outfit. Is that true?" He got real quiet. He says, "Bob," he says, "I am so boring." He says, "Yeah," he says, "I did." He was a guy that mowed his lawn on a Saturday afternoon with a shirt and tie on. Now I get it. You want to look nice for the Lord? Hey, I am all for that. Personally, I think most of you look really nice here today. A couple of you I am worried about. But other than that, for the most part, you are doing good. But I am telling you something: if you think putting you under a set of rules is going to make you spiritual, it is not going to happen. It is not going to happen because human nature is always going to find a way around it.

I think that when a woman dresses, if she wants to wear a dress, that is fine. I think there is nothing wrong with that. I think that if she wants to wear slacks, that is fine. There is nothing wrong with that. You do not measure a person's spirituality by what they have on. I have known Baptist churches where if the person did not come to church and was not dressed the way the rest of the world, they asked them to leave. It is wrong. It is just simply wrong. I am telling you, it is a thing where it is just the way that it is.

I had a guy one time that I was going to preach down in Joplin. He had me down to preach for him. He called me on the phone and he said, "I really want you to preach, do something for me." I hate when a pastor, and I am going to preach for him, and he calls me up and wants me to hit something with his people that he is trying to get across. I do not like that. I do not usually do it, or I will tell him I will not do it, but here is the deal. I guess they were down there someplace in Joplin. They have a boats gambling thing like we have around here, and some of his people were going out to eat at the restaurants. They were not gambling; they were just going out to eat at the restaurants. He had a problem with that. He said, "Would you preach somewhere in your message? Would you just get the message across that it is wrong to go to those kind of places to eat lunch?" I said, "Well, I was going to preach on hell. I am not sure how I fit that in there. I guess I could just preach on Jesus on the lake in the boat with the disciples and say, 'Get out of the boat,' or whatever. I do not know what to do with that." I said, "Let me ask you a question. What is your problem with that?" I said, "How can I say, I do not have a problem with you doing that, believing that? I mean, it is your deal. But my problem is how consistent are you? Because if you say you cannot go there because it gives the appearance of a gambling place, then you cannot go buy gas at a gas station that sells cigarettes and liquor or lottery tickets. Where do you

draw the line? Is there a restaurant in town—54th Street Grill, Applebee's, you name it, Chili's—anywhere you go that does not have a bar in it that if you happen to go on any day between four and five, you are with a happy hour crowd? Where do you draw the line?"

Now I realize, I realize I had a guy years ago in my church that we had to get rid of, and he had a ministry passing out tracts at strip clubs. Not a very good deal. I do not think I am saying you have got to draw the line someplace. I get that. Here we go. I can already see the wheels turning in some of your heads. But I am telling you, you cannot put somebody under a system of rules because the real freedom you have is what you have when you are at liberty in Christ.

V. Liberty in Christ vs. Legalism

Let us talk about that for a moment. My position on it is understanding my liberty in Christ. You have a problem with that because the moment I say that you are not under a set of rules and you have liberty with Christ, then everybody wants to take the other side of that, and that means you can do whatever you want to do. So it is a two-way street that goes downhill either way.

I know we are not under the law, under the Old Testament. James 2:8 says that we are under the royal law. That is that Christ took the Ten Commandments and put it into two: love God first and then love everybody else second. I get that. But we have in New Testament Christianity what we call our liberty in Christ.

Where a legalist has a thousand rules that you cannot do this, the guy that wants to hold his liberty in Christ, he says, "I am saved. I can do whatever I want to do." That is simply not true. But here again, we will just come back to the Bible. The Bible always answers any question that we have about whatever we are asking it about. Here again, it comes to our rescue with two verses that completely explain what he is talking about.

1 Corinthians 6:12

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

Okay, there it is. All things are lawful unto me. There is no law governing anything in your life other than the sin things that are found in the Bible. But as far as your everyday life, all things are lawful unto me. I get that. But all things are not expedient. That means even though I can do all things, some things are not wise for me to do. Why is that? Because all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. In other words, whatever your liberty is that you want to do in your life, you want to make sure that whatever you say I can do, it does not get control of you.

1 Corinthians 10:23

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

Okay, then let me give it to you. Your liberty was not given to you so you could do whatever you want to do. Your liberty was given to you that you could do for Christ whatever Christ wanted

you to do, and whatever you do with your liberty is okay as long as Christ gets edified by it and the people around you get edified by it. See how the principle works? You have a right to do whatever you want to do. I have a right to do whatever I want to do, go wherever I want to go, be with whoever I want to be, as long as Christ gets edified by it. Not me or you get edified by it. That is Romans 14. You are either strong to bear the infirmity of the weak and not to please yourself.

I am not under a system of rules. I am under the royal law which says that I love God first and I love you, and in my life, the liberty that I have is to do whatever God has called me to do, not be under any bondage or any law, that everything in my life might edify Christ first and be an edification to you second. That is how it works. My liberty is given to me to do what God wants me to do. It is the guidelines of my liberty, my edifying Christ, and I am telling you when you deal with your heart under the biblical principles, because you do not do that with man's rules.

Man's rules change wherever you go to church. These guys will have this set of rules. This guy will have this set of rules. These rules will not match this rule. You will have to do these. They will add some more. They will take some away because the rules of man will change with different men, but the principles of the Word of God will always stay absolute. They never change. So you do not live your life by the rules of man. You live your life by the principles of the Word of God, a principled life. It will change everything about you. It will give you everything where rules will try to control your flesh through legalizing or legislating morals. Principles will control your heart, and when your heart becomes under the principles' guidelines of the Word of God, it comes back to that attitude in action. Whatever your attitude is toward the Word of God and its principles in your heart will produce the right action, and for years pastors and churches have put their people under the bondage of those kind of things, and it is a burden and a curse to them, and it is certainly not God's remedy.

I have watched it all my life. I have watched the churches and the Christian schools that had those kind of rules, and I have watched that today you cannot even find the kids that went to school there. They are gone. Why? Because they figured out how foolish it was.

VI. Examples of Good and Bad Leadership

Our verse is talking about two kinds of spiritual leadership, two kinds of churches, two kinds of men who are going to either put their people under the authority, and the people are going to rejoice because of it, because they have the freedom through the Word of God to be everything that God wants them to be, or the guy who is going to put them under some kind of bondage. In the Bible, you will simply find four men. I mean, there are a lot of them, but four in particular that are great examples of a good pastor and then a bad one, or just leadership in general.

In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel and the New Testament church, they have a lot of things in common, even though two different dispensations, one under the law, one under grace. I get that, but they still have a lot of things in common, and one of the things they both have in common, both in the Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church, both places the people are absolutely dependent on good leadership. That is why God, you can see in the Old Testament,

the men like Moses, the men like Elijah, the men that God brought down, David, Solomon, the men that God gave them that were good men who led them, Joshua, Caleb. They were dependent, and when those men were in power and ruled, the nation went well. But when you get the Ahab, you get the Hezekiahs, you get all the guys, the Joashes, and all those ones who were bad ones, then we see how it goes, and it is the same way in Christianity. I am going to show you in a little bit how that works.

It is a lost concept today. Churches today, pastors today, they are not into building people; they are into building mega churches. They are into big churches that everybody looks at and says, "Wow, God must be there, look how big it is." Let me tell you something, I am not interested in mega churches. I am interested in building mega people, men and women who can grow and be everything that God wants them to be. The young single people we have in our church, the young couples, and the moms and the dads that are just throughout this church that have fallen in love with the Word of God. They are part of the Bible Institute, they are learning the Bible. The Thursday night Bible study, the questions they ask, the people ministry of giving themselves over to really learning the principles. It is a lost concept today. Men and women need to be strong leaders today for their families first, and then for the mission that God has called them through their church, and that takes a principled life, it really does.

Our first two quickly here will be David and Solomon. David, I do not know how you study the Bible, but when you come up to guys like this who obviously stand out, there is something here. David is the warrior king. He wipes out the last of the enemies of Israel, and when he is done, they are all wiped out. So Solomon comes to the throne, and where David reigns for 40 years in fights, Solomon reigns for 40 years in peace, and there are no wars because David killed them all.

So if you want to take that from a practical way, here is what I would do. I would study David and show through his life and show you how to fight for God. David goes through around 27 battles, depending on how you count the battles, maybe more than that, but he goes through conflict and battles with people like Saul, the Philistines, Goliath, Amalek, the Ammonites, and Absalom. The list is endless. Every one of those battles will show you the way to fight what you are up against in your world, and he is an incredible picture of the warrior through his relationship with God. I get he has his issues, I understand that, but he is victorious at the end.

Now Solomon will show you how, through a relationship with God, to build your temple. So you get David, how to fight the battle. You study Solomon, how to build your temple, because he built the temple.

1 Corinthians 6:19

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

You get those two guys working for you, you will get something going.

David has all three offices, just like you do.

- David was a king (Matthew 1:6).
- He was the priest (2 Samuel 24).
- He is a prophet (Acts 2:25).

So are you. He is the greatest king that Israel ever had, and I know he had his issues, I am not taking that away from him, but I am telling you right now, every king in Israel, they are either 33 for Judah and 33 for Israel, are all compared to him. He is a king and a pastor to the people, and they loved him.

There are two verses in the Bible that illustrate these two men who, in my mind, are a picture of two kinds of pastors, Christians, leaders, whatever. For David, it is Jeremiah 3:15. When I think of David, or I think of what a pastor should be, to me it is Jeremiah 3:15, where he says:

Jeremiah 3:15

And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

That was David. In fact, Acts 13:22, he said he was a man after God's own heart. 1 Kings 15:5, God said he did what was right all the days of his life except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. David is an incredible guy; he is an incredible picture, and he is a picture of what leadership should be. You will want to learn how to fight, that is David. You want to learn how to build your temple. Sometime you want to go in and you want to just read Solomon's prayer for the dedication of the temple. It is one of the most powerful prayers anywhere in the Bible. If you want a prayer of getting right with God when you get out of fellowship, you want to study David. If you want a prayer to get your life where it needs to be and be everything that God wants you to be and be the man for God's people, then study Solomon. It is one of the most amazing things. He starts out talking to God standing up, and he winds up the prayer on his knees. Incredible prayer, and those are two good examples for us, for you and for me.

In 2 Samuel 23, David has mighty men of valor. Wow, what a great study that is! Yet when you look at those guys, you will find that those guys were standing in line to be with David. They loved him. He was a great leader, he was a great commander, he was a great pastor to them, he was a great king to them, and they were proud to be his mighty men of valor. When you come through that passage, you will find the four greatest essentials it takes to be a leader and be something really great for God, and you find that in these four guys. David instilled that into these guys. He just did not look around, and he took guys and he trained them to be the kind of warrior that he was, and he had to instill in them four concepts that you find when he talks about these men.

- 1.) Courage. It takes courage to take your stand for God if you are going to ever take your stand for God, but courage alone is not enough.
- 2.) Determination. As you read down through that chapter in 2 Samuel 23, you will find the second great aspect is determination. You have got to have courage, but courage without determination is not very good because you can have courage and just do whatever you want

to do, but when you are determined to do something for God and you have the courage to do it, you are something special.

- 3.) Loyalty. Courage and determination are good, but it takes a little bit more than that, and the third great quality you will find in these guys is loyalty. They are loyal to David, and David most certainly is loyal to them because you can be courageous and you can have determination, but if you are not loyal to something, then it really does not mean anything.
- 4.) Honor. The fourth thing that you find in these guys: they were courageous, they were determined, they were loyal, and then they had honor. Honor is simply that you honor the things that God has given you. Honor is the bond that holds us together. Honor is the thing that when push comes to shove is the glue that holds God's people together because they are courageous and they are determined, and they are loyal to that determination, and through that they have honor.

You know what is missing today in God's people's lives, in pastors and churches? Honor. They do not honor anything. There is no honor. They will treat you like a dog, they will use you, they will sell you out, they will do everything they can because all they want to do is get what they want. There is no loyalty, and there is no honor in that loyalty.

The second two will be Saul and Ahab, and we will throw his wife Jezebel in there too. We will throw her in here so she can be thrown out of the window a little bit later on in the Bible. These are two examples of a bad one. Saul, and I am going to show you here in a minute, the eight characteristics of Saul that are the eight characteristics of the modern day pastor. He is that, and he represents that bad leadership. Ahab and of course Jezebel represent the bad doctrine and the leadership of teaching and Bible that is corrupt.

The eight characteristics of Saul, and you will find this in 1 Samuel 13 and 1 Samuel 14:

- 1.) He takes the Bible from his people (1 Samuel 13:19). That is the first thing that most pastors do. They take the Word of God right out of their people's hands and tell them a better reading should be or a better translation should be, and in doing so, they take the Word of God right out of their hands.
- 2.) He pretended he was something that he was not (1 Samuel 13:8). He pretended he was a priest. When he was not a priest, he had no business offering the sacrifice, and like most guys today, they pretend they are something they are not. They give you the illusion that they really know a lot about the Bible when they do not know anything about the Bible, and they rule you through fear and intimidation.
- 3.) He took credit for everything that the people did (1 Samuel 13:3). He did not do anything, and yet his people are out there doing all this stuff, and he is taking the credit for it instead of giving the credit where it belongs.
- 4.) He puts them under a non-biblical system to control them (1 Samuel 14:24, 33). He makes them take an oath that has no biblical basis whatsoever.
- 5.) He lets his own son die in battle (1 Samuel 14:45). He pastors a great church, but his own kid does not come to church. He pastors a great church, but his kids are out in the world, or he loses them, or they commit suicide, or they go out in some terrible situation. That is Saul.

- 6.) He has a total disregard for the authority of the Word of God (1 Samuel 15:3). God tells him what to do, and he does exactly what he wants to do.
- 7.) The end for him always justifies the means. He wants to do something, and it does not matter what he has to do to get there as long as he gets there.
- 8.) Everything is all about him (1 Samuel 14:24-33). He is the great this, he is the great that, he is the king. But when it all falls apart, he does what they all do: he blames the people.

I tell you around here that everything rises and falls on leadership. Everything. If this church fails, it will not be your fault; it will be my fault. If my family fails, it will not be because some gym teacher or this person here, it will be because I failed. Everything rises and falls on leadership. That is why it is so imperative to build courage, determination, loyalty, and honor, and to every one of you kids, to have you come to the place that you rise up through the rubble of Christianity. You rise up through the rubble of this world and take your stand.

His verse is found in Isaiah 65:5. This is his verse.

Isaiah 65:5

Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

Two great men, one terrible, one good. Two great verses that illustrate who they are. The authority talked about in verse 2 will for us be the reference to the authority of the Word of God. Here at Old Path Baptist Church, we do not operate by a set of worthless man-made rules. We will always operate on the absolute biblical principles that will define for us right and wrong and leave nothing to the imagination. It is not about my opinion, your opinion, or what you think about it. It only comes down to what God thinks about it, and that will be laid out within the principles. How to do something, how not to do it, clearly giving us God's mindset on it, not man's. Principles illustrated through types or examples will make everything so clear for you.

We follow the Bible in 1 Samuel 16:7. That is a great principle: "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God sees the heart." It is what is in your heart that I am concerned about. As I said, man-made rules will continually change because they are made by man, but biblical principles will never change because God's authority never changes. Principles will separate you from what is Christian and what is spiritual from what is biblical and what is scriptural. There are a lot of things out there that are Christian and they are spiritual, but they are not biblical and they are not scriptural. Principles will separate you from that, and when you are put under a rule of man's law to make you spiritual, there is no joy in that.

I go back to Saul. When he wanted his mighty men of valor, he had to force them, he had to conscript them, he had to make them be his mighty men of valor. They did not want to be with him. I am telling you something, your liberty in Christ has been taken away from you in many cases, and it is an absolute mess, an absolute mess.

VII. The Failure of Modern Missions

I will take it one step further, and nowhere do you see this more clearly than in the failure of modern day missions today. Everything goes along hand in hand, and the churches fail, missions fail, pastors fail, Christians fail when you lose the Word of God. You lose those seven things we have talked about many months ago, many times we have talked about it.

For me, the aspect of missionaries, if I was going to take a model for missionaries, I would take the Moravians. The Moravians were under Count Zinzendorf and August Spangenberg, and he had a plot of land in Germany, and he opened it up to start training for missionaries to go to the world. If I was going to be a missionary, which I am a missionary to Kansas City, but we got the idea that missionaries do not have to go to foreign lands, and I understand that. But they were an incredible model for missions, and they trained people, and people had a burden to go to other people, and they got a one-way ticket.

There were Moravian missionaries who sold themselves into slavery, never to be free again, so they could reach the African black man for Christ. Now that is missions, and of course, that is so foreign today. It is a thing where they got a one-way ticket, and when they went there, they became part of that culture, never to come home again. But they followed the greatest missionary example anywhere in the Bible, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

When He came down from heaven, He left the throne of heaven. He came down, left His culture for this one.

2 Corinthians 8:9

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

He is the perfect model of the missionary that the Moravians patterned their whole missions program after. He came down and became one of us. He never pushed Himself off as holy. He did not have a halo, sorry. He did not always wear white starched robes. He dressed in the common dress of the man of the day. He lived with the common people. He did everything that everybody else did, yet without sin, and He was tempted at all points like we were. He came down from the Son of God to be the Son of Man, even though He was always the Son of God, and He set the model for us. If you want to reach people, you have got to become one with them. You have got to open up yourself to them.

A missionary one time was failing in Japan terribly, and he could not figure it out. He was so discouraged, and he finally asked some old Japanese guy why they would not listen to him, and he said, "American missionary, you love my soul, but you do not love me." You have got to become one with them.

You go back to the great Philadelphia Church Age, you see men like Robert Moffat, David Livingstone, Adoniram Judson, Hudson Taylor. Oh, the list is endless. Those men, when they

went to the mission field, they spent their whole lives there. Robert Moffat spent 51 years on the mission field. David Livingstone went into the darkest part of Africa for years. Nobody saw him or heard from him, and finally they sent the New York Times reporter Stanley to Africa to try to find him, and you read the account, it is incredible. Stanley says, "I walked around this little, in the middle of the jungle, I walked around this little bend in the trail, and there was a camp there, a tribe, and there out of one of the little huts came Dr. Livingstone," which is the famous little quote that most of you young kids do not know, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" When Dr. Livingstone died in Africa and they buried him in Westminster Abbey in London, his body is there, but before they shipped his body back, the Africans cut out his heart and buried it in Africa. I wonder if we died and they cut out our heart, where we will be buried today?

It is incredible. Missionaries today, they go for two years and then they come back for a year. I understand it, it is not their fault, it is the system. They have got to raise their own support, they have got to do this, they have got to do that. I will tell you something, you go someplace to build a work, you cannot build it in two years. It will take you five, six, seven years just to get your feet on the ground, and when you start to get something going for two years and you have got to take a year off and come back, you are basically starting over again. We have lost the concept, we have lost the principles, we have lost the mindset.

Hey, let me tell you something, when I came to Kansas City, that was it. I left my mom, I left my dad, I left my sister Barb, left her family, and this is where we are at now. This is our home. Yeah, I go back once a year, but not because I want to. It is a thing where that is what I have got to do. I will tell you right now, and you can justify this, when we are back there, she is always saying, "You are always on the phone with somebody back here, you are always solving problems, you are always solving this." I get that. You want to go on vacation, you want to go home, you want to just kind of forget this place. I am sorry, I cannot. This is where my heart is. I mean, I enjoy it, and we go to eat at Heggy's, we go to eat at all those good places, my Papa Bears. I get it, I enjoy that, but my life is here. It is here. I got transplanted from there to here, and if God called me to go to Africa, called me to go to wherever, that is where I would stay, and that is where I would be, and you would never see me again. That is why if I needed something, then I would call you. But that is what it has to be. It has to be.

I understand we are talking about a world thing concept of missions here that has miserably failed, but I want to tell you something, it is true in your life because your mission field is where you go to work tomorrow. Your mission field is the families that you reach out to that you are around in your neighborhood. You have got to have the same kind of dedication. When some new people come in this church, what do you do? Do you sit over here on your phone? Or are you over there making an investment in their world? That is what it takes, and that is what is missing today. It is just the way that it is. The model in the Bible is the Lord Jesus, and the Moravian missionaries picked that up, and the men in the Philadelphia Church Age, like Robert Moffat, David Livingstone, and all those guys, they gave their lives. Some of them buried their kids on the mission field. Some of them lost their wives on the mission field. Some of them died on the mission field themselves. You see, the principles will change your heart. The principles will take self out of your life and out of your world, and the principles of the Word of God will

transform you into Jesus Christ, and you will see the world completely differently, and that is what a pastor needs to be.

VIII. Loving Wisdom and Spending Substance

Proverbs 29:3: "Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father," or makes his father rejoice, God the Father, "but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance." "Whoso loveth wisdom" that will be God's wisdom over, we know, the wisdom of the world. I have said it many times, the key to learning the Bible the right way, the key to getting the Bible down in your life, will never be just reading it nor studying it, though obviously you are going to have to read it and study it. But the real key to learning the Bible will be you loving it. If you love it, you will learn it. I am just telling you, you love it more than anything else on this planet, and loving it so much that you are willing to allow it to change everything about you. You absolutely put absolutely nothing in front of loving that Book. You are not brought into the power of anything, as the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6. No boyfriend, no girlfriend, no job, no relationship, no amount of money, no worldly possessions, no career, no education, no bowling league, no golf club, no sports. All those things are fine. There is not one thing wrong with any of that as long as it is run through the Word of God and not around the Word of God.

Christians serve God in only three capacities:

- You have one group that serves God out of fear, and they serve Him as slaves, unfortunately.
- Then you have a group that serves Him under obligation, and they serve Him as hirelings.
- Then you have those who serve Him simply because they love Him beyond belief, and they serve Him as sons.

When you do, your Father rejoices. But contrast to that, "he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance."

At first glance, you cannot miss the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15, who leaves his father, and the Bible says that he wasted his substance on riotous living. You cannot miss that connection. He went out and turned into the world and all those things. But there is something else here that we need to stay within the context of where we are going here. I understand that there are physical harlots in the world that a person can ruin their life with and riotous living and all that. I get that. But you know as well as I do in the Bible that the horrid woman, a harlot, in Proverbs 5, Proverbs 7, over there in 1 Kings 18, Revelation 2:20, is likened to Jezebel the harlot. She is the horrid woman of Proverbs. She is the strange woman, and she is a picture of false doctrine and bad teaching.

When a child of God gets into that, he will dishonor not only his father but he will spend his substance in the wrong church. He will be listening and getting taught, and he will lose his millennial inheritance. The Bible gives two warnings: one, that "let no man take your crown," and that you "keep your garments." What you have inspirationally in Proverbs 29:2-3 is a contrast between a man who loves righteous authority and allows it to guide his life through the principles, and he takes his substance—substance, that is what you really are, what you are made of, your substance, that is who you really are. When everything is scraped off and it comes down

to the foundation, your substance is what you have to give God. He loves God's wisdom so much that he will spend the rest of his life serving God with his substance, and his Father rejoices.

Then a man who allows himself to stay in a church or under some kind of false teaching or the world system that oppresses him and teaches him false doctrine, the horrid woman, the strange woman of Proverbs 5 and 7. I have seen it, he will moan. How many times have I heard they will moan and complain about the pastor, about the music, about the lack of Bible teaching, about this, about the dances up on the thing. They will moan and complain about it, but they will never, never do anything about it, and they waste their substance on harlots and riotous living in the name of Christianity and a life of rebellion against God's established authority. Oh, they will complain about it, not like it. They will say, "Oh, I just hate it over there." "Oh, this or that." "Oh, it is terrible." "Oh, we do not get the Bible taught." "Oh, I know I have to follow you online, I have to do this, I just come to this." Hey, listen, why do you not just get the guts to get out of that place and get something and stop wasting your substance? But they will not.

In your study of the Bible, we have seen the great parallels between the Old Testament nation of Israel and the New Testament church or Christianity. Both God's structure in the Old Testament, His structure was a nation, kingdom of heaven. In the New Testament, His structure is the church, the kingdom of God. Yet the same basic elements are at work in both. I know one is under the law, one is under grace. I get that. But in both cases, the furtherance of God's message has to come through the families, the families in the Old Testament, certainly families in this church. It had to come with leadership that was willing to understand that I need to teach you how to fight, David, and then teach you how to build your temple, Solomon, and take you and not give you a set of rules that you just try to keep that you cannot keep, but give you the principles of the Word of God that will change your heart, your attitude, and your action, that you will come to the place in your life that you will take for the rest of your life your very substance and do with it whatever God calls you to do, and understand that your liberty in Christ is the freedom to do that as long as God gets the edification of it, God gets the glory, and you edify Christ and the cause of Christ, and you edify the people that are sitting next to you. You learn how to live your life today by the examples of yesterday. The book of Proverbs is the book of God's principles, and it shows you exactly what God thinks about everything in life, and we take those principles, and then when we put them into our hearts, we wrap our lives around them, they become one with our very being. It will take your substance, and you will bring honor and glory to your Father.

We will hold up there. Guys, make sure you get your tracts and your water.