

I. Introduction and Review of Proverbs 26

If you have your Bibles this morning, we are in Proverbs chapter 26, and we have been studying in this chapter some great concepts. Actually, it is just like studying the workings of a fool. The theme of the book of Proverbs is a wise man and a foolish man, and there is much said about both of them. We have been studying together this chapter from the aspect of seeing and understanding the great contrast between a man with the understanding of God, that will be our wise man, and then a man without the understanding and the wisdom of God, and that will be our fool.

We talked about the great differences between them. I gave you Amos 3:3, how the Bible says:

Amos 3:3

Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

Of course, we see this when we work with people; people that do not want to follow the Bible and change and do what is right very quickly, it becomes obvious that there is something there that you cannot walk together in the thing anymore.

In Proverbs chapter 26, there are somewhere around 10 or 11 different direct references to a fool in this chapter. You can learn a lot from him, about ourselves, and about the people that you work with. So far, the first one we saw in Proverbs 26:1, and we saw that a fool is like snow in summer and rain in harvest. I explained to you those two, how that they are a contrast. It does not snow in the summertime, and when it rains in the harvest, you cannot get the crops in. We talked about how that is the way a fool is; they are just opposite everything that God wants them to be or God wants them to do.

Then the second one we looked at already is in Proverbs 26:3, and it talked about a whip for a horse, a bridle for an ass, and a rod for the fool's back. We talked about how that all three of these have in common that until they are broken, they are unrideable. We used a lot of different examples to show you how that we have to get broken to the things of God before God can ever take us and use us.

Two of the best ones that I have always used, and I told you about, are found in Proverbs 26:4-5. That is where it says:

Proverbs 26:4

Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.

We talked about how that when you deal with fools, you find them in two different categories. You have some that are just fools because they are ignorant of things, so you do not clobber them; you answer them, you give them what they need. Then Proverbs 26:5 said:

Proverbs 26:5

Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

We talked about how that is the fool that is unteachable. We used many examples to show you how that you do that with the American cults and different religions and all the things that we deal with.

Last week, the fifth one was found in Proverbs 26:6, and that was a good one: a message in the hand of a fool. How that it is always going to come back to bite you, trying to send somebody out to do God's work before they are ready to go out and do it, or when they are still in a foolish mindset. It says, "He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage." It is going to hurt you; it is going to come back and bite you.

Then, of course, it also said the sixth one last week in Proverbs 26:7: "The legs of the lame are not equal." That was a picture of somebody out of balance in their walk with God and not walking on equal ground. Probably the greatest aspect of last week was the understanding of when he said, "The parable in the mouth of a fool," how important the parables are in putting the Bible together and understanding it. Literally nobody today that you are going to read, that you are going to listen to, that you are going to study under, even has a clue to the beginning of understanding how these parables fit into not only the story itself, like the parables in Matthew, parables of the kingdom, but in the whole putting the Bible together. I gave you some good examples of that. In fact, I think Thursday night I walked you through some of those.

Now today, let us look at a couple more verses here, and we are going to add a couple more to our studies of a fool. We are going to be in Proverbs chapter 26, verses 8 and 9. Here is what Proverbs 26:8 says:

Proverbs 26:8

As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that giveth honour to a fool.

Proverbs 26:9 says:

Proverbs 26:9

As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools.

II. The Fool Who Binds the Stone (Proverbs 26:8, Part 1)

Let us look at Proverbs 26:8 first, and it says, "As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that giveth honour to a fool." Now here again, it may not look like much as you read it, but trust me, there is a great principle here, and we want to unearth that today as we come through it. I want to break Proverbs 26:8 down into two parts to better understand and help you grasp it and see what he is saying. I think that will be beneficial today.

So let us look at part one here, and it says, "He that bindeth a stone in a sling." To see all of this, allow me a moment to lay out a few things for you here that I think will better put it into a context for you. We know that the Old Testament is about literal nations going to war against each other. We know that when God called the nation of Israel out of Exodus 12, set them out to

the Promised Land, there were nations along the way that the devil was using to stop them. Egypt themselves was of the devil to keep them in bondage and to wipe them out. Of course, it only made them stronger. But while they were down there in that time period in Egypt, the devil was fortifying the land that God had given and promised to Abraham with hundreds of nations. Now these nations stand for one purpose: that is to stop the nation of Israel by the devil's design from getting into the land.

So we see the books like Numbers. Numbers is the book in your Bible that simply means that they were numbered for war, getting ready to go to battle. You have the great battles in the book of Joshua. You have great battles in the book of Judges. They are everywhere in the Old Testament. In Old Testament warfare, and this is what I want you to see, the sling, we know it as a slingshot. Every kid growing up in my time had a piece of a tree branch that was a wire, and you put rubber bands on it, and we could shoot things with it. In the Old Testament, they had slings. We do not think of a slingshot as a formidable weapon with your Glocks and your Sigs and your Smith and Wessons and your Colts. But let me tell you something, back in the day, in the Old Testament, the sling was an incredible, formidable weapon in the right hands, compared to what we think as a slingshot today.

Most notable comes to mind, I get it, David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17. He takes out Goliath with a slingshot. Yet, if you study it a little more, you begin to see how that was used. In Judges 20:16, it says clearly that the nation of Israel had 700 chosen men that were left-handed who could sling a stone at a hair's breadth and never miss. Now that is a pretty good feat. That is like putting a bottle cap on the top of a fence post at 50 yards and knocking it off with a slingshot. It was an incredible thing.

Along with that, in Judges 20:17, it says that they had a whole bunch of swordsmen, men who were skilled in battle with fighting with a sword. Along with that, you had what they called the bows and arrow guys, the archers. In the Bible, in 1 Samuel 20:40, bows and arrows are called artillery. We get our word from it in the military today because we have an artillery battalion, and there will be 75s or 155s or whatever it is, cannons, and they will rain down destruction on the enemy. So they are called artillery. But in the Bible, guys with bows and arrows, archers, are also called artillery.

Let me explain to you how it worked. I am going to make my point in a second, but you have to understand this first because most of you do not understand how they fought back in the Old Testament. They were much more sophisticated. Warfare today has moved into the guerrilla warfare movement where everybody is camoed up, where you look like a tree stump sneaking through the woods, and you kill people indiscriminately. It never was that way. World War I was a very civilized war, even though it killed millions of men. When the fighter guys would fight, they would shoot somebody down, they would actually fly over their base and drop a wreath down. They shot the guy. That is pretty good. In medieval times, they only fought from nine o'clock in the morning to five o'clock at night, and then they took the night off. If you had a real good war, you did not work weekends. In fact, the standard saying in the German Prussians during that period of time is, "In case of rain, the war will be held in the auditorium." It was a thing where it was very civilized. Chivalry was the word.

Back in these times, it was different. You had two armies that faced each other. You saw it in the Revolutionary War, the stupidest thing you ever saw in your life. First of all, you have these guys, you do not want to be a target in battle. So you have these guys in the Revolutionary War all wearing red coats. That would be your first red flag that you should not wear a red coat. Then they line up in a straight line, maybe a line here of 5,000 guys and a line maybe 100 yards away of the opposing guy. You just shoot at each other. It is stupid. But it was more civilized back then. Today it has gotten murderous. I am not against that; you fight a war, you want to win. If I was going to fight a war, I would not stand across from somebody and shoot at them. I might sneak up behind them while they are looking for me and kill them from behind. That is how you do it.

So get in your mind now a picture in Old Testament battle. You have 10,000 guys in a line of march lined out this way. They are all abreast, and they are coming toward you and your army to do battle. When they get about 200 yards out, they are still marching towards you. The first thing you do is let your artillery go. You have a thousand, 2,000 archers back here with unlimited arrows. They will stretch toward the sky, and they will rain artillery or arrows down on that army. Now in theory, I mean, theory does not always work in battle, but in theory, here is how it worked: if you have a thousand guys and you shoot 10 times each a minute, then you are going to pretty much wipe everybody out if every time you fire your arrow, you are going to hit somebody. Now it does not actually work that way, but that is the mindset. I guarantee you it whittles them down to size.

There is nothing more scary than being in a war zone place in an artillery barrage when it is coming down on top of you. It is absolutely frightening. I cannot imagine guys looking up and seeing the sky black with arrows coming down on them. But here is what they did: when a troop saw the arrows coming, they would hold up their shields and protect themselves from the oncoming artillery. Now this is called in the Roman warfare *atetudo*, where they held their shields up, and the arrows obviously hit the shields. Roman legions did it, Alexander the Great did it, and it was to their advantage because when these artillery, these thousands of arrows were raining down on you, when you put your shield up, if you had a good shield, you did not want to get one from Walmart, you wanted to get a really good one. It would stop the arrows, and you would survive. Of course, that is how it worked. When they did that, they left the rest of their bodies and their legs exposed.

The way it worked was once the archers launched the arrows, they put the arrows up. You had 700 men who could sling a sling with a stone in it who never missed. They would put out at knee level a barrage of 45-caliber slugs, stones, at about 900 feet a second. They would take them out wave after wave. The theory here was if you have 700 men that shoot 10 a minute and you have 7,000 guys coming your way, you wiped them out in just 10 times. Now that is in theory. But you could see once the arrows come over, you are going to take out a bunch of guys with the arrow. But they got their shields up, and then the slingers let go and take them out at knee cap level. Then you are going to, and then all that is left is your swordsmen go in, and they kill everybody that is left. That is how it was supposed to work.

I said all that because a sling back in those days, Bible times, was a formidable weapon in battle for its day. When old David went out and fought Goliath in 1 Samuel 17, old Goliath is probably 14 feet tall. He probably weighs about 800 pounds. The Bible says the staff of his spear is like a weaver's beam. That is a 6x6. And this little guy with a sling, with this guy standing there who could just break him in half with one sling with one stone, took him out right between the eyes. Down he went. It is like getting hit with a golf ball hit by Arnold Palmer, and you are 40 feet away. I guarantee you, you get hit with that, you are absent from the body and present with the Lord, man.

I know I give you guys tough times about playing golf. I think I always say, and I say a lot of things I do not really mean. But I played golf for a while, Bubba. I did. And those of you older days, you know that that is true. I played golf. I went and got me a set of golf clubs, and everybody was playing it. I thought I would give it a try. They told me that I could hit a golf ball harder and farther than anybody they ever saw. I got to get into it, man. The problem was it would never go straight. I never learned all the things, you know, how to get it straight. The last time I played golf, I was with four or five guys. It was over here where Sterling Acres is, where they used to have a golf course across their apartments now. The last time I ever played, I teed off, and I do not even remember the club sizes. I did not even know. I used to have somebody tell me what club to use, but I could hit that sucker. You give me whatever, you knock it out there. So I am here. There is the fairway. There is the green. There is the fairway. I got to hit it down here. Here is the road coming down here with all the other golfers, and they are in golf carts. Man, I hit that. I mean, I cracked that sucker so square on, but the problem was there was a golf cart coming this way with four guys in it. That golf ball went right for that golf cart. It was like slow motion murder. I wanted to yell "Fore!" but I thought they would think I was being a smart aleck because there were four guys in it. I thought they were taking them, and that ball, I remember it like it was yesterday. It went in at the top, and it rattled around like a, and these guys were talking to her and trying to just cart over the place. That ball. I thought, "That is it. I am done." I said, "I am not going to cut my ministry career short by a life sentence of murder." It was the last time I ever played, but I know the power behind that thing. You take a guy who can put a stone in a sling and put that sucker out there that he can hit something with it. I mean, it is coming out of there about 800, 900 feet a second. It is harder than any golf ball because you can really wind up with it.

III. The Spiritual Warfare and the Sling

Now that is a historical application other than the little golf story I told you. Now let us look at how it fits into you and me and our fool here. We know that we are in a spiritual warfare, a spiritual battle. 2 Corinthians 10:4 says that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. They are not swords and slings and literal things, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Ephesians 6 says that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. What you want to understand is that we are in this battle, you and me, and God wants you and me to be a formidable weapon for Him. Our battle is not physical, and God wants us, you and me, to be that formidable weapon in His hand.

God wants you and I to be that sling that when you take the stones, now in the Bible, the Bible is in Christ, and God is a rock, but the stones are a piece of that rock. So the stones would be a picture of the principles, the verses, the concepts, the truths, that we are. God wants to take you and me, just like the guy took a sling and put Bible truth in that thing and nail somebody with it. You and me as a fine instrument of war in the hands of Almighty God to slay the enemy. When you go over in Daniel 2:45, you will find it talked about the stone cut out of a mountain of God. That is Mount Zion, the stone made without hands. God wants you and I to be that formidable weapon that He can take you and me like they took a sling in the Old Testament with the enemy of God coming after them, like Goliath, and take Bible truth in the form of the stones and launch those things toward our enemy. I will show you how it works here.

If you were a slinger in the Old Testament in a battle, you would target two areas of your enemy. You would go for a headshot or you would go for his knees because those are two most vital areas to take somebody out. In a fight, I do not care if the guy is 300 and 400 pounds, you crush his knee and take him out, he is going down. It did not matter, Goliath was 13, 14 feet tall. He outweighed David by tons, and it was one stone placed at the right spot, and his day was over. It is the head and the knees. It is a picture for you and me that when we put out, when we swing forth, when we shoot forth the stones of truth, the principles, you choose your target. You either go for the head where that guy is thinking intellectually, or you go to his knees where his walk is walking the world. God's people need to see this warfare and see themselves as the instrument in God's hands to put out the word of God to nail somebody where their thinking is or nail somebody where their walk is, allowing God to swing out the truth, put out the truth through you and me and hit them where it hurts.

We saw this when we talked about the two verses there, "Answer not a fool according to his folly," and then "Answer a fool." We saw the two kinds of fools. I went into great length that day to show you the biblical principles, took you through the Bible, took you through history. Those are all stones that you launch on them. The faster you can swing those stones to them of truth, the harder it is for them to deal with it. You go after their intellect, you go after what they have been taught, and then you go after where their walk is because they have no walk through history. You have to take Bible truth, Bible principles, and like in the hand of a swinger, put those stones in there and nail that guy. You go after what he thinks, and you go after where he is going. It is an incredible picture.

Proverbs 26:8 says, "He that bindeth a stone in a sling." In the military, this is our fool, by the way. In the military, we would call this guy a misfire. We would call him a short round. We would call him a hang fire. Most lovingly, we call him a dud. He does not get off the shot. The Bible says in Proverbs 26:8 that he binds the stone into the sling. How stupid. The whole purpose is to put the stone in the sling and shoot it out. This guy puts it in and then duct tapes it so he cannot lose it. You are laughing at that, but I want to tell you, I met a lot of Christians that same way. They had a long two-piece thing with a little cup in it, and they put the stone in there, closed it, and then swung it around, and it really got some momentum going, and they had the ability to know exactly when to let one string go and fire that stone and nail the guy. I have seen a lot of God's people that just go around swinging the sling, but they are shooting blanks. They never get

anything going down range. God cannot depend on that kind of fool in battle because his sling and stone are stuck together. We talked about last week, that is a picture of a message in the hand of a fool. He swings his arms and makes a lot of noise, but he never gets the stone out of the sling.

Paul talked about guys like that over in 1 Corinthians 9:26 when he says:

1 Corinthians 9:26

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

He is talking about a guy throwing punches but never hits anybody. He just beats the air. A guy, a fool, who takes the sling and instead of being a formidable instrument of God in God's hand, he takes the sling, puts the rock in it, the stone in it, and then binds it in there that he can swing all day long, but there is nothing coming out. A really wise man will place it right where he wants it to go.

I go back to David in 1 Samuel 17. David, what a credible story that is. Now this guy comes out to fight David. He has got greaves of brass on. He has got a coat of mail. David knows that if he slings that stone and tries to hit him in the leg or knee, they are going to be protected because he has got greaves of brass that are going to block the stone coming in. He has got a coat of mail by which it is going to, like a bulletproof vest, that is going to stop it. When you study the passage and you look at it, you will find that when Goliath saw him coming, he is such a little runt and such a little guy that he laughs at him and he disdains him, and he starts, he leaves a spear, and the thing that he did that was his undoing is he took his helmet off. When he took his helmet off, the Bible says in Ephesians 6, the salvation, here is a picture of an unsaved man. He is going to fight a battle. He took the helmet off, and when David saw him coming, he is analyzing it. He is saying, "He has got greaves on. I cannot go for the knee. Cannot go for the chest. I certainly just do not want to take on an arm because he can kill him with the other one. Ah, he took his helmet off," and he put it right. You have to pick your target. Oh, David, he knew exactly where he wanted to place that. Here is a guy that was shooting off his mouth, defiling the nation of Israel and the God of Israel, disdaining Israel, making fun of him. Little David takes him out in one shot.

Of course, I have always, you have not only got to know how to place your shot, but you have got to be ready for anything. If you are going to get into this battle and you are going to be God's sling, and you are going to put forth those stones of truth, and you are going to take out the Goliath of life, David was smart. David not only picked his shot, but David was prepared for the inevitable because the Bible says he goes down into the brook and he picks up five smooth stones. I have had preachers preach on this sermon, and they say that that was a lack of faith on David's part, that he was afraid that the first one would not kill him or maybe he would miss, and they go on and on and on about that. Almost every commentary I have read on 1 Samuel, that will be what he says. The truth of the matter is not only did David place the shot where he wanted it to go, he went after the brain, he went after his intellect, he nailed him right between the eyes. Not only did he do that, but he was prepared because he goes down into the brook and picks up five smooth stones because the Bible says in 2 Samuel 21:18-21 that Goliath has got

four brothers, and David is prepared not only to take out Goliath, but if the boys want to make this a family affair, he is going to go five for five. So in this warfare, you have not only got to know how to place your shot, you have got to be prepared for the inevitable. You may start out talking to one Jehovah Witness, and two more show up. You have got to kill all three of them, spiritually speaking, in Jesus' name. You may get in talking to somebody on a King James Bible issue, and some two other guys jump in or three other guys jump in to try to help him out. That does not scare you. You just take them one at a time or take them on at all. Back in the Old Testament, David's mind meant a valor, 900 to one was pretty good odds. You have got to place your shot. You have got to be prepared for the inevitable.

IV. Giving Honor to a Fool (Proverbs 26:8, Part 2)

Then the last part of Proverbs 26:8, "So is he that giveth honour to a fool." Now giving honor to a fool would be like talking about a great gun that you have that does not fire. You laugh at that, but in Japan, you cannot own a firearm. But there are hundreds, if not thousands, of firearm collectors in Japan. You see, you can buy the gun, but you cannot own it until you send it to somebody, and they fix it so it can never fire again. Then you can put it on your wall, you can put it in your collection, you can say, "Hey, this is my six-inch stainless steel Colt Python." You know what they are worth today? A lot of money. So you take that gun, buy it over here for what, two or three thousand dollars, ship it to Japan. Before you can pick it up, guys have got to go in and fix it so it will never fire, and all you can do is hold it and look at it and show somebody, but you cannot shoot anything out of it.

I had a guy over here that ran a huge auction house years ago. His name was Ron Mannion. Ron was a good friend of mine, and his mom actually used to watch me on television. She really liked my preaching, and I would go over there, and he ran a worldwide auction house. I remember back in the day when he was running it out of his basement in his home. Then he built an absolutely incredibly huge complex, and he was selling stuff. The auction was a worldwide auction, military auction. Had everything on it you could ever want. People would send it in, and he would consign it and put it on. I remember he is taking me on a tour, and he took me down into the basement, and there was, I had a heart attack. They had all these German World War II officers' daggers, which are phenomenally rare, and a chained officers' SS dagger is probably today twenty thousand dollars. Back then, they were four, five, six thousand dollars. This was thirty years ago. I am standing there, and I am looking at all these, and I look over, and here is a guy or a gal taking these six thousand dollar daggers, putting them in a vise, and snapping the blades off at an inch and a half, two inches. I am dying. I said, "Ron," and he said, "Oh, they have been bought by collectors in Japan." In Japan, you cannot own a knife that has a blade any longer than two inches. So they take these thousands of dollars worth of knives, millions of dollars when you put them all together, and snap the blade before they send them over. Then they put it in the sheath and hang him on the wall and look at it. I thought to myself, "How worthless is that?" It is about as worthless as a child of God who binds his stone in a sling, and he cannot shoot either. He is a great showpiece. He looked like that Colt Python. He looks like that Dirty Harry gun, that Smith and Wesson model twenty-nine. He looks like, "Look at this rifle. Look at this scope on this." How is it going? "Well, you cannot shoot it." What good is a weapon no

matter how pretty and beautiful it is on the outside if it cannot do business when you need it? I say this, what good is the child of God who looks good on the outside but when God needs him to do the business, he cannot do it?

What are you talking about? Giving honor to a fool would be like talking about a great weapon and demilling it to the point where you cannot fire it. It looks good, but it is worthless. Now we see this concept in life all through this country, all through the world, how one fool bestows honor on another. Now I am not fighting anybody because I like some of this stuff too, but I am just making my point. Do you ever see the Country Music Awards? No, I am not fighting. I like country music. I do. I am country. I was country before country was cool. But you get these people up here that wrote these songs, and they are good songs, and they are bestowing all these, and my point is this: a hundred million years from tonight, will it matter? We have all these awards. We have the Gospel Music Awards. We have the Academy Awards: Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, Best Picture, Best Color, Best Sound, Best Music, the Golden Globe Awards, the Miss America, the Miss Universe, Mr. America, Miss Universe. I mean, you take the most beautiful, voluptuous woman on the planet that walks out on that stage in the bikini as Miss Universe, and at the Great White Throne Judgment, she is going to be Miss Maggot. Who cares? The world does.

We have the Football Hall of Fame. We have the Baseball Hall of Fame. Every year, the Most Valuable Player, Rookie of the Year. I get it. I am not against it. I think it is wonderful. But the verse says, "Giving honor to a fool is worthless." We see fools laying honor after honor. Everyone that sees this really work good, just go down to Springfield, Missouri, to a Baptist Bible Fellowship meeting. Boy, it is one rear end kissing after another. It is bringing up Dr. So-and-So by Dr. So-and-So, and "I want to introduce you to Dr. So-and-So. Thank you, doctor. Thank you, doctor." Doctors down there, you would think God was sick. Fools laying honor after honor on fools. What they accomplish in life is worthless. It will be burned up either at the Great White Throne Judgment or the Judgment Seat of Christ. As I said, 100 million years from today, nobody is ever going to care.

In Canton, Ohio, this is where I am from, they have what they call the Football Hall of Fame. It is one of the greatest things that you could ever go to. Nothing wrong with it. It is really good. It was picked in Canton, most people do not know this, because football in America started in Canton, Ohio, with the old McKinley Bulldog team way back in the day. So it was the place that they chose to put it in there. It is great. I mean, it is a good thing to go see. You will not believe this. When I was in high school, I was in the marching band, and that was the first year they had the Hall of Fame game, the first one. They just opened it. Our high school band did the halftime show at the first Hall of Fame game. They played Redskins versus somebody, I do not remember. But we did it. It was a big deal. I am all for it. I am not fighting it at all. If you go to Canton, go through it.

But my home church, Canton Baptist Temple, Dr. Harold Henniger, years ago, long before they did the Football Hall of Fame, he started something at Canton Baptist Temple, which was unique. He put in, because of the idea of putting in the Football Hall of Fame, he got the idea of putting in the Christian Hall of Fame. Down the hallways of that church, which is a huge church,

the church is probably twice the size of this property that all those buildings are on, the parking lot, twice that size, maybe bigger. It is huge. You walk down these halls, and starting from early Christianity right up to the time that we live, you will find these portraits with a little bio on each one of these guys, and it was the Christian Hall of Fame. I thought it was always tremendous. But you know what? I bet they do not have 10 people a year to go through that. I bet they have 10 people a minute going through the football one. That just goes to show you. There is where honor needs to be looked at and honored toward the men and the women who have given their lives in the preaching of the gospel. Every one of them was an instrument of war in the hand of God, and they slung out some stones. But we are more interested in the guy running there and throwing a dead pig at 50 yards and making a touchdown. That is just where we are.

V. The Parable in the Mouth of a Fool (Proverbs 26:9)

Now look at Proverbs 26:9: "As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools." Now here are our parables again. I told you last week how vitally important they are to the whole concept of the Bible. I made it clear that you did not have to know everything about the parables to be able to minister for God to use you. But I am telling you, if you ever want to get your Bible together, you have got to understand the parables. Looking at the verse here, you might think that it is talking about the same thing as last week, but it sounds and looks like it does, but it is not. The trained eye will see something totally different here around the same parables. We are going to talk about that.

Again, I want to break down this verse into a couple of different aspects so we can better understand it.

1. He says, "the thorn in the hand of a drunkard." Just so we know, thorns in the Bible will always be connected with a curse. In Genesis 3:18, it is connected with the sins that we get into. In Joshua 23:13, and when Christ died on the cross and became sin for you and for me, the crowning aspect of His death on the cross was the crown of thorns that they put on His head. He became sin for you who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. It was the crown of thorns. So thorns in the Bible are always going to be connected to sin. So you know that.
2. We have the drunkard here. I know what a drunkard is, I understand that. But it is not necessarily talking about a drunkard that is drunk on booze all the time. We know from Revelation 17:2 and Revelation 18:3 that when the Antichrist shows up and his religion and all the things that there are people in the world who get drunk with the wine of their fornication, the very religion. In other words, you can get drunk on the world without ever taking a drink of booze. You can get drunk on anything in this world without ever touching a bottle. Drunkenness is an excess. When a man gets to be a drunkard and he drinks in excess, he loses control of his life, and the booze takes over. Or whatever he has got drunk in, and when you get in excess of the world, the world takes over, and you become elaborated to that just like a drunk does to the bottle.

Then here again, he likens to a parable in the mouth of a fool. Now let us look at this for a moment. Last week, as I said, we talked about the parables, how key they are, how that they are

an exact truth, doctrinally, put in a mystery form because of a man, the nation of Israel, rejection of the truth in Matthew 12. At that point, then all of the things that Jesus is talking about the coming kingdom to Israel now goes into parables or mysteries because of their unbelief. We get the idea that there is some heavenly language, some heavenly metaphor of truth. That is not true. They are exact doctrinal truth that when you understand them and you can take them apart and put them through the places in the Bible, it opens up the whole Bible for you. It is absolutely necessary to understand at some point in your life, if you are ever going to learn your Bible. I say it again, you can work with people, you can preach, you can do things without ever getting them down. But if you want to learn your Bible, that is another thing. You are going to have to get them down.

Now look at this. Last week we saw this thing about the parable in the mouth of a fool. It had to do with his legs, his walk with God, him being lame or unequal or out of balance. A couple of weeks ago, maybe a couple of months ago now, at 2 Chronicles 16:11, we talked about Asa, who was a king of Israel. The Bible says he was a king, and he started to take the things that were the glorified things of God and give them to the world and the other nations, and then he got a disease in his feet. The Bible says that that disease in his feet is a picture of you and me getting into the world system and then getting a spiritual disease on our feet where we quit walking with God. The Bible says that he went to the physicians instead of going and getting it right with God. He could have went to God, got it right, got healed, but on his way, he goes to the world system for his help because he had already turned to the world system and gave them everything that God had as holy, and he died. God killed him. So we saw last time how that the parable in the mouth of a fool had to do with his legs. Now here, it is not a parable about his walk or his legs or his unevenness or being out of balance, but what he does with his hands that counted them as thorns or sins. So one place we have a reference to the parable in the mouth of a fool where he goes, the other one we have a parable in the mouth of a fool of what he does. You do not want to miss that. Only a fool could because the lesson becomes so clear.

Not only does God have somewhere that He wants to send you with His message, that you are not a fool with a message. God has somewhere He wants to send you someplace with that message. He wants to use you as a slingshot with the message of truth in a stone, and He wants you to fire those things and launch those things to people. Not only does God have somewhere that He wants to send you with His message in your legs, but He has a work that He wants you to do with your hands. A great question for all of us all the time is, who in our life at this point are we building? What in our life are we building? That is the question. With all of the natural resources, the things that we have, the things that God gave us when we get saved, how are we utilizing those resources to build something for God and go with a message where God wants us to go? You have to know the Bible parables to get both done if you are going to get to that point.

VI. The Virtuous Woman and the Work of Our Hands

In Proverbs 31, there is a great picture of you and me. That picture is laid out in the story of the virtuous woman, and we are going to look at that when we get to Proverbs 31, and we will have a great time with it. But just skimming through it this week, in light of where I am at, I got

thinking about it, and I went back there, and I thought, "I want to look at this." When it came to that virtuous woman, who is a picture of your life and my life and what we do, I found seven references to her hands. They were incredible.

- In Proverbs 31:13, it says that she seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands. Now the key words here in this verse are "willingly" and "her hands." She is willing to take what she does, and if you study this, she is busy making clothes all the time. The Bible says that she makes the clothes, which is a picture of a covering, a picture of the Word of God, that her children will not be cold in winter. The clothes here are a picture of the clothing, the garments of salvation that she is doing willingly with her hands, and she is covering people with them.
- Proverbs 31:16 says, "She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard." She sees the world, and she sees that Christ died for it, and she realizes that in this world, God has some place that He wants her to go. I do not know all the things about you, but I do know this: wherever you were in life, wherever you were born, wherever you lived, whatever reason, God chose to put all of our paths together. Some a long time ago, some 10, 15 years ago, some a couple of weeks ago, but God chose that. You had no say in it. God looked down through heaven, and some of you were in some weird places. Some were in some bad places. I look at some of you, and I honestly do not know how you ever got here. The odds against you being here today and being where you are at in the Bible are so against you that it has to be just God. There is no human man, there is no human factor that you can factor in and say, "Well, that was the determining factor. His uncle did this or his aunt did this or his..." No, no, no, no, no. Some of your lives were so out of touch with reality. Some of you came from all over the place. You never even heard of this place before. The hand of God saw fit to bring everybody here today. It is no accident that you are here today. The virtuous woman here, she looks at the field that God died for. The field is the world, Matthew 13. In that field, she says there is some place that God wants me to go. She allows God to take her to her own personal field, which for you is Kansas City in this church as it is for me. Then the Bible says with the fruit, not just her hands, with the fruit of her hands, she planted the vineyard. She worked willingly with her hands, and she saw the field, and she began to take with her hands and bear fruit. With that fruit, she planted a vineyard.
- Proverbs 31:19 says, "She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff." Now the spindle is where she would weave, and the distaff is the unused flax that she would make into thread. It is clearly showing you that her hands are completely, totally involved in the work. The work is to make clothes for people's covering when the cold comes. Many of you were out in the cold. Many of you were out there in the blistering cold of this old world. When God brought you here, you got a new coat. You got ear muffs. You got galoshes. You got snow pants. Keep it coming. I got out, so I am not done yet. That is what, you know, the world is a blistering cold wasteland, and nothing will warm you up by warming your heart more than that precious book and the covering of God's blood and a place where you can come that you know people love you. Nobody is going to hurt you. You are here because God decided to bring you here. I have no doubt that God had decided to bring you here. My question is, do you understand that God decided to bring you here? If you did, why are you binding your stone in the sling? Why are you not shooting it out of there?

- Proverbs 31:20 says, "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy." She sees beyond her own self. She sees the need out there in people's lives. She realizes that there are two things that are going to fix that: one, her willingness to go in her walk, and her willingness to do the work in her hands.
- The last thing he says in Proverbs 31:31: "Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates." My dear friend, that is a reference to the Judgment Seat of Christ. That is a reference to you standing there on that day, and the fruit of your hands praising you for what you allowed God to do in your life. A weapon that God could use to reach the world.

Hands are an incredible study. When you get into the book of Psalms, Psalms 8:6 talks about the work of our hands to do all that God really wants us to do. Psalm 7:3 talks about the iniquity that is found in our hands that will stop us from doing what God wants us to do. In preparation of being that sling where God wants you to go and what God wants you to do, Psalms 18:34 says:

Psalms 18:34

He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

Psalms 144:1 says:

Psalms 144:1

Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight;

You see, God wants to strengthen your hands. He wants to use your fingers, and I cannot impress upon you that your hands and when he says there "my fingers to fight" is nothing more than your hands opening up these books and your fingers flipping through the pages to find the principles, the stones that you are going to put into your sling.

Psalms 90:17

And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

What an incredible verse. It simply says that the work that God does with our hands establishes the beauty of the Lord. What you allow God to do with your life and your hands, where you allow Him to send you to this world, establishes to the lost world, the friends that you are with, when they see it in your life and they see your dedication, you see you as the virtuous woman doing what the Bible says, you know what it does? In their mind, it establishes the beauty of the Lord. What a great lesson for all of us on our walk, our legs, and our hands, our work. You see, you are my work, and I invested in you, and now you are working with somebody else, you are investing in them, you are going to get them to invest in somebody else with their work, and the process just keeps going on. That is the way God intended it to be.

VII. The Call to Be God's Instrument

We have seen some really great stuff here. God wants us to carry the message to the world, but He cannot use a fool. You are going to have to use a wise man. There is an enemy out there that is going to try to stop you. You are in a warfare, and if you try to attack this thing in Christianity, it is a mamby-pamby, get along with everybody, you are going to get swallowed up in this thing. You have got to be an instrument of war in the hands of God, spiritually speaking. You have got to be that sling that God can fire the stones of truth and strategically place that truth right where it is going to do the most damage. God wants you and me to be that formidable weapon in His hand, a sling that will put those stones of truth and hit the adversary right where it counts with a headshot where his intellectual mind tries to get around everything that God is doing, and you hit him there, or he is out in the world doing the things that the world, so you take him out at the knees, choosing our targets like David did, having understanding, perception, and discernment is the order of the day.

But no, instead we sit around, and we glorify each other. We honor each other. We talk about how good so-and-so is. I always had a question, I keep it to myself, I have done it a few times, but I will hear somebody get up, and I will say, "You know, what we say is all relative." If there is not a point of truth to it, everything really does not mean anything. I had a guy say one time talking about a pastor, and he said, "I want you guys to know he really did a good job." I asked myself, "Compared to who? What is your point of reference?" He did a really good job compared to who? I mean, it is your point of, I mean, anybody can do a job compared to somebody who is doing no job. He said, "Well, he is a really good man." Really? Compared to who? Adolf Hitler? Osama bin Laden? That is a statement. That is a positive statement if you do not have a point of reference. We do it all the time. "Well, I will tell you what, he is a really good guy." Really? And I say, "Compared to who?" "Well, he has built a great church." Compared to whose church? There has to be an absolute point of truth in what we say that brings it back as the reference point. But we just glorify each other. We get up, and we talk about this guy, this girl, this pastor, this church, this, that, this, that. It is all relative unless you have something that, "Well, he really knows the Bible." Compared to who? I mean, what is your reference point? We like to sit around, and I am not saying you do not give honor to whom honor is due, but a lot of these guys out there have not done anything. They are not building anything, and yet because we are in the good old boys' club, we have to just honor everybody and pat everybody on the back. That is why I do not hang out with that crowd. I just, I just, I would not last five minutes.

Out of our chapter so far, and we are going to add to it in the weeks to come, but right now out of our chapter so far, we have learned five great truths.

3. First of all, there is a message that needs to be delivered. You need to prepare yourself to deliver that message so you make sure that it is not in the hand of a fool.
4. Then there is a work to be done. There is something God wants you to do. He gave you hands for it. We have seen it over and over again today. There is a work to be done, and God has something that He wants you to do.
5. Then the third thing, there is a ministry to be established. You have to establish yourself in the work of God.

6. The fourth thing is that there is a warfare to be fought. You have to see this thing as it is, and you have to realize that God is counting on you. He went back to heaven and trusted the battle to you and to me.

There are times that I will run into somebody who, and I think there are like 29 people watching online today. I know that the majority of them, most of them, if not all of them, they are out someplace here, or maybe they are sick today or whatever. But from time to time, I will run into somebody that should be in our church on Sunday morning but just decided that they do not go to church anymore. They just stay home and watch it on YouTube. They do not go to church anywhere. They think that their Christian life is okay. It is your call. I am just saying, but they just tell you, they think their Christian life is okay. Never going to church, never being part of a church, and just checking in on Sunday morning and getting a sermon that I am preaching and probably got the little notebook there and get a little warm fuzzy feeling, probably got the little latte next to them or the little poodle sitting there snarling things up. They think that, and I will bump into them every once in a while. I am cool. I really am. I do not say a lot of times what I think, but they will come up to me, and they will say something like, "Well, you know what? I know you do not like this, but we do not come to church. We just stay home, and we just watch it." They want to be buddy-buddy, and I am cool. I am. I am cool. I just say, "You know," and I say, "Well, nice to see you." But I will tell you what, it upsets me. I look right in the face and tell you if you are watching, "Well, you know why it upsets me? Because you are letting me do all the work. You need to be here picking up your share of the load." But you see, you have opted out of the ministry. You have opted out of your hands. You have opted out of your legs. You are lame. You sit there at your kitchen table or on your couch, and maybe I am on your big screen TV. I am not going to say every thought. You are sitting there, and you are enjoying it. My job right now for the next 30 seconds is to take that joy from you. You say, "Well, I do not like that." So what are you going to do? Quit coming to church? No, people like you put more burden on people like these. You need to be here, pick up your load, carry the load. Bear the cross, get the job done, get in. But for whatever reason, you have chosen to be on the sidelines, yet you want to get all the gravy of the Bible we have. You just do not want, you want me and my folks here to do all the work. I do not appreciate that. I love you. That was a very small stone I threw your way. I got one under here. It will take your house out.

The bottom line is, God has something that He wants you to do. There is a ministry to be established. There is a warfare to be fought. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 8 that there is no discharge. Where did you get your discharge not to be here today? Where did you get your discharge? The church does not matter. It is the process that God uses to build you, to get you ready to deliver the message, to do the work that needs to be done, for the ministry to be established, for the warfare to be fought. You and I need to understand that we are God's instrument of war to get it done with our hands. That He teaches us the war, a good warfare is a good soldier of Jesus Christ in 1 Timothy 1:18. That He teaches us in 2 Timothy 2:3 that you and I are to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. He says in 2 Timothy 2:9 that I may please Him who has called me to be a soldier, not home. You need to be, you cannot please Him by sitting on the sidelines. You have to be in the forefront of the battle as the weapon of God, not in the rear with the gear. Jesus Christ in Hebrews 2:10 is the captain of our salvation. With our

hands, that He teaches us the war, a good solid fight. With our feet and our legs that are strong, that is balanced to carry the message in the hand to a lost world. To establish the beauty of the Lord by our hands. With those two aspects, the head and the feet, we establish how God is, who He is.

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:

When you got saved, God started that work. Now you walked out of it someplace along the line, obviously. But I want to tell you, God started His work in you the day you got saved. We here at this church, our job is to help you develop that work, to get you to the place where you become that formidable weapon. At some point through the biblical process of investing your life in others, they too will begin a work, and on and on it goes.

With the fingers of her hand, she planteth a vineyard. In Genesis 1:29, God told Adam that all the trees He put in the garden, they are all fruit-bearing trees. They are all trees that have their seed within themselves, that He would never have to plant another apple tree. The apples would fall, they would go into the ground, the seeds would be there, and more trees would pop up. The garden of God was filled with trees that kept bearing fruit of their own. Once God put it in the ground and planted it, and it grew and it got to a point in its growth, it automatically just kept producing fruit all its life. The trees that it produced, they produced fruit, and it was an endless line of fruit. That is the way you ought to look at yourself in this garden of God that He has planted you in. Your job is to grow to a point, and you have the seed within you, the Word of God, and you bear fruit in somebody else, and that tree bears fruit, and it is an endless process.

God got you here. He got you from Lincoln. He got you from Kansas City, all around this city. He is bringing some up from Texas. He is bringing Taylor from Wichita, all over the city, all over the state, and sometimes all over the country. They just keep coming, and God keeps bringing them. He brings them here simply because of the fact that this is the way station by which we can take and build them into that weapon that God wants them to use. Once you are here, we go to work on you with our hands. We start to teach you, show you, give you. We start to go to work with your legs and strengthen you, make you strong, make you able to run great distance, maybe you are able to endure. Building this vineyard, our work, with the work of our hands, planting it one person at a time. There is no mass evangelism today. There never was. That idea dropped out in the 60s and the 70s as a failure. You want to build a church, you want to build a ministry, you want to affect the world in Christianity, you have got to do it one person at a time, one couple at a time, one family at a time. You have got to take what God gives you when God brings them to you and then invest your life in them and give them what they need. That tree grows up, and the seed in itself bears other fruit. Putting forth a word of truth just like that guy with a sling. Puts that stone in that thing and shoots that out there, and those stones of truth impact. They impact where a man thinks and they impact where a man walks. It will change how he thinks. It will change how he walks.

Problem is we do not want to be that sling. Oh, we want to be popular. We want to be nice. We want people to look at it, but secretly when everybody is out in a battle, we are duct taping our stones so it does not go out. We yell and scream and swing the sling, but nothing ever goes down range, and you never hit anybody. You are like the weapon collections in Japan. They are beautiful. They are absolutely some of the most rarest things you ever saw in your life, but none of them shoot. That is God's people today. Shooting forth the truth of God like a stone shot out of a sling in the Old Testament to reach out to those who need the truth. You and I are the only way that God gets it out. You and I need to become that formidable sling, that weapon in God's hand that God can take the stones of truth, the principles, the concepts, everything in that book, and fire them out one at a time and pick our target, understanding our target, realizing the target, and then giving them everything that God would have us to give them.