

A Series of Proverbs Part 2

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a good name, the value of sorrow, and the purpose of man's existence, which is to have fellowship with God.

Duration: 25:05

Scripture: Psalm 22:2-3, Psalm 39:4, Ecclesiastes 6:12, Matthew 6:33, Romans 3:23-24

Topics: "Proverbs"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith explores the book of Ecclesiastes, specifically focusing on chapter 6, verse 12. He emphasizes the uncertainty and brevity of life, highlighting the fact that we do not know what is truly good for us in this earthly existence. Pastor Chuck also discusses the concept of memory and how our recollections can be a mixture of fact and fiction. He concludes by addressing the issues of oppression and bribery, noting that they can have a detrimental effect on our judgment and well-being.

Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh, let Him have the things that hold you And His Spirit, like a dove Will descend upon your life And make you whole
And now with today's message, here's Pastor Chuck. For you really don't know what's good for man in this life, all of the days of the vain life he spends as a shadow. We know that life is short, measured by days.

If you don't know that yet, you'll know it when you get old. For who can tell a man what will be after him under the sun? So, watch it when you're contending with God. But a good name is better to be chosen than precious ointment.

It's so important to have a good name. We don't stress that with kids anymore. The importance of a good reputation.

And the day of death is better than the day of one's birth. Interesting observation from an old man who is jaded. It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart.

That is, going to the house of mourning for one who has died, the day of death better than the day of one's birth. Better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting, they always had a feast at the

birth of a child. For that is the end of all men, the living will lay it to his heart.

for sorrow is better than laughter, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." Now, we had just dealt with who knows what is good for a man in this life. Is it better to have sorrow or revelry? Now, we would all say, well, revelry, you know, laughing, great time. That's better than mourning.

But here he says sorrow is better than laughter. For he speaks about the depth of character that comes out of suffering. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but of the heart of fools is in the house of merriment.

It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools. Faithful are the wounds of the friend. And then he said, for as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool.

It's just emptiness. In the Hebrew, there's a play on words and you can't appreciate it in English. The word is serum and seer.

The crackling of thorns, the thorns are serum and under the pot is seer. So, it is a play on words. If we would put it into English and give a play on words, you'd probably say the crackling of nettles under the kettles.

You get the idea of the play on words. In that area, they didn't have much wood and they would make their fire out of sticks and thorny bushes and so forth and grasses and they were quickly, flame up quickly, but they would burn out very soon. They wouldn't be, it isn't a good lasting fire.

And so, the crackling of the thorns, you know, when you're, when you got a fire that's just, you're using just kindling and small twigs and all, the fire comes quickly, it's hot, but it goes, it goes out so quickly too. And so, he talks about how the laughter of fools is just as vain, empty as the crackling of the thorns under the pot. Surely, oppression makes a wise man mad and a gift destroys the heart.

So, to see oppression, it's really disturbing for a wise person to see oppression. We see it so often in the news. We see people who are being oppressed and it almost drives you crazy.

In fact, my wife quickly turns the TV, she can't stand to see it. It so upsets her, it makes her almost crazy to see someone who is being oppressed. She empathizes so deeply for the situation.

And a gift destroys the heart, bribery, and that would be a gift of bribery. It destroys your true judgment. Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof.

Now, that's not according to Trump. The end of it is empty, but the beginning, the chase is exciting. And the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit, just waiting for the Lord to do it, waiting on him.

So, don't be hasty in your spirit to be angry. Now, don't be quick-tempered, for anger rests in the bosom of fools. Don't say that the cause of the former days are better than these.

You always hear about the good old days, don't you? I can remember, you know, when I was a kid, boy, California was different. And I can remember Orange County when we first moved down here. Orange groves all over the place.

The place smelled like incense or just orange blossoms. In May, around here, just this scent of orange blossoms filled the whole area. It's glorious.

We lived in Huntington Beach. There were only 6,000 people living there. When we surfed at the pier, we were the only ones down there in the morning.

Three of us guys used to go down every morning. We were the only ones there. We'd pick either the north or south side, whichever was breaking best, and just had it all to ourselves.

I don't even try to go anymore. There's too many, you know, people on the waves, and there's all kinds of anger and bitterness, and get off my wave. And these kids think that an old bald-headed man has no place out there anyhow, so leave it to them.

But we're always referring to the good old days. And he's sort of coming out against that because every age has its advantages and its opportunities. Now, I can remember back in the good old days when I was a kid and my dad had to crank the car.

Now, I'll tell you, having a starter, you know, just push a button or turn your key is very, it's just a lot better than that. And so there are advantages to every age in which a person lives. And I think so many times our memories of the past are sort of, well, the psychologists talk of a schema, and that is, this is the way you remember it.

There are certain facts, but then your mind sort of makes up the rest. And so there's fantasy mixed with the facts. They call it the schema.

This is the way you recall it to be. You remember it to be. But it's part fact and part fiction.

And it sort of comes into the thing where the guy says, well, I'm not the man I used to be. The truth is, I never was. But, you know, when you think, you sort of glorify the past.

But there's sort of the warning against that. Don't say that the cause of the former days are better than these, for you do not inquire wisely concerning this. Wisdom is good with an inheritance, and by it there is profit to them that see the sun.

For wisdom is a defense, and money is a defense. But the excellency of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to them that have it. So wisdom, it's good, better if you have money with an inheritance.

It's a defense to you. And the excellency of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to those that have it. So consider the work of God, for who can make that straight which he hath made crooked? This is speaking a little bit about the sovereignty of God.

God has ordered my life. Who can change that which God has ordained? If God has made something crooked, who can make it straight? You can go off on that side to a position of the absolute sovereignty of God, which is the denial of the responsibility of man, which is not good. But yet there is that truth to the sovereignty of God.

Who can say to the potter, why hast thou made me thus? In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity stop to think. God has set the one against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him. So God brings joy into your life.

God brings adversity. They sort of work together in creating what you are. All things I have seen in the days of my vanity.

And there is a just man that perishes in his righteousness, and there's a wicked man that prolongs his life in his wickedness. And so I don't understand this, he is saying. I see just people who die young.

I see wicked people who live to be old. Our minds say that if you live a right kind of a life, you should live to be old and prosperous and happy. If you live a wicked life, then you know you're apt to be cut off early.

But yet he observes that that isn't always the case. There are times when the righteous are cut off early and the wicked live for a long time. And remember now, Solomon, in his later years, he got away from the Lord.

His many wives caused him to turn away from God. He was building these temples to the different gods to appease his wives. And so this is sort of his conclusion, but not necessarily a wise conclusion.

He says, do not be righteous over much or don't be overly righteous. Neither make yourself overly wise. Why should you destroy yourself? And don't be overly wicked.

Neither be foolish. Why should you die before your time? So hey, you know, don't be too righteous, don't be too wicked. Just sort of take a little bit from both sides.

But that's really not the thrust of the New Testament, which is that of commitment completely to God and to the will of Jesus Christ. He said, it's good that you should take hold of this. Yes, from this don't withdraw your hand for he that fears God shall come forth of them all.

So the main thing he is saying is just have a fear of God, reverence of God, wisdom strengthens the wise, more than 10 mighty men which are in the city. Wisdom will do more for you in defending you than 10 strong men. For there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not.

There is none righteous, no, not one. There is not one of us who have not sinned. There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not.

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none righteous, David said, no, not one. What does that mean? That means that all of us need Jesus Christ to cleanse us from our sin, to bring us into a relationship with God.

Because you see the effect of sin is always that of alienation from God. Sin separates you from God. From the beginning, when God spoke to Adam and Eve in the garden, he said, you can freely eat of all the trees except the tree in the middle of the garden, you're not to eat of that, and the day you eat of it, you will surely die, spiritual death, separation from God.

Spiritual death is the separation of your consciousness from God. The day you eat it, you're going to die spiritually. You're going to be separated from God consciously.

So Eve ate and she gave to Adam and he also did eat. What was the effect? Separation from God. When God came into the garden, God said, Adam, where art thou? Where are you, Adam? We've hid ourselves.

Separation from God. That is always the effect of sin. Now God created you that you might have fellowship with God.

And because that was the purpose of God creating you, your life can only have a sense of fulfillment and purpose when you are living in fellowship with God. And that is the real problem with the world today. Men

are trying to find meaning and purpose in life, in things, in achievements, in material possessions.

And like Donald Trump, they find that they are empty once they have them. They're not satisfying because God didn't create you to find satisfaction in material things or in personal achievement. God created you that you might fellowship with him.

And in as much as that is the basic purpose of your existence, until you are living in fellowship with God, you are not answering to the very purpose of your being alive. And that is why so many people find life is so empty, so meaningless. And you see them in this mad pursuit from one thing to another, trying to find something that will satisfy, something that will fulfill that craving that they have within.

The problem, sin has separated them from God. And separated from God, life is empty and it is meaningless. And you can go on forever just arguing, what is the purpose of man's existence? And you'll find that there is no real purpose for man's existence apart from his fellowshiping with God.

The Greek philosophers wrestled with the purpose of man's existence. And it was just a play on words. And they would go from one thing to another.

But the real purpose of man's existence is fellowship with God. That's why you were created. And that's basic.

It's innate. It's just a part of your existence that you cannot escape. Sin separates you from that fellowship with God.

And all have sinned. There is not a just man on the earth that does good and has not sinned. Now, God, in seeking to restore man to fellowship with himself, sent his only begotten son, Jesus Christ, who bore our sins for us.

That is, as Isaiah said, all of us like sheep went astray. We turned every one of us to our own ways, but God laid on him the iniquities of us all. So God placed all of the guilt, collectively, of mankind, all of the guilt of man's sin, he placed on his son, Jesus Christ, who in turn accepted the result of that sin, the penalty of that sin, which was separation from God.

Remember on the cross, his cry, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? You see, when the collective sin of the world was placed upon Jesus Christ, he experienced the effect of sin, which is separation from God. And he cried out, agony, why have you forsaken me? That cry was a quotation of Psalm 22, where it was spoken of prophetically. It begins, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why are you so far from my roaring? I cry in the daytime, and thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent.

But then he tells the reason, for thou are holy, you who inhabits the praises of your people. And so because of the holiness, the absolute holiness of God, there can be no fellowship between an absolutely holy, pure God with unrighteousness or sin. They're incongruent.

And so when Jesus bore your sin, he also bore the penalty of your sin, that separation from God. Now, the Bible tells us by our believing in Jesus, accepting the fact that he bore our sins, he has provided for God a just basis to exercise his mercy towards you in forgiving you your sins. And in the forgiving of your sins, that which separated you from God is now removed, so that you can have fellowship with God.

And so John, when he wrote his epistle, said, these things we write unto you, that you might have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. And he said, if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with each other, as the blood of Jesus Christ is cleansing us from all sin. But if we say we have fellowship with God and we walk in darkness, then we're just lying.

We don't really know the truth. And there are a lot of people today that claim to have fellowship with God, but they don't know what it's about. They're walking in darkness.

But walking in Christ, believing in Jesus Christ, there is that forgiveness of my sin, which then opens the door for fellowship with God. Oneness, communion, koinonia, with God the Father. And that's why you were created.

And that's why the Christian life is such a satisfying life, such a rich, full life, such an overflowing life. A life that, as John said, these things we write unto you, that your joy may be full. How is the joy full? When you're fellowshiping with God, you experience the fullness of joy.

Because now you are responding to the very purpose of your existence, as you're living in this relationship with God, in this close communion and fellowship with him. We'll return with more of our verse-by-verse study through the book of Ecclesiastes in our next lesson, as Pastor Chuck Smith continues with a series of Proverbs. And we do hope you'll make plans to join us.

But right now, I'd like to remind you that if you'd like to secure a copy of today's message, simply order Ecclesiastes 6, verse 12, when visiting thewordfortoday.org. And while you're there, we encourage you to browse the many additional biblical resources by Pastor Chuck. You can also subscribe to the Word for Today podcast or sign up for our email subscription. Once again, all this can be found at thewordfortoday.org. If you wish to call, our toll-free number is 1-800-272-WORD.

And our office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time. Again, that's 1-800-272-9673. For those of you preferring to write, our mailing address is the Word for Today, P.O. Box 8000, Costa Mesa, California, 92628.

And now, on behalf of the Word for Today, we'd like to thank all of you who share in supporting this ministry with your prayers and financial support. And be sure to join us again next time as Pastor Chuck continues his verse-by-verse study through the Bible. That's right here on the next edition of The Word for Today.

Now, once again, here's Pastor Chuck. May the Lord be with you, and may you experience the joy, the fullness of joy that comes by living in close relationship and fellowship with God. May He minister to you in a very special way this week.

May you feel the closeness of God. May you be guided by God. May you be strengthened in that hour of trial or temptation.

And may you see the victory of Christ being worked out in your life as you submit yourself to Him. May it be a wonderful week of joyful blessings, fellowshiping with our Creator. We'd like to draw your attention to a couple of very special resources by Pastor Chuck Smith that answer some of the many questions about the third person of the Trinity.

The first of these two resources is entitled, The Person of the Holy Spirit, and contains 12 messages that explain the baptism of the Holy Spirit in detail, as well as how the Holy Spirit works in the life of the believer. Now, the second resource is entitled, The Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and consists of 19 messages covering such subjects as healing, prophecy, and faith. Pastor Chuck not only explains how and why the gifts of the Holy Spirit are available to the church today, but he also encourages believers to fully understand the working of the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life.

Once again, you'll be asking for The Person of the Holy Spirit and The Gifts of the Holy Spirit. For those of you wishing to call, our toll-free number is 1-800-272-9673. Once again, that's 1-800-272-WORD.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25629.mp3>

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