

The Folly of Meddling

by Chuck Smith

The sermon warns against the dangers of meddling with sin and encourages listeners to stay out of things that can hurt them, offering hope for restoration and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Duration: 36:14

Scripture: 2 Kings 14:8-10, Proverbs 20:1-17

Topics: "Meddling"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Brian leads the congregation in reading various verses from Proverbs 20. The verses touch on topics such as the dangers of wine and strong drink, the importance of avoiding strife, and the blessings of walking in integrity. The sermon then shifts to discuss the concept of redemption and how the Greek philosophers believed it to be impossible. However, through Jesus Christ, God offers redemption and the opportunity to be lifted out of sin and onto a solid foundation. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the value of purity and the need to be simple concerning evil.

Transcript

Now shall we turn in our Bibles to Proverbs 20. I'll read the first and the outnumbered verses and Pastor Brian will lead the congregation in the reading of the even-numbered verses as we read these Proverbs found in chapter 20. Shall we stand as we read God's Word.

20. Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. 21.

The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion, whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul.

22. It is an honor for a man to cease from strife, but every fool will be meddling.

23. The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold, therefore shall he beg in harvest and have nothing.

24.

Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out. 25. Most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness, but a faithful man who can find.

26. The just man walketh in his integrity, and his children are blessed after him. 27.

A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes. 28. Who can say, I have made my heart clean? I am pure from my sin? 29.

Diverse weights and diverse measures, both of them are like abomination to the Lord. 30. Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure or whether it be right.

31. The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them. 32.

Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty. Open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread. 33.

It is not, it is not, saith the buyer, but when he is gone his way, then he boasts it. 34. There is gold and a multitude of rubies, but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.

35. Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman. 36.

Bread of deceit is sweet to the man, but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel. 37. Every purpose is established by counsel, and with good advice make war.

38. He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets, therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips. 39.

Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness. 40. An inheritance may be gotten hastily in the beginning, but the end thereof shall not be blessed.

41. Say not thou, I will recompense evil, but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee. 42.

Diver's weights are an abomination unto the Lord, and a false balance is not good. 43. Man's goings are of the Lord.

How can a man then understand his own way? 44. It is a snare to a man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry. 45.

A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them. 46. The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all of the inward parts of the belly.

47. Mercy and truth preserve the king, and his throne is upholden by mercy. 48.

The glory of a young man is his strength, and the beauty of the old man is his gray head. 49. The blueness of a wound cleanseth the way evil, so do stripes in the inward parts of the belly.

Free translation. Let's pray. Father, we come before you today asking for wisdom and for guidance for our lives.

Lord, even as we are warned in the Proverbs here of the danger of meddling, we find, Lord, that it is so easy to meddle. We're curious. We want to know and find out about different things, and, Lord, so many people have been hurt by their meddling.

And so, Lord, we ask that our hearts would be open now to hear and to receive your word in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.

This week our reading is in 2 Kings. We're in chapters 13 through 15. And tonight, as we continue our journey through the Bible, we'll be in this portion of Scripture, 2 Kings 13 through 15.

This morning, we'd like to draw your attention to the 14th chapter of 2 Kings. And we have the story of King Amaziah, who was the king over the southern tribe of Judah. Then Amaziah, verse 8, sent messengers to Jehoiash, the son of Jehu, the king of Israel, saying, Come and let us look one another in the face.

It's a challenge to fight. Come, let's face off with each other. And Jehoiash, the king of Israel, sent to Amaziah, the king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon, sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give your daughter to my son as a wife.

And there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and it throwed down the thistle. You have indeed smitten Edom. Your heart has been lifted up within you.

Glory of this. Stay at home. For why should you meddle to your hurt, that you should fail, even you and Judah with you? But Amaziah would not hear.

Therefore, Jehoiash, the king of Israel, went up. He and Amaziah, the king of Judah, they looked one another in the face at Beth Shemesh, which belongs to Judah. Judah was put to the worst before Israel, and they fled every man to their tents.

And Jehoiash, the king of Israel, took Amaziah, the king of Judah, the son of Jehoiash, the son of Ahaziah, the Beth Shemesh, and they came to Jerusalem. They broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim, even to the corner gate, four hundred cubits. And he took all of the gold and the silver and the vessels that were found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and they returned to Samaria.

Amaziah was a young man, just twenty-five years old, when his father was assassinated, and he became the king over Judah. He went to war against the Edomites, and he was victorious. He defeated the Edomites.

He even took the rock city of Petra. Upon his return, he sent a message then to the king of Israel, the northern tribes, challenging him to a fight. Now the king of Israel was reluctant to come out into battle, and he sent a message to Amaziah, look, you went against the Edomites, you were victorious, just stay home and rejoice in the victory.

Why should you meddle to your own hurt? There are many people today who are meddling to their own hurt with various forms of sin. There are some who meddle with alcohol. In a report that was published this week, it declared that in a recent poll, 81% of the young people in high school are drinking.

It makes you wonder where we are headed. Children are being introduced to alcohol at nine years of age. Let me warn you that meddling with alcohol can only hurt you.

There's not really a decent benefit to be gained. There are a myriad of evils that have resulted from alcohol. In Proverbs 23, Solomon speaks of the dangers and of the folly of meddling with alcohol.

He said, who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who is in fights? Who has quarrels? Who has wounds and doesn't know how he got them? Who has bloodshot eyes? They that hang out in the bars and spend their time drinking. Don't let the sparkle and the smooth taste of wine deceive you, for in the end it will bite like a serpent and sting like a scorpion. Your eyes will begin to look at strange women.

You will utter stupid things that would embarrass you if you were sober. You do stupid things like trying to lie down in the midst of the sea or you go to sleep on the top of a mast. And you will say, they've beaten me up and I didn't even feel it.

And when you sober up, you will just go out and seek it again. Meddling with alcohol can only hurt. But even worse than meddling with alcohol is meddling with drugs.

The insidious thing about drugs is that the first thing that it does attack is your willpower. It destroys your willpower to resist. It also begins to destroy your capacity of rational thinking.

And you soon find yourself doing things that at one time you swore that you would never do that. And now you are doing it. Honesty and truth are early victims as you become a con artist.

And in time it can cost you your job, your family, and everything that is worthwhile. There are some who meddle around with sex. Extramarital affairs are just sex apart from marriage.

Started off innocent enough, but now you are like a fly that's been caught in the spider's web and you find yourself trapped. The excitement and the sex drive keeps you pursuing the forbidden fruit, yet it's destroying you and things that are valuable. You find yourself soon in the torments of hell because of the approach avoidance conflict in your mind.

You feel so guilty when you look at your sweet innocent children and you realize the pain that you are bringing into their lives. You become, when you become sexually promiscuous, your chances of contracting a sexually transmitted disease become extremely great. You know what God's word says about these things, but your desire for sex becomes stronger than your desire for life.

One day they brought a man to Jesus who it says was sick of the palsy and his friends were carrying him in his cot. This particular palsy, the Greek language, the word that is translated palsy is shaking and trembling, was one of the final symptoms of a disease of syphilis, sexually transmitted disease, where a person would gradually go downhill, get dementia, and ultimately would be bedridden, just shaking and helpless. Here was this man in this condition.

His friends brought him to Jesus in order that he might be healed. Don't you know that this man's conscience was giving him fits? As he lay there on the cot, shaking, his mind would go back to that illicit relationship, go back to that moment of meddling, and realize the hurt, the pain that it has brought to him. One moment's pleasure, but now months of going downhill, losing your strength until finally you're just a weak, trembling, helpless mass on a cot.

When the friends came with him to the house where Jesus was teaching, they found the house was so crowded that they couldn't get in. And so determined as they were to get him to Jesus, they climbed up on the roof, hoisted the fellow up on the roof, and then removed the tiles in the center of the house where Jesus was teaching, and let the man down through the roof. And when Jesus saw this fellow coming down in front of him, he said to him, your sin is forgiven.

It probably upset his friends who had gone to all of the trouble to get him to Jesus, because they didn't want Jesus to say, your sin is forgiven. They wanted Jesus to say, be healed, stand up, go home. We do know that the saying of Jesus did upset the Pharisees.

They began to grumble among themselves saying, who can forgive sin but God? But don't you know this man who had been plagued by the guilty conscience, by the sin that had brought him to this helpless condition, the sin that had tormented his mind for so many, many months, had tortured his mind. Don't you know when Jesus said, your sin is forgiven, that there was a deep, wonderful peace that came over that tortured mind. But in order to satisfy the Pharisees that were there, and to show that he had power to forgive sins, he said, what is easier, to say to this man, your sins are forgiven, or to say, rise, take up your bed and walk.

And that you might know that I have power on earth to forgive sins. He then said to the man, rise, take up your cot and go home. And the man rose, took up his cot and left.

Your sin is forgiven. You were meddling around with sex. You got caught, but your sin is forgiven.

There are some of you today who have been meddling with sin, and now you are hurting. Maybe like Amaziah, you had a good start in life, a lot of potential, a lot of opportunities, early victories in your life. But you became lifted up with pride or something else, and you started meddling in things in which you had no business meddling.

Amaziah, now challenging Jehoash to a fight. Jehoash says, no, no, stay home, enjoy your victory, young man. Why should you meddle to your own hurt? But Amaziah would not hear it.

He was determined that he was going to fight with Jehoash. As a consequence, Amaziah and his men were defeated there at Beth Shemesh. This is a pain that was not necessary, the pain of defeat.

It was a pain that was caused by his meddling. Had he stayed home and minded his own business and just enjoyed the victory that he had had over the Edomites, he'd have been so much better off. But it not only affected him, but it affected the whole nation.

The whole nation suffered as the result of his meddling. You see, your sin does affect others. It not only brings you into misery, but it often brings suffering to so many others.

For the army of Jehoash, after defeating Amaziah at Beth Shemesh, came to Jerusalem, it said, and they broke down a large portion of the wall. Verse 13 there. So the second result of his meddling is that he lost some of his defenses.

That is, the wall was torn down. The defense of Jerusalem was weakened. And one of the insidious things about sin is the fact that it does destroy your defenses.

Before the first time that you indulged in that sinful practice, you put up a very strong and stiff resistance. You knew that you shouldn't do it. And you resisted the temptation.

But the pressure was on. You were being challenged. You were being prodded.

You were being humiliated. And ultimately, you did it. And what happened? You were defeated spiritually.

You gave in. And in so doing, you lost a part of your defenses. Afterwards, your conscience gave you fits.

I did it. Why did I do it? I'm guilty. But because you did it once, you didn't have quite the strength to resist the second time.

Because having already once succumbed, it was easier to succumb the second time. You didn't have as much resistance as you did the first because a part of your defenses were destroyed. After a time, you lose your defenses completely.

In fact, there comes a reversal. You've become trapped. You now have a hard time or you find it impossible to resist the temptation because you're hooked.

You're addicted. As the scriptures tell us, by whatever a man is overcome, by the same as he brought into bondage and having been overcome, now you find yourself a slave to that thing. You've done it so often that you have violated the voice of conscience so many times that the voice of conscience is now silent.

And you have what the scripture refers to as a conscience that is seared as with a hot iron, no longer speaking to you. When King Jehoiash came to Jerusalem, not only did he destroy the defenses of the city, but he also took the treasures of the city back to Samaria. He sacked the treasury.

He took the gold and the silver and he took hostages. And meddling with sin will cost you your treasure. What a glorious treasure virginity is.

What a sad day when a person meddles with sex before marriage and loses that treasure because once it is lost, it can never be regained. And when one day you stand next to your chosen mate in order to take vows before God of love and faithfulness, you cannot offer to your mate that treasure. You've meddled and you've lost that valuable treasure.

What a beautiful treasure purity is. When Paul wrote to the Romans, he said, be simple concerning evil. Now, evil does create a strange curiosity in man.

And people are fascinated by evil. But Paul says, be simple. You don't need to understand.

You don't need to know these things. Be simple concerning evil. Years ago when I was in Bible college, some of the students decided they'd go down to Main Street to one of the burlesque theaters and take in one of the shows.

And their whole rationale was, we need to know how evil the world is so we can preach against it. That's a tawdrous rationale, I'll tell you. Ridiculous.

Be simple concerning evil. Because you see, the problem is when you once plant that in your brain, you can't erase it. You can never get it out.

It's there. And thus, best to just keep yourself as possible. Well, the Bible says, guard your heart with all diligence.

Don't let it get in. Because once it's in, you can't get it out. It just stays there, hopefully repressed back and, you know, pushed way back those frontiers.

But yet, it's there. It can't be erased. There are so many things in life that you should not meddle with.

Because they can only hurt you. Why should you meddle, the king said, to your own hurt? You say, but Chuck, I've already meddled, and I'm hurting. Is there any hope for me? Glad you asked.

The Bible tells us that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, can cleanse a man from all sin. God is the only one that can forgive sin. And he not only forgives, he makes you so clean that you become as though you had never done it.

That's what the word justify actually means. To understand this theological term justified, you have to break it up, just as if I had never done it. Only God can do that for you.

He can restore you to innocence. He can make you as though you had never done it. God said, come now, let's reason together, saith the Lord.

Though your sins are as scarlet, you can be as white as snow. Paul said, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. No matter what you have done, how much messed up your life has become, you can leave this place today pardoned and cleansed, declared innocent by God.

You can leave with a clean conscience, because there is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. And you today can know the joy that David spoke of when he said, oh, how happy is the man whose transgressions have been forgiven. That's the wonderful thing about the message of the gospel.

That's the wonderful thing about the Bible. It talks of redemption. The Greek philosophers had come to the conclusion that redemption was impossible.

Once a man meddling with sin became trapped, there was no hope for that man. Redemption was impossible. And that was the conclusion of the Greek philosophers.

And the conclusion is a correct conclusion, apart from God's plan of redemption through Jesus Christ. And through Jesus Christ, God has provided for the man who is down, to lift him up and to lift him out. As David said, he lifted me out of the miry clay, and he set my foot upon a rock.

And God wants to do that for you today. He wants to lift you out of that miry clay in which you are sinking. And he wants to put your feet upon a rock.

God's made the provision. It's up to you to accept it. Let's pray.

Father, we see so many people whose lives are being destroyed because of their meddling with sin. Lord, sometimes we want to just grab them and shake them and say, don't you see what's happening? Can't you see what you're doing? Can't you see what it's doing to those around you? You're being defeated. Your defenses are being destroyed.

You're losing such valuable treasure. And yet, Lord, they seem to be caught and trapped, just going downhill. We thank you, Lord, that you are a forgiving God, that you have mercy and pardon.

Pardon for each one of us, if we will just but seek it. For those today, Lord, who have meddled and who are now hurting, they're beginning to see the disaster that has been created because they did meddle around. They begin to see the pain and the suffering that they've brought, not only to themselves, but upon others because of their folly.

Lord, today may they discover the power of Jesus Christ to set them free from the powers of darkness that have held them and are holding them as in a vice. Lord, may they this day know the joy of which David spoke when you said to David, your sins are forgiven. The joy that that man with the palsy felt when you

said to him, your sins are forgiven.

Lord, as they come, may they hear your voice speaking to their hearts those beautiful words, your sins are forgiven. We pray this, Father, in the name of our wonderful Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front. They're here for the specific purpose of praying for you this morning. And if your life has been messed up because of your meddling and you want help, you want to start over again, you'd like a new beginning, that's exactly what Jesus offers to you.

If any man is in Christ, he's a new creation and the old things are passed away. Everything becomes new and he can transform your life. He can give you a new resolve.

He can build up your defenses. He can make you strong and he will forgive and he will cleanse and he will pardon. And actually, he can restore a lot of things that have been lost.

As the result of your meddling, the lost treasure, he's able to restore. And so, I would encourage you as soon as we're dismissed, make your way forward. These men are here for the purpose of praying for you today, that you might discover God's grace, God's love, God's mercy, his pardon, his forgiveness.

May the Lord be with you and may the Lord strengthen you and may God keep you from meddling to your own hurt. The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee and be gracious unto thee.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace.

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