

Deserting Principal for Convenience

by Ernest Woodhouse

The sermon emphasizes the dangers of neglecting God and the importance of staying focused on the center in a world of rapid expansion and change.

Duration: 41:18

Scripture: Proverbs 29:4-8, Proverbs 29:12, Proverbs 29:14-17, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Convenience"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Proverbs 29 and discusses the importance of standing up for principles and doing what is right, rather than what is convenient. He highlights the contrast between the righteous and the wicked, emphasizing the righteous person's consideration for the poor and the wicked person's disregard for them. The preacher then moves on to discuss the day of the great exposure, where he mentions the disappearance of the remote and how technology has allowed us to bring faraway places and cultures into our homes. He also talks about the adoration of the limelight and how people love to be seen and recognized in this day and age.

Transcript

Let's go back to Proverbs 29. This is the chapter from which I read the last time, or the last Sunday morning that I preached a week or two ago, and I have a message to finish. I had five points and I only preached on three, so I'm going to review those and give you the last two.

Let's look at chapter 29 here, and let's read verses 4 to 8. The king by judgment establisheth the land, but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it. A man that flattereth his neighbor spreadeth a net for his feet in the transgression of an evil man that is a snare, but the righteous doth sing and rejoice. The righteous considereth the cause of the poor, but the wicked regardeth not to know it.

Scornful men bring a city into a snare, but wise men turn away wrath. Now turn to verse 12. Verse 12.

If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked. Verse 14. The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established forever.

The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth, but the righteous shall see their fall. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest, yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

Obviously the welfare of a country or even on a city depends upon its lawmakers. It's a very solemn thing to be raised up as the leader of a nation, especially if you don't have a good history when you take over the leadership. America has suffered because of the present presidency.

It's been very successful economically, but religiously and morally America has taken several steps down. I'm not going to talk about that. Instead I want to talk about having a good day.

Maybe you say when you're leaving your friends, have a good day. Some are more enthusiastic and they say, have a great day. Well I want to talk not about a great day, but a day of great things.

And three of those I want to recap. You'll remember that I talked about the day of the great expansion, and that's the kind of day that we are living in. Geographically we have advanced, we have expanded.

There was a time when our own country kept us busy with our responsibilities, but it has spread out to the world, and when the world wasn't enough we now have moved a long way into space. Geographically we live in a day of greatness, the great expansion. Now numerically that is true also.

The world is growing numerically, and there are grave dangers ahead because of it. Medicine is causing us to live longer, and the country is getting worried that we old people don't die soon enough, because they are afraid that they will go bankrupt keeping us in our older days. Numerically we are expanding.

Commercially we are expanding. I never looked at the stock market. I didn't even know how to read it, but I do today, only because I bought 10 stocks in GTE, and they had a split, and then I had 15, and then I had another \$5, and then \$10.

I got 30, I mean 10 stocks. I got 30 stocks now. I'm rich, and I'm always wanting to see it.

I said to my wife one day, do you think we could afford to lose \$240? I had a man in Cleveland, and he kept hounding me. In the bank your money is not, you're not a good steward. You should put it in the market, in something that's sound and good.

One day he said, I despair of you. I am going to order some GTE stock for you, and you're going to pay for it. I said, all right, how much is it? He said \$24.

Then I said, get me 10. That's how I come and ask my wife, do you think we can afford to lose the money? I was very suspicious of the stock market. Today, those 30 stocks are worth \$74 apiece, and I have 30 of them.

I'm a rich man. Yeah, I look at the stock market, but I only look at GTE. It's fun for me.

The thing is, the little man has gotten into the market. Commercially, there has been a tremendous expansion, and educationally. Again, I talked enough about that the last time, but I pointed out that living in the day of the great expansion brings with it a very grave danger.

It's a danger of neglecting the center for the circumference. The more you push the walls out, the more you get fascinated by the distance, and you forget the center. This country, by and large, has forgotten God, and without God, you cannot succeed in the best meaning of that word.

So, we live in the days of the great expansion. The danger is, we mustn't be interested or concerned about the pushed-out walls. We have to keep our eye on the center, and God is the center.

Not acknowledged so by the world, not acknowledged so by the country, but he positively is the center, and the wise man fixes his eye on the center, and lets God have his way. You know, I thought I was going to be a draftsman. I'd better not keep on this too long, but I learned a little mechanical drawing because that was in preparation for being a draftsman, and I learned to draw geometric figures, but then I learned to combine them.

I found with a circle that it was very easy to deliver the center, to define and to find the center of a circle. You divided it into four parts, and where the lines intersected, that was the center. But as I drew more convoluted things, my instructor said to me, now the center moves.

Always keep your eye on the center. Don't let the circumference, what's happening on the outside, all around you, become an obsession with you. Keep your eye on the center, and the center is God.

The day of the great expansion. Then I talked about the day of the great expertise. You remember that? Everyone is a specialist, and a specialist is a man who knows more and more about less and until he knows everything about nothing.

The great expertise, even your garbage man, is a sanitary engineer in these days. We have to get the right, the appropriate language. It's a great sin in these days not to be correct in describing things like this.

We are living in days when education gives to us, or develops for us, many, many skills that we have and never discovered until we began to get educated. But you know, there is a danger with this expertise. If what you learn, if the knowledge that you accumulate does not impress upon you increasingly your ignorance, it has failed and failed utterly.

The bible speaks of men who are ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. That's the bible. Now think about that.

Ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. If we got our eye off the center, God says, the fool has said in his heart, there is no God. If we are being trapped into the experience of exchanging what is simple for that which is complex, and that's what happens with expertise, you know.

The more you get educated, the more experts you get in these things, the more you imagine you can do until you trip over your feet and fall flat on your face. We are living in the days of the great expertise. And simplicity is going by the board.

Now most of us here, by all means most of us here, we know what it was like to live in simple days. Isn't that right? Yes indeed. But now because of all the expertise we live in very complex days and it's very very easy to lose our way.

Those of us who know the Lord, we have somebody to lead us and guide us and instruct us and give us wisdom. But men today through their expertise are just hastening themselves to their doom. Education is good, but when it says no God, it's rotten to the core.

It's rotten to the core. If our boys and girls cannot learn the basic truth that God is and that God has to be faced and we ought to want to be his servants and witnesses for him, the teachers cannot. One teacher got disciplined because although she couldn't talk about it or read about it, she put a Bible on her desk.

It was part of her testimony and the authorities said it goes out of the door. God has nothing. I mean man has nothing without God.

And education is pushing him out of the schools. He's already gone out of the colleges and so these people are learning and they're learning and they're learning, but they're never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. The Word of God is the truth and if the Bible goes, then truth goes with it.

No wonder so many warped lives in these days are becoming such an influence. I don't really think we realize the danger this wonderful country is in because it is being positively undermined by atheism and with that goes vileness. Did any of you hear the news about Madeline Murray O'Hare this week? Did anybody hear it? Nobody heard it? Well it turns out she founded an atheistic society and it grew and she made it her business to travel all over the place getting adherents who paid a fee.

When she got to \$600,000 with her son she vamoosed and to live with her. \$600,000. She purchased gold, they know that much and they evidently carried it with them.

The authorities were glad to be rid of her and nothing seemed to be done about her disappearance. She has a son who got saved you know. The very one who was used to take the Bible from the schools and prayer from the schools.

He got saved and he's a good preacher today, but he's very puzzled. I don't think in his heart he's puzzled that the authorities don't seem anxious to trace Mrs. Madeline Murray O'Hare. But two detectives decided to do it and they found out and were robbed of the money and they landed up dead in two barrels.

If you're going to defy God you're going to pay the price. If you're going to say no God for me you're going to pay the price. You can't afford to be without God.

We're living in the days of the great expertise but while education is good it's becoming damning in this country to our young children in the public schools. We ought to be on our knees about this. We ought to begin to pray earnestly that God will begin to remove these high court judges who make the final decision and every time it's a majority that he's anti-God.

Let's pray that God will remove them. He can do it in his own way but let's get rid of them and there is no power like the power of prayer to bring it about. We ought to be praying that God will remove these judges, that God will remove these proponents of atheism in the schools and who are trying to destroy the children's opportunity to learn about God and they need nothing, no one more than they need God.

The day of the great expertise. Then I talked about the day of the great expediency. Expediency.

You do what is uh it's really opportunism. You know you you just well it may not be quite right but however it's expedient that I do this. It's better that I do this and people live like that and people by their millions live in this country.

The language is this, communication. That means you say I talk and you listen. Accommodation.

That means you give and I take. Negotiation. We demand and you comply.

That's the way it goes. It's expediency, opportunism. Take advantage of everybody that you can.

The facts are there is social expediency. Lots of things. You know I thought it was a an affront when one of the minorities rose up and said look we need uh public school diplomas and we demand that we get them even if we don't attend school.

Can you imagine that? That actually happened. There were those who also demanded that they be given the opportunity to college to go to college even if they didn't have sufficient education. See this is so nonsensical but it's part of the day of the great expediency and it really means compromise.

We compromise here, we compromise there, we compromise somewhere else and you know what the danger here is? It's not the danger of deserting the center for the circumference. That was the first one. It's not the danger of exchanging simplicity for complexity.

That was the second one. It's the danger of deserting principle for convenience. Men don't feel ashamed at all if they are described as unprincipled.

It's part of the culture. You don't have to stand up for principle. You have to do whatever is convenient.

You have to do whatever is the easiest for you and brings the most to you. Now I have two other days to talk about in twenty minutes. The day of the great exposure and the day of the great exploitation.

Now the day we are living in the day of the great exposure. Man lives in a goldfish bowl. Do you ever feel that? Do you ever feel like you live in a goldfish bowl? There are three things that I think glaringly illustrate this and the first is the disappearance of the remote.

There was a time when some people thought that the moon was green cheese or they were very content and they went on in their ignorance. But of course there were those who said we have to destroy that myth and so by means of telescopes and so on they did. But the moon was still so remote.

I can remember as a young teenager in a museum one day or in some kind of an exhibition hall climbing onto a scale which told me how much I would weigh on the moon. And I got on the scale and instead of the finger going round like it went like this. That's what I would weigh on the moon.

And you know on the moon men float. You know that. They have to be held down to the spacecraft with magnetic shoes.

We've gotten sort of familiar with the moon. I was mentioning the last time footsteps on the moon. I've often thought that Russia would just love to get to the moon so they could stamp them out.

But there they are in the pictures of them to assure us that men really did get to the moon. Well you say I'm not likely to go to the moon. It's still going to be remain remote for me.

Look how many of you people, and you can raise your hands, how many of you people have been outside this country? Let me see. Look at all those hands. Your fathers and mothers probably never went out of their town.

And you've been out of the country? Yes and some of you have been a long way out of the country. You see we travel. And sometimes we go to far away places.

I'm talking about the disappearance of the remote. We go to these places, we take a camera with us or we take a video camera with us. And we not only go to these places, we bring them back with us.

And then we can go over. The remote is no longer remote. We go out there and then we bring it back with us.

So the disappearance of the remote is one evidence that we are living in the day of the great exposure. We were exposed to this and we were exposed to that. Other cities, other countries, other cultures.

The remote is certainly disappearing. The next thing is the adoration of the limelight. In this day of the great exposure, people love it.

How many of you watch the Today Show in the morning? Nobody watches. Mr. Gilbert, you watch it? You used to watch it? Well I'll tell you what you do from time to time on the Today Show. They take you outside and they show you all those people down the block and round the corner.

They walk with a camera and people wave and they jump up and down. They have their placards. They love to be seen.

This is the day of the great exposure and people adore the limelight. You go to a football game, people have their posters there. And or else the camera comes near them, they have to crane their necks and get into the picture.

It's the day of the great exposure, the adoration of the limelight. But here's something else, the invasion of your privacy. I think you would be shocked if you knew how many people know your name, how many people know your address, how many people know your social security number, the number that you have in your family, even your bank account, your habits, good and bad, and your rating, economically.

I doubt if there's a person here whose history like that is unknown in certain areas that they never even thought of, never went to, never communicated with. If you get a magazine, your address has already been sold to maybe a thousand more, a hundred anyway. Where do you think all your advertising comes from? It comes from the people who've gleaned that information and you have very little privacy, very little privacy.

See this is the day of the great exposure. Now there's a danger here, and it's the danger of cultivating the outside instead of the in. If people are going to see me, I've got to look good.

If people are going to watch me, I've got to be, I've got to be dressed right, I've got to do the right things, I've got to make the right gestures and so on. And so you work on, you know, decorating the outside, because you suddenly realize this is the day of the great exposure, when you ought to be looking after the inside. You see what you are really is not what you are outside.

You can put on airs, you can, you can put on all sorts of things, but it's what you are on the inside. Now on the inside there's only one who can make a difference to you. You can try to give up your bad habits in order to develop good habits.

You can, you can try to give up your crude language in order to speak properly. Some of these things you can do, but what's on the inside you can't change. The Word of God says, you were born in sin and shapen in iniquity, and in sin did your mother conceive you.

On the outside you may be beautiful, on the inside you're putrid. And it's time you forgot the outside to take care of the inside. You see if I'm like that, if my heart is full of sin, if I'm a vile sinner, as you tell me, what

can I do about it? Do you know why the Lord Jesus went to the cross? Because there was no other good enough to pay the price of sin.

Do you know why the Lord Jesus shed his blood on the cross? Because it's the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, that cleanses us from all sin. The only way you can make any difference on the inside is to stop trying to make difference on the inside. But if throwing open the door of your heart and life to the Lord Jesus, who paid a price in order to deal with your sin, and who wants to come into your heart, you know what happens when Jesus comes in at the front door? Sin has to go out at the back.

You can know that your sins are forgiven once you have deliberately, acknowledging your sin, opened your heart's door and said, Lord Jesus come into my heart and be my Saviour. I know for a little while ago that a seven-year-old in one of the Christian day schools, I'd been there for the devotional in the morning, that little boy came to me and said, Mr. Woodhouse, I'm not saved. His mother was with him too.

I said, well, do you want to do something about it? So we talked together, then we knelt down at the pew, and there he said very simply, Lord Jesus I'm so sorry I kept you out of my heart so long. Please come into my heart and be my Saviour. He got up and sat up, we both got up and sat on the pew, and I said to him, Kevin, where is Jesus now? He said, he's in my heart.

I said, how do you know? He said, because I asked him, and he said he would come in, a seven-year-old. But we get very, you know, I grope for these words. My memory isn't what it used to be.

We get very sophisticated. Can't imagine ourselves doing that. The Bible says, except you become as a little child, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

And a little child takes God at his word, and when he does what God says, he knows it's happened, because he believes God. Oh, to be little children again, willing to listen to the voice of God, to make sure that our sins are gone, because Jesus is actually in the heart. Don't worry about the outside, take care of the inside.

You can't cleanse it yourself, but the Saviour is knocking at your heart's door. Who can? And the moment he comes in, the sin, question and judgment is taken care of. Don't be a superficial person.

Talk to God about these things. Read the word of God. Find out if this is the way, and it's sure in the book.

And then say, I'm not going to go one day longer without him in my life. Now the last thing is the day of the great exploitation. If you look around and you have any kind of powers of observation, you will realize that the good of the people is a thing of the past.

The good of the people is a thing of the past. All the politicians still talk about it, but the history of some of them shows that you can't really depend too much upon the politicians. The good of the people, why the people in this country are exploited.

This is the day of the great exploitation. They're exploited by big business, big business. My wife had to have a cataract removed just a couple of weeks ago, and the doctor gave us a prescription for two small bottles of eye drops.

I took the prescription to the pharmacist. He filled it. The girl handed it back to me and asked me for \$70.

Who says the people are not being exploited? All they say, we need all this money for research. We've got to keep doing research. But believe me, a lot of that money is flowing into pockets other than the researchers.

We are being exploited by big business. Older people, I'm glad this president is getting a concern about older people and prescriptions. I could ask any one of you in this congregation, how many of you have prescriptions that cost you more than \$500 a year? Your hands would all shoot up.

Some of you, it costs \$2,000 a year just for your medication. I hope Medicare does something about this, because I have Medicare. However, the thing is that we are being exploited by big business.

They know how every time you go back for the same thing you bought before, it's always a few cents or a dollar and a half more than it was the last time. It hasn't got any more expensive to the maker, but he just sees you as somebody, he can look a little more. We are being exploited by big business.

And these big businesses have found a unique way of turning their penalties, when they're penalized, into profit. I'm not going to explain it to you, because you might want to do that yourself, and it isn't honest. But they actually find out how to make their penalties pay off, so it doesn't worry them when they get fined.

Exploited by big business. We're also being exploited by organized labor. You say, well now, what do you mean? Do you realize that your doctor may very shortly belong to a union? They have just started a union for doctors.

Now you know what happens to the union. What's going to happen if they go on strike? Their patients will die. So what? We've got our rights.

A doctor's union. Did you ever hear anything as ridiculous? And, oh, I'd love to know, to have the word that I'm thinking of. Unconscionable.

That's it is. That's it. To join a union so you can bring pressure on your patients when they complain about your fees.

We're being exploited by organized labor. Where do you think inflation in the country comes from? Strikes and organized labor. Who pays the bill? You do, and I do.

We're even being exploited by organized crime. I read about the A&P grocery stores. How many of you ever heard of the A&P grocery stores? Of course.

Do you know that organized crime actually made the stores of A&P put in a detergent that they manufactured, that is the syndicate, that they manufactured and put it in at the same price as the detergent they were presently getting? And it was extremely inferior. But they did it. They were scared to death.

Two managers lost their lives and 12 of the stores were closed. It was fear that did it. Fear of the crime syndicate that was the A&P.

And we're all the time being exploited by agitators. I don't know whether you ever stopped by open air meetings other than gospel meetings and listened to the tirade and the diatribes and the talking of men like this. You know, most agitators are out for their own ends.

They really are. Or else they are serving some cause that you wouldn't be sympathetic with. There are so many of them, their service is causing rejoicing in hell.

We're living in the day of the exploitation. Now, do you know what the danger is here? It's the danger of substituting self for others. All the circumstances are calculated to make you say, I've got to do more for myself.

I've got to stand up and be counted because of me. You and I are very fortunate. We live in the best country in the world with all of its faults.

You only have to travel to a few of the not so very far away countries to realize how fortunate we are to be in America. I can even say now to be Americans. All the country has gone down a long way.

It's got a long way to come back. But we are among the most fortunate people on earth. So, we mustn't spend time in self-pity because you look around, there's always somebody worse off than you are.

If you get wrapped up in yourself in spite of the fact that you're being exploited, if it troubles you to the point that it becomes an obsession to overcome it, you're way off in a left base, a left field, because there are others around you worse off than you. I grumbled that I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet. We can always find somebody worse off than ourselves.

I'm glad I got that sermon finished. It's not a great day, but it's a day of great things. But all of these have peculiar dangers, and I've outlined them for you.

Now, you need the Lord. You should be sitting in your seat asking yourself a question. If it is true that I can't conquer my own sin, if it is true that I'm in such danger of dying and going to hell, if it's really true that I can do nothing good with my life unless God gets it first, I ought to do something.

If you have a problem about knowing where you stand before God, I would like you to stay behind after this service, even if it means you get late for dinner, because I would like to talk to you. Don't go away uncertain about your state before God. If you crossed the road out there, got hit by a car and were killed on the highway, as one woman from part of the farms was done, crossing over to McDonald's, hit, and she was ready, would you be ready? Now, that's a good question for you to ask yourself.

If I died today, where would I go? All that's around you in the world is calculated to keep you not thinking about these things. The preacher is the one who has to do his duty and tell you, if you die without Christ, you go to hell. And hell was never meant for you.

Hell was made for the devil and his angels, and they're going to go there, every one of them. But if man goes there, he goes there of his own volition. There was a way of escape, and Jesus paid a price to make it available by giving his life.

Until you receive him, you're not ready to die. Let's pray, shall we? Our Father, these are solemn things, and we know the truth behind so many of them. Our own experiences preach these things to us, and they influence us.

We ask, Lord, that we may not get our eye off the center, that we might realize that you, God, are the one that we need above everything else. Grant, Lord, that we'll not be led off into Bypass Meadow and get away from that which really matters. And Lord, we ask that we may not try to substitute for your salvation

our own good works, even though we be the best people on the face of the earth.

We are sinners, and we are lost, and we need to be saved. Oh, how it would rejoice our hearts if someone came and said, I am not sure that I'm right with God. To see them become sure.

Lord, speak to every heart, each one of us, as we separate the one from the other. We ask it in the Savior's name, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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