



FIRST BAPTIST of Hayden

Proverbs
The Proverbs of Solomon
Chapters 9-21
03/15/2023

Introduction:

*There was a crooked man, and he walked a crooked mile,
He found a crooked sixpence against a crooked stile;
He bought a crooked cat which caught a crooked mouse,
And they all lived together in a little crooked house.*

Jeremiah 5:1 (ESV): *1 Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, look and take note! Search her squares to see if you can find a man, one who does justice and seeks truth, that I may pardon her.*

There are things that men do that are a revulsion to God, and then there are things that we do that please him. And while this is true, we should be careful not to fall into the human trap of thinking that our righteousness, our good deeds win God's favor. Only grace grants us favor in God's eyes. But as his people, we should live a life that honors his name. As his people, we should act in ways that show that his life in us.

Unfortunately, we tend to act in ways that are less than godly. We use excuses, like our age or our disposition, or here is the worst excuse for ungodly behavior – the truth. *“All I did was tell the truth.”* It has been my experience that many believers excuse their bad behavior and hide themselves behind the “truth,” or the culture in which they grew up, or their nature.

Much like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, some of us act in ways that are rude and absolutely not Christlike, and in so doing, we drive people away from the Lord rather than call them to him.

Unjust weights are an abomination in the eyes of the Lord; and so is the one who walks a crooked way.

Proverbs 11:20 (ESV): *20 Those of crooked heart are an abomination to the Lord, but those of blameless ways are his delight.*

Message:

Bad behavior, no matter what it is or the reason it is, does not honor God. We may decide in the moment that our decision is necessary. But in afterthought, we tend to look at that decision in a more righteous way, and we see that God is not pleased with our words or actions.

Solomon wants us to consider the decision before we make the choice and do the right thing in the moment of decision.

1. Imprudent action:

Proverbs 11:15 (ESV): *15 Whoever puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer harm, but he who hates striking hands in pledge is secure.*

This was also addressed back in chapter 6. If you have given your word, and made a pledge to cover someone else's debt, do all you can to release yourself from that commitment.

It is financially dangerous to pledge your resources for another's bad financial choice. And if you do, there is a strong possibility of bringing financial harm to yourself and your family.

Take note of the antithesis of this, security belongs to the one who *hates*, (a strong word that means to make this type of thinking an enemy).

2. Relationships are more important than career achievements:

Proverbs 11:16–17 (ESV): *16 A gracious woman gets honor, and violent men get riches. 17 A man who is kind benefits himself, but a cruel man hurts himself.*

In verse 16, there is a contrast of desire. A gracious, or kind woman is one who fights through the desire, or the human tendency to be ugly, selfish, and unkind in times of stress. She literally fights her nature to be less than kind. And when she succeeds, she gets honor in the community. Her deep desire is to build relationships with her family and friends.

And when they see her, the comments are, “*There goes a kind lady, a woman of generous and hospitable nature.*” She becomes the go-to person when a dignitary, or a VIP comes to town because she always makes sure everyone is welcomed.

Relationships are of the utmost importance to her.

This contrasts with the violent, the ruthless, or tyrannical man, who through their selfish demands get what they want. They pursue their career goals against any relationship, no matter who it may hurt.

They may get everything they are going after, but they have no testimony – they have no honor within the community, and this kind of man is avoided at all costs.

Solomon completes the thought in verse 17, with something of a medical tone. Kindness is a benefit to the one who practices it, while cruelty harms the one who practices it. A kind heart is full of health and well-being, but a ruthless spirit makes a man sick.

3. Payday Someday:

RG Lee wrote a sermon about Jezebel and Ahab. She was a king’s daughter and a king’s wife. She was the viper seated on the throne of Israel married to the worst of Israel’s kings, Ahab.

Ahab wanted a righteous man’s vineyard. It distressed him that Naboth refused to sell his family’s inheritance.

A wicked man, wanting what he cannot have, a wicked woman scheming to get what her husband wanted.

He acted like a selfish, sullen child demanding what was not his, as if it should be. This is who Solomon is pointing to: the person so selfish, so overwhelmingly focused on his desires that he loses sight of what is right, just and true.

Proverbs 11:18–19 (ESV): 18 *The wicked earns deceptive wages, but one who sows righteousness gets a sure reward.* 19 *Whoever is steadfast in righteousness will live, but he who pursues evil will die.*

The story of Naboth, Ahab and Jezebel will not happen for many, many years in the future. But selfish men live in all times and demand what they demand in all eras.

Wicked people earn wages that come out of deception, while a righteous person is honored by God and receives a sure and steadfast reward. It may not be in this life, but God sees, and God knows, and God rewards according to our deeds.

“Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.”

4. Divine judgment is sure:

Proverbs 11:20–21 (ESV): 20 Those of crooked heart are an abomination to the Lord, but those of blameless ways are his delight.

21 *Be assured, an evil person will not go unpunished, but the offspring of the righteous will be delivered.*

Here Solomon ends his contrasts in desire, with divine judgment. A promise, an assurance that God will reward according to behavior. God's judgment follows his evaluation of a person's life choices.

We are told about the coming judgment at the end of all days.

Revelation 22:11–12 (ESV): 11 *Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.* 12 *“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.*

It is spoken of when we stand before the Bema seat of Christ, as he judges the lives we have lived.

1 Corinthians 3:13–15 (ESV): 13 *each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.* 14 *If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.* 15 *If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.*

We are warned not to assist or help any who are anti-christ, lest we lose the reward we have won.

2 John 1: 8–11 (ESV): 8 *Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.* 9 *Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.* 10 *If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting,* 11 *for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.*

Jesus cautioned his disciples that they should be careful how they served or gave, so that it was not for men, but for God and God alone.

Matthew 6:1 (ESV): 1 *“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.*

Take note of the last phrase in 11:21, *“but the offspring of the righteous will be delivered.”* How we live so often affects our children and their children. Our lives, our testimony will impact how our children see God and see their service to God.

It should be a warning to all adults who want to live for God: don’t act in certain ways, don’t say certain words, don’t be the kind of man or woman who impacts your children, and really any children, in a negative way.

Mark 10:13–16 (ESV): 13 *And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. 15 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” 16 And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.*

Conclusion:

My life impacts so many and does so much good or ill. The desires of my heart so often determine the choice I make and whether that choice is good and God honoring, or bad and life destroying.

Let us be like Jesus was: living for God, working for God, and serving God for his honor and glory. That is where we will find the greatest glory.