



Sermon: January 28, 2018

Verses Covered This Week

Proverbs 3:5 – 8 (main Scripture)

1 John 4:18

Mark 4:35 – 41

Romans 8:26 - 28

Genesis 4:5 - 7

So we are walking through the book of Proverbs. We've come to the most terrifying verse in the entire word of God for me. I used to play golf with my pastor in High School, or in College, after I was called to preach. So he was telling me one day that back then you only had one version of the Bible, right. The King James. So you could buy a Bible for some kid that got saved and the parent wouldn't mind because it was all one version. So he bought him this Bible and he did what any pastor does, he, you know, endorsed it. And he put Proverbs in there. So he gets a call later that week, about Wednesday night, and this mother calls him and she says, "Brother Nelson, did you mean to put the verses in my sons Bible, my 12-year-old that just got saved? Did you mean to put those verses in there?" And he meant to write what we're going to look at this morning, Proverbs 3:5 & 6. But he transposed and here's what he put in there.

For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey and her speech is smoother than oil; and in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.

So ever since then, I don't write anything in anybody's Bible unless I read that verse 8 different times before I sign anything. So we come to what is one of the most impacting verses in my life. I thought you'd laugh more, but apparently not. So, now before we get into the text, I want you to remember a couple things so that we get the text in its proper place. We've got three worlds. There used to be Adam and Eve's world; nothing wrong, they could do anything they wanted, God gave them enormous freedom. They named the animals, farmed whatever they wanted to. There's coming a day when we go into a similar world. The Bible says we'll be on thrones. We will rule with Christ. But we live in an interim time. We live in an interim time when there are a couple things that fit all of us. Number one, we all have a general and a particular calling. All of us in this room, if you know Christ, you have a calling; a general calling, all of us, to reflect the glory of God in our life. Then that calling is particularized in whatever He's called you to do. Whether you're cleaning houses, whether you're president of a university, whether you're a doctor, whether

you're a lawyer, no matter what God's put you in, inside that particular area, now He takes that glory and He particularizes it toward the people that He's placed in your life. So there's the first thing. You have a calling and a purpose from God; general and particular.

Number two, you have an enemy, right, who wants to destroy you in that calling. And then thirdly, as you live this calling out, as you walk toward Christ and you're reflecting this, you're in a world that is broken. It's not God's world, I mean He's still sovereign, but it's not the way He meant it to be. It is broken. It is going to sting you. It's going to bite you. When we get here and we will never lose anybody we see. You're going to lose people here. You're going to have diseases. You're going to have problems. So this world is going to bite you. So I've got three things. I've got to make sure I'm walking straight towards the Father correctly. I want to understand I've got an enemy; he's going to try to stop that. And then I've got normal things in this world that are simply going to sting me and I've got to be able to deal with all those. That's why Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs. So we'd have the wisdom to be able to handle all three of those things. Now remember last week, because everything that hangs today is based on last week. Remember last week we learned two things. We learned the fact that the Father has a steadfast love and is faithful to everything He says. His love is steadfast. We have the same punishment as Satan, but in Christ that's removed. But His love is steadfast toward us anyway. It's the same on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday. It doesn't get worse on Friday because you blow it. It doesn't get better on Saturday because you did something right. His love is steadfast. It never stops. Secondly, He's faithful. When He makes a statement about something, He always backs it up no matter what He has to do. He's big enough to back it up and He's honest enough to back it up. So we know two things about the Father, right. His love is steadfast and He backs up what He says.

Now with those understood and what we face in this world, now He takes you to Proverbs 3. Listen to what he says beginning in verse 5.

⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart, do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him, He will make straight your paths. ⁷Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, turn away from evil. ⁸It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

So it says a couple things. Number one, you trust in the Lord with all your heart. Which you can do because His love doesn't change and He honors what He says. Here's the reason you have to trust Him; because you're not going to see Him. You are not going to see His hand. There's a passage, 2 Corinthians 5 that talks about being absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. And in the context of that it says we walk by faith, not by sight. That is, you're not going to see somebody leave the body and be in the presence of the Lord. John 14 says Jesus comes back for His own. You're not going to see that. I've been in a ton of rooms where people died. Some hard. Some easy. I've seen a lot of death of believers. I'm absolutely sure Jesus came and got them because that's what He promised and His love is steadfast. But I've never seen Him in the room. I haven't seen the windows rustle. I haven't seen the bed move. I've never seen evidence of Jesus, but I absolutely trust that with all my heart because that is what God says He will do. And I do have the one guy in the Old Testament, I love that, there are two verses you need to always juxtapose, particularly in the life of Stephen. When Jesus ascended into heaven, right, it says they saw Him sitting on the right hand of God. When Stephen was being stoned; he looked up, nobody

saw it, he looked up and the Bible says He say Jesus standing on the right hand of God. He was up getting ready to come and get the first man to die for His name. He saw it; nobody else does. You are not going to see God's hand. You're not going to see it. And therefore you have to trust with all your heart. But you have a basis for trust because you know His love is steadfast and you know His word's absolutely true and He will back it up. So you have a reason to trust Him. But you have to do that.

Now if you struggle with trust, and I know many of us that don't, if you struggle with it, let me give you one book to read that is, that I think will alter, and that is the book of Esther in the Old Testament. The name God is never mentioned in the book of Esther, ever. It's the only book in the Bible that does not have God's name in it. It is, though, the best book that you can read about seeing what God's up to. There a couple guys in the story. There's, obviously, Esther. Beautiful, young Jewish girl. She's being raised by her cousin, Mordecai. Her parents have died. There's a guy in the story, Haman, who's this horrible guy that works for the king. Now when Haman walks through town, Mordecai won't bow down to him. I don't know if he was a Baylor grad, I don't know what the problem was, but Haman wouldn't bow, I don't want any e-mails, so Haman, Mordecai wouldn't bow down to Haman. Hated him. He just stood up. So it hacked Haman off so Haman finally one day, he was a close advisor to the king, he came in and said, "Look, there's some people in the land, they're Jews, and we need to just eradicate them." So the king said, "OK." Signed a deal he couldn't revoke, gave him money to pull it out, the decree went out. Now about this time that this decree went out, Mordecai's cousin Esther has become the queen through some weird events. But she's become the queen. So when this comes out, somebody goes up to Esther and they said, "Hey, Mordecai's freaking out downstairs. You really need to go down and talk to him." So Esther talks to him and he says, "Look Haman's decided to kill us. You're going to have to go to the king and talk to him." And her response was, "He doesn't know I'm Jewish. If I go into the king and he doesn't request of me, he can kill me." Now he then makes this statement. Now Israel's being punished. They're in exile. They're in the Persian empire. They're being punished. But he makes this statement to her. He says, "Relief and deliverance will come to us. But if you refuse to act, you will not experience that relief and deliverance. You and your people will die." And so she says, "Let me pray about it. Now have everybody fast three days." Now right before that, Mordecai has discovered a plot to kill the king. He gets word to the king, the king discovers it's true, slaughters the guys, but nothing's ever done for Mordecai. If you're Mordecai, you've got to be sitting there going, "Come on, man, oval office tour, championship game, something. Give me some tickets to something." Nothing comes to him. So he lets it go. She goes to the king and she says, "I want you and Haman to come to supper." So Haman goes home. Haman's got a little ego issue. He goes home, sits down with his wife and his friends and he goes, "You're not going to believe this, man. I am one stud puppy. The king's wife asked me and the king to come to dinner. I'm the man." So they're all bragging. So, but then he says, "But I got to tell you. I hate Mordecai. As a matter of fact, even all this accolades, I hate that guy." So his wife says, "Hey, baby, I know what to do. Build a gallows, 150' high, and hang him on it. You'll feel better in the morning." So he says, "You know, I think you're right." So he builds this 150' gallows and in the morning he goes to see the king.

Now when he goes to see the king, the king couldn't sleep and being the arrogant guy that the king is, he calls to have something read to him out of his own biography about how great he is. It just so happened that out of all those pages, they turn to the place where Mordecai saved his life and

the king goes, "So have we done anything for this guy?" And they said, "No sir, we haven't done anything." Who's in the hall? Well here comes Haman to get the king to kill Mordecai. Haman comes in and goes, "Yes, sir." He said, "Listen if you wanted to honor somebody, what would you do?" Haman's going, he's kissing the mirror, and he realizes this has got to be about me. So he said, "Well I'll tell you what I'd do." Gives him all the things to do; put him on a horse, lot of neat clothing, have somebody walk him through the city saying, "This is the man the king honors." King goes, "Great idea, Haman. I want you to do that for Mordecai." "Well, praise God, king. I'll be glad to." So he walks him around the city, he comes home, tells his wife and friends what's happened, and they're like, "Oh, man, if you're in trouble, you're in trouble." And sure enough to make a long story short, he winds up getting hung on the gallows and the nation of Israel is saved. Now here's what I want you to understand. God knew when Esther lost her parents who she's live with. He knew what Mordecai would cause. He knew Haman's reaction. He set up the fact that when the king was saved, he wouldn't do anything about it. He orchestrated that night that that to be the section of the king's biography that he read. God orchestrated every single bit of that. Haman didn't see it. Mordecai didn't see it. Esther didn't see it. The king didn't see it. But I'm telling you God did it! So the great thing is I don't care whether you see it or not. You trust Him with all your heart because you have a God that is not sitting up there busy, you have a God that the Bible says in Psalm 139, the thoughts that He has about you are more than the sand of the sea. He says the hairs on your head are numbered. It's not as hard for others as it is for some of us, but there isn't anything He doesn't know. There isn't anything He doesn't have interest. And there's not a single part of your life He is not behind the scenes working on whether you see it or not. So you trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Second thing he says; acknowledge Him in all your ways. Now here's what he says. Look, I trust in the Lord and I do it in every place in my life. I trust Him in my home. I trust Him in my business. I trust Him with my friends. I trust Him with my recreation. It doesn't matter where I find myself in my life, I trust Him with all my heart and I acknowledge Him in any situation I find myself in. I don't ever find myself in a situation where He's too small, or He doesn't love me enough to honor what He says. So I trust the Lord with all my heart. I acknowledge Him in all my ways. And then here's what He says: fear the Lord. No remember, we've talked about this, right. There are three fears of the Lord in the Bible. Two are bad, one is what you're supposed to live. There's one in 1 John 4 where he says perfect love casts out fear. You don't fear that you're going to mess up on Friday, He's going to hate you on Saturday. You don't fear that you cannot lose what you have in Jesus Christ. So you don't fear that. That's the wrong fear. Number two, Mark 4, you do not fear, He's in the boat sound asleep, they wake Him up, things are bad. You don't fear anything in this life, as long as you belong to Jesus Christ. You don't fear anything. He can handle anything you face. But there is a third fear that you must live in. And that's the fear at the end of Mark 4 when they are stunned at who Jesus is and the Bible says they fear Him greatly. Their reverence and awe is unbelievable. They can't imagine who He is and that He's so different from them and it does not repel them. In Matthew 17 on the Mount of Transfiguration it pulls you. So there are three things that you do because you know He's steadfast love and He's honest in what He says. You trust Him with every bit of your heart. You do it in every circumstance and you make sure you fear Him correctly so that you're pulled to Him, not repulsed by Him, and not afraid of Him. That's what you do.

Now if you do that. He says two things. Listen to this. He will make straight your paths; He will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. He will do two things. He will take the path you're walking which is toward Jesus Christ so you can reflect His glory in a general way and in a particular way. He will take that path and He will make it straight. The enemy will not be able to pull you off that path. And the things you hit in this world will not pull you off that path. Because there are two things that knock you off the path of walking. One is the enemy busts you, and the other is you have some sort of issue and you can't deal with it. And see if I trust in the Lord with all my heart, if I acknowledge Him in every way, if I fear Him correctly, then the enemy can't do those things. I remember I buried a man in Midland who was probably my best, best friend. As a matter of fact, I was there the night when he died. I went into the room and he was obviously at the end. He was still cognizant, but he couldn't speak and he couldn't write. He'd lost his ability to write, but he was extremely cognizant of everything in the room. Great man. I mean I loved him intensely. I came into the room and he began to get agitated after a few minutes and his eyes kept following me across the room. And I looked at the family and said, "Look I think he probably wants me to go." And one of the daughters said, "No, I think he wants you to sit on the bed with him." And I sat down on the bed with him and he quit being agitated and he put his arm around me to say to me, "I love you, but I'm going home." When he died, driving home from the hospital in Midland, I stopped and wept for 20 minutes. This guy was tremendous in my life. He had impacted his family in a deep way. His wife, and this guy was one of these just nice to the bone guys. His wife had grown up in a home, she was adopted, and I know this sounds bizarre, but she had grown up in a home where when the phone rang, she'd go to reach it and they'd say, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no, don't answer that phone. That's our phone. You're adopted." When she would go get the mail, they'd say, "Oh, no, no, don't get the mail, honey. You're adopted. That's our mail." His love and kindness had absolutely swept over her. And it healed her. So when he died, and he died in his early 50's, you can imagine how hard it was. And so one morning she and her daughter called me and said, "We want to meet you at the church." And so they met me at 6:30 at the church and we sat down. They looked at me and they said, "Look, we don't know how to handle this. We don't know how to pray. We don't know how to walk. We don't know what to do." In other words, they're on the path, right, but this horrific moment has begun to edge them off because that's what happens. So what do you do there? I want you to listen. You stay where you are, but listen to Romans 8.

²⁶Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness; we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; ²⁷and He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for all the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to His purpose.

That's the answer. You've got to trust that. When you're sitting there and you've lost the man that's absolutely God's used to heal your heart from some sorry parents, and you're facing that loss, the only way you can get back on the road is to be absolutely sure that somewhere down this road, things are going to be good. And they're not going to be good because of your walk; they're going to be good of your Holy Spirit in side you who will pray on your behalf when you cannot. You've got to know that. You've got to trust that whether you see Him or not, whether you hear Him or not, and He says you can't hear him, that doesn't mean He's not praying. You've got to

trust that because if you really trust that, that can put you right back on that path. And then it will bring refreshment to your bones.

Genesis 4, Adam and Eve have just blown it. They have two sons, Cain and Abel. And I've always had people ask me, "How do you know that Cain and Abel knew they should bring a blood sacrifice?" Because when Adam and Eve sinned, what did they cover up with? Plants. But when God covered up their sin, he used blood. He killed two animals and put the animal skins on them in anticipation of the prophecy about the blood of Jesus Christ. Cain and Abel both knew it had to be a blood sacrifice. So Abel brings blood. Cain doesn't. Now look at this in verse 5.

⁵but for Cain and his offering God had no regard. So Cain was very angry and his face fell.
⁶Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why has your face fallen? ⁷If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

When I do not trust in the Lord and I do not acknowledge Him in every way and I do not fear Him, it damages me on the inside. And the great thing is that when I do it right there is a refreshment inside me. Now don't misunderstand what I'm saying, OK. We all face some tough times, but I'm going to tell you something. When we don't trust Him and we don't do that in every way, we don't really fear Him, we add to the depression we have in a broken world. And Christ's presence is real and effective and powerful.

Does all that work? Yeah, absolutely. I've shared before when my son was one and a half/two, he had surgery down at Texas Children's. And the surgery was fine, but we were down there a couple weeks, I was flying back and forth from Midland. And we went through, I stayed the nights, Peg took the days, and it was horrific. I mean there would be nights when his bladder would spasm and the pain would just be intense and he'd just weep and cry for like 45 minutes. No medicine would work. It just had to run its course. And then finally he'd go to sleep. And I'm just telling you honestly where I was at this point. I finally got up one night after one of those bouts and I looked down out of the window at Texas Children's on Fannin Street and I said, I said, "Lord I've got to be honest with you. I don't understand this. Now I've got to go home and preach Sunday to people that think I trust you. And right now I am really struggling because this is not making my son a better Christian. He doesn't even know what's going on except he hurts. I've prayed and you have not responded. And I don't understand." And I was as honest as I knew to be. I look out the window and there's a blinking cross across the way. And God just spoke to me and He said, "What's happening to your son isn't near what happened to Mine. I love your boy and I love you and you're going to have to trust that." And there are times I don't see His hand, I don't know what He's doing, I don't sense it, I don't feel it, you die in the room, I don't see you go. I don't see you come. But I'm telling you. I'm absolutely sure He's at work, He picks people up, He takes them home, and there are times when the only thing you can root your faith in is the steadfast love of Jesus Christ in the cross where He stayed there until He won our sin/redemption. And that is enough.

Let's pray.

Father thank You for the intensity of how much You love us. I do not grasp that, but I sure am glad for it. And Father remind us whether we see you or not, you're there. And let us trust You so the enemy can't have us, the world can't sting us, and we can be everything You want us to be. I ask You those things in Jesus Christ name.