

Avoid Adultery

WISDOM'S WARNINGS (PART 5) • PROVERBS 6:20-35

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****COVID-19 SPLIT SERVICE****

It is good to be with you this morning! If you are joining us online or on the phone, we are glad you can be with us. For those of us here in person, I hope you have the elements for the Lord's Supper, either from home or from the table in the entryway, as we hope to partake immediately after our study of God's word. Following the supper, we plan on singing, "I Am Resolved" (#255), before we head outside to do some reconnecting with each other. We need some human interaction, and we plan on doing that out on the front lawn.

As you can see, we are starting with God's plan of salvation. Jesus, the Lamb of God, came to take away the sins of the world, and he did, offering himself as a sacrifice on the cross. He was buried, and according to the scriptures he was raised up on the third day. In response, we believe the message, we turn away from sin, we confess Jesus as being the Son of God, and we allow ourselves to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins. At that point we are born into God's family, the Christian life begins, and we spend the rest of our lives living for him.

And once again, we have some good news to share. This pic comes to us from a Facebook friend, H. Clay Williams, from somewhere near Dallas, Texas. The one being baptized here is Jesus Perez. I'm not sure whether this is from brother Williams' home congregation or from somewhere else, but we are thankful for Jesus and his decision to obey the gospel earlier in the week. We also have some pictures of Angelo being baptized by Anthony Castillo this past Tuesday at the congregation in Schertz, Texas. We share both of these by way of example: What Jesus and Angelo have done this week, you can do this morning. Please do not leave here today without knowing for certain that you are in a right relationship with God. If you would like to study the scriptures, if you have any questions at all, get in touch with me, or Aaron, or John, and we would be glad to open the word of God with you to find some answers.

This morning, we come to the end of our series of lessons from Proverbs 6. We started several weeks ago by looking at the danger of co-signing on a loan. We need to help people, but we need to help in a ways that are actually helpful. We went on to look at some lessons from the ant, the six-legged preacher, that we are to work hard, preparing for the future, and we are not to be slackers. Two weeks ago, we looked at Solomon's warning to beware of the scoundrel as he warns his sons to stay away from those who are twisted and deceptive. And

last week we studied a short paragraph where King Solomon describes God as HATING - we had a list of six things God hates, yes, even seven that are an abomination to him.

This morning, we conclude this short series by looking at the last paragraph in Proverbs 6 – Proverbs 6:20-35 – and in this passage, we have yet another warning from King Solomon to his son concerning the danger of ADULTERY. I took the picture up here this past Wednesday morning. After I recorded Wednesday’s Bible class at Fish Camp County Park on the north shore of Lake Kegonsa, I got in the kayak and paddled up the Yahara River about an hour and a half to Mud Lake, out in front of Al and Juanita’s place. So, there’s nothing particularly adulterous about this picture; we’re just using it as a background, some local flavor from Mud Lake on the Yahara River.

Nevertheless, when we come to this passage, there’s a chance you might react as I did reading this chapter again a few weeks ago, “Wow! Another passage on adultery!” It seems we’ve had quite a bit of this up to this point in the book of Proverbs. And the reason is: This is a real danger. It’s a real temptation, and the consequences can be devastating. So, King Solomon warns his son, again and again and again. And what is amazing to me is to realize 1.) That King Solomon was born to a man who committed adultery with his mother (David and Bathsheba), and 2.) That it is this exact sin is exactly what brings King Solomon down himself – by the time it’s all over, he ends up with 700 wives and 300 concubines, and his decision to go after these women is what ultimately pulls him away from God.

Solomon, then, although not perfect by any means, is definitely writing from personal experience. As we might say today, he is being “authentic.” He is sharing with his son what he has learned the hard way. And he repeats it, because he knows: Unlike some other sins, this one has the very real danger of ruining your life, not only spiritually, but financially, and physically, and financially, and in just about every other way.

This morning, then, let’s look together at Solomon’s warning in Proverbs 6:20-35. I hope you can find this passage in your own Bible and keep it open as we study. As you can see, I’m splitting it between two screens, since it’s a bit long and it’s written in verse form – I’m doing this for the benefit of those joining us online. But I do hope you can find this in your own Bible. Let’s look together at the words of Solomon - Proverbs 6:20-35,

***20 My son, observe the commandment of your father
And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;***

***21 Bind them continually on your heart;
Tie them around your neck.***

***22 When you walk about, they will guide you;
When you sleep, they will watch over you;
And when you awake, they will talk to you.***

***23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light;
And reproofs for discipline are the way of life***

***24 To keep you from the evil woman,
From the smooth tongue of the adulteress.***

***25 Do not desire her beauty in your heart,
Nor let her capture you with her eyelids.***

***26 For on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread,
And an adulteress hunts for the precious life.***

- ²⁷ *Can a man take fire in his bosom
And his clothes not be burned?*
- ²⁸ *Or can a man walk on hot coals
And his feet not be scorched?*
- ²⁹ *So is the one who goes in to his neighbor's wife;
Whoever touches her will not go unpunished.*
- ³⁰ *Men do not despise a thief if he steals
To satisfy himself when he is hungry;*
- ³¹ *But when he is found, he must repay sevenfold;
He must give all the substance of his house.*
- ³² *The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense;
He who would destroy himself does it.*
- ³³ *Wounds and disgrace he will find,
And his reproach will not be blotted out.*
- ³⁴ *For jealousy enrages a man,
And he will not spare in the day of vengeance.*
- ³⁵ *He will not accept any ransom,
Nor will he be satisfied though you give many gifts.*

- I. **As we work our way through this passage, let's start with Solomon's encouragement here at the beginning, that his son is to PREPARE FOR TEMPTATION BEFOREHAND, and he does this by LISTENING TO GOOD ADVICE (we see this in verses 20-24).**

And specifically, in these opening verses, Solomon tells his son to listen to his parents; he is to listen to both his mother and his father. Let's realize here that when it comes to avoiding the sin of adultery, both a mom and a dad have something to add to this conversation. Both parents play an important role in this discussion.

We also notice here that Solomon wants his son to take these commandments and he wants him to bind them continually on his heart, he wants him to tie these commandments around his neck. In other words, Solomon wants his son to make these commandments a permanent part of who he is. Incorporate this teaching into your life; make it a part of you. And if he can do this, these commandments will guide you and watch over you. In verse 22, the commandments will *"talk to you."*

We know that kids today are surrounded by advice and opinions in this area – we have friends, and fellow students, and the media, and an unlimited supply of online influences – and in this hurricane of advice, our children need to hear the voice of their parents above everything else. And hopefully parents are basing their advice on God's commandments. In verse 23, these words from mom and dad seem to be based on scripture, as Solomon refers to *"the commandment"* and refers to this commandment as a *"lamp"* and the teaching as *"light."* These commandments come from God. His word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105). When we face temptation, the word of God (handed down to us by our parents) has a way of protecting us. We hear God through the voice of our parents. And that voice corrects and teaches us. That voice prepares us beforehand. It prepares us, Solomon says, to resist the *"evil woman."* Preparing beforehand protects us from *"the smooth tongue of the adulteress."* And this leads us to what comes next...

II. ...because in verse 25, gives the warning: RESIST TEMPTATION.

“Do not desire her beauty in your heart, nor let her capture you with her eyelids.” What an interesting picture! And again, it seems as if Solomon is speaking from a bit of experience here, “Don’t fall for a beautiful off-limits woman like I did!” But it’s also interesting that he commands his son to not desire this woman’s beauty in his heart. Desire can apparently be controlled! Temptation can be resisted. If we see something that’s pulling us in a dangerous direction, if a woman tries to capture us with her eyelids, we have the power to turn away. We can do what Joseph did when he was approached by Potiphar’s wife: He ran!

There’s something else we notice in verse 25, and that is: Temptation starts in the heart. Isn’t this what Jesus says in Matthew 5:28? ***“You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*** This is a heart issue. Solomon isn’t blaming the woman here, he’s not saying that you can think about it all you want as long as you don’t commit the actual act, but he’s telling his son: Get out of there. Resist temptation. Do not desire this woman with your heart. Resist this from the very beginning.

On Thursday and Friday, we had to get some work done on the Subaru. Yes, it was so much that it couldn’t be done in one day. It was that bad. But you know what they did that really wasn’t fair? They gave me a brand new Subaru as a free loaner car! It was so nice! It actually worked. It didn’t smell like kid vomit. It didn’t have any rust. It wasn’t covered in dog hair. It had these really cool features. It told me when the car in front of me at the stoplight started moving. It told me when I crossed over the white line on the side of the road. It pushed the brakes for me when I came up on somebody at a stoplight. I had to test these things, of course. It was amazing. And now I have my own car back, I’ve had to really try to not think about all that. I’ve had to resist the temptation.

And what is true of cars is also true of people: Desire starts in the heart. There may be some programs on Netflix that we just can’t turn on. There might be some people that we just can’t spend time with. There might be some search terms we just can’t use online. There might be some conversations we just can’t have with certain people. And so we have the warning: Resist temptation! And this brings us to the rest of this passage...

III. ...as Solomon continues the warning by telling his son to PICTURE THE CONSEQUENCES.

He needs to be aware of the danger, because (as he explains in verse 26), ***“...on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread, and an adulteress hunts for the precious life.”*** There are two dangers: On one hand, a prostitute will make you poor, but a married woman committing adultery is out for your life. In terms of danger to a future king in particular, different women might be motivated by different reasons. A prostitute might just be out for your money, but a married woman has something else in mind – she’s in it to take your life, her goal is to bring you down. But either way, there is no safe option here. And so, King Solomon paints his son a picture, and he explains the danger in two ways...

A. ...starting with the picture of FIRE (in verses 27-29).

Being intimate with another human being is an awesome blessing from God, and yet Solomon compares adultery to playing with fire (as we might say today). Fire is good in its proper place (when it’s contained), but when it gets out of control, terrible things happen. We’ve seen this over the past few weeks, haven’t we? A gender reveal goes wrong, and homes are destroyed and lives are lost and changed forever. In its place, fire is

good. We heat this building with fire, fueled by natural gas. Most of our cars are powered by fire. We heat our home with wood. These fires are controlled, but when they get out of control, the results can be devastating.

In the same way, God created this desire for intimacy for some really good reasons, and he gave us marriage to keep it contained; however, outside the boundary of marriage, some terrible things can happen – physically, emotionally, spiritually. Solomon, then (in verses 27-28), pictures adultery as a fire. He compares adultery to holding a fire in our lap or on our chest. We get burned! Or maybe we picture a man walking on hot coals. We try that, and we get burned! In the same way, if we take steps toward adultery – if we get in the car with this person, if we start making plans, if we make the call or send the text, we are heading down a very dangerous path, we are striking a match, and it can very quickly get out of control.

B. The second picture Solomon tries to paint for his son is the image of JEALOUS VIOLENCE.

And he leads into this by explaining (in verse 30) that if someone steals, we don't approve of that, and you need to pay it back, but most people at least understand. If you are hungry and steal food, most people can at least empathize. Even with food, you'll need to pay it back sevenfold. However, if you commit adultery, that's just stupid (in verse 32)! And (in the last few verses of this chapter), you deserve whatever a jealous husband dishes out. There is no erasing adultery. If you cheat with another man's wife, nothing fixes that. With food, you can pay it back, but there is no ransom for adultery. You can give many gifts, you can try, but nothing makes it right.

Conclusion:

As we come to the end of this series of lessons from Proverbs 6, I am thankful for the warnings, even this one. These words come from a wise father who wants the best for his son. And these words are also inspired by God, and preserved for us today. We might struggle, but God knows what's best for us, and so he tells us.

Thankfully, unlike the jealous spouse, God does offer forgiveness. And so, we'll close with the reminder from 1 Corinthians 6, a passage we've come back to over and over again through the years. And we do, because it offers hope. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Paul starts with a question,

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

No matter what we have done, God can forgive if we are willing to repent. Repentance is a change of mind resulting in a change in the way we live. If I wait for my heart to agree with scripture, that might never happen. And so we make a decision: This is what God has said; therefore, I will do it. And when we obey the gospel, we are "**washed**" and "**sanctified**" and "**justified**," as Paul says. Without even knowing what today's lesson is about, Clayton chose "I Am Resolved" as our closing song today. We'll partake of the Lord's Supper in just a moment, but afterwards we'll sing together. And as we sing, I hope we'll think about what Solomon has said to us today, and I hope we will resolve – to no longer be charmed by the world's delight, leaving behind sin and strife, turning our hearts toward Jesus, the true One, the Just One; he has the words of life. And so, we are resolved to enter the kingdom, leaving the paths of sin.

As we close our study, let's go to God in prayer:

Our Father in Heaven,

You are the Almighty and Everlasting God, and we praise you this morning for sending your Son Jesus to die in our place. We are thankful for your Word and for the encouragement it brings. We are also thankful for the warnings, for the words of wisdom passed along to us through inspired men like King Solomon.

Today, we pray that those of us who are married will be faithful, that we would strengthen our marriages and resolve to love each other just as you have loved us. For those who are not married, we pray for strength, we pray that all of us would live in purity, and we pray that all of us would find our identity in You. You are the Living God, and our lives belong to You.

Thank you, Father. We come to you in the name of Jesus. Lord, come quickly. AMEN.

To comment on this lesson: fourlakeschurch@gmail.com