

The Blessings Of The Righteous

Memory Text: “Blessings *are* on the head of the righteous, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked.” (Proverbs 10:6)

Setting The Stage: Automaker Henry Ford asked electrical genius Charlie Steinmetz to build the generators for his factory. One day the generators ground to a halt, and the repairmen couldn't find the problem. So Ford called Steinmetz, who tinkered with the machines for a few hours and then threw the switch. The generators whirred to life--but Ford got a bill for \$10,000 from Steinmetz. Flabbergasted, the rather tightfisted car maker inquired why the bill was so high. Steinmetz's reply: For tinkering with the generators, \$10. For knowing where to tinker, \$9,990. Ford paid the bill. Ah, the benefits of knowing where to tinker. And there are benefits galore to be experienced when one applies biblical wisdom.

Biblical wisdom is not only knowing what is right but doing the right also. What is another way of saying “right doing”? Righteousness! (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 312) The book of Proverbs is actually a book of instruction in righteousness. Proverbs chapters 10 thru 12 specifically bears this out. In Proverbs 10 the wise man refers to the wise as the righteous or the wise as doing righteousness 12 times (v. 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 16, 20, 24, 28, 30-32). In chapter 11 it's 13 times (v. 4-6, 8-10, 18, 19, 21, 23, 28, 30, 31). And in chapter 12 it's 10 times (v. 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13, 17, 21, 26, 28).

The wise = the righteous. The foolish = the wicked. Wisdom = righteousness. Foolishness = unrighteousness. To see a couple of examples **read Prov. 8:12, 18, 20. Compare Prov. 4:13 with 10:2.**

Sunday – Righteousness Is Holistic

Proverbs 10:1-7

Proverbs 10:1-7 offers general instruction in righteousness or wisdom in brief proverbs basically independent of each other as opposed to the consecutive thought we have seen earlier in the book. These thoughts are in the antithetical form of Hebrew poetry (the 2nd line is contrasted to the 1st line). Hebrew poetry also adopts synonymous parallelism (repeating/rhyming thoughts) and constructive parallelism (2nd line adds/builds on the 1st). Notice how broad righteousness is in the following verses:

v. 1 – Righteousness considers the influence of its words and actions. No man is an island. The actions and attitude of a man who is putting a hole in the bottom of a boat that is carrying several other passengers insisting that what he is doing is non of their business, is absurd.

v. 2 – Righteousness seeks out eternal riches above earthly, temporal riches. There is profit in gaining eternal life. Righteousness is not just avoiding the pollution of sin but actively engages in treating and benefitting those around them.

v. 3 – Righteousness knows it can trust in God. Needs v. wants.

v. 4 – Righteousness works faithfully and diligently.

v. 5 – Righteousness understands the hour and acts accordingly.

v. 6 – Righteousness knows it is blessed. Blessings shall be on their head as a crown to adorn and dignify and as a helmet to protect and secure.

v. 7 – Righteousness maintains a good name. Certainly righteousness is holistic.

Monday – The Mouth Of The Righteous

Proverbs 10:8-14; James 3:2

The mouth is the outlet of the mind. The book of Proverbs is concerned with what comes out of it. “Mouth” is mentioned 50 times, “lips” 41 times, and “tongue” 19 times.

Read Prov. 10:8, 10. “Pratting fool,” literally is a “fools of lips.” Someone who is always too busy talking therefore not having time to listen. “A wise old owl lived in an oak; The more he heard, the less he spoke. The less he spoke, the more he heard, Why can't we all be like the wise old bird?”

James 3:2: “For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.” (cp. Prov. 10:19)

v. 11 – The righteous offer words of wisdom, counsel, and edification – refreshing streams that bring new life and growth. God is said to be a fountain of living water (see Ps. 36:9; Jer. 2:13).

v. 12 – Hatred motivates to slander v. love that forgives, moves on, and returns good for evil.

v. 13 – Rod – conscience smites him, tongue-lashings from others, and floggings by the local magistrates.

v. 14 – Righteousness learns from everyone and every experience of life thus is prepared to meet life’s emergencies (see Matt. 13:52).

About Abrasive Speech: “Keep your words soft and sweet; you never know when you may have to eat them.” About Gossip: “Gossip is like soap -- mostly lye!” “A gossip is just a fool with a keen sense of rumor.” About Profanity: “Profanity is a public announcement of stupidity.” About Boasting: “Don't brag; it isn't the whistle that pulls the train.”

Speech, as when used by God in the creation of this world, should only serve creative purposes. How can we keep our lips from evil?

Tuesday – Hope Of The Righteous

Proverbs 11

Let's look at the blessings of the righteous: v. 3, 5, 6 – God will help them stay the course; v. 4 – Delivered from death (eternal life), v. 8, 9, 21 – Delivered out of trouble (Red Sea, Mordecai & gallows; Daniel & lions den; remnant & last days); v. 18, 31 – Sure reward; v. 19 – Life; v. 24-26, 28 – Satisfaction

Certainly there are temporal blessings when we follow Christ, but can I know that I'm obeying God because I'm experiencing certain blessings? Yes and no. The blessings of life, air, and sunshine are given to all, both good and bad. Certainly we experience God's blessings when we implement His principles into our daily affairs. But if I find myself not having all that I want, this is no indication that God is displeased with me.

Wednesday – The Truth Of The Righteous

Proverbs 12

Read Proverbs 12:17-22. The righteous are known for the truth they speak.

John 1:47: "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

Revelation 14:5: "And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."

1 Peter 2:22: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:"

The Lie: "First, somebody told it, Then the room couldn't hold it, So the busy tongues rolled it Till they got it outside. Then the crowd came across it, And never once lost it, But tossed it and tossed it, Till it grew long and wide. This lie brought forth others, Dark sisters and brothers, And fathers and mothers--A terrible crew. And while headlong they hurried, The people they flurried, And troubled and worried, As lies always do. And so evil-bodied, This monster lay goaded, Till at last it exploded In smoke and in shame. Then from mud and from mire The pieces flew higher, And hit the sad victim And killed a good name."

How can a person take better control of their tongue? How can they experience victory? A changed heart! The cure for lying is also remembering what it felt like to be lied to.

Thursday – The Reward Of The Righteous

Proverbs 13; John 3:16

When we talk about rewards we need to remember that the elaborate reward of eternal life is not given based upon performance, like a trophy won by a sports team for winning the finals, but is issued as a gift of grace. When it's all said and done there will be 2 groups – the saved and the lost, the righteous and the unrighteous, the wise and the foolish.

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Proverbs 13:13: "He who despises the word will be destroyed, but he who fears the commandment will be rewarded."

Appeal: In Proverbs God explains the cause and effect at work in our lives so that we can know how to make the best choices that will lead us all the way to the kingdom of heaven. Will you be joining me in making the right choices when it comes to righteousness – the Jesus?