

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2023.02.06

Website: oakgrovecofc.org

Facebook: facebook.com/oakgrovecofc

Sermon recordings

Click or type the short URL, or visit oakgrovecofc.org/Recordings/.

Speaker-AM: Steve Helterbrand

Title: Famous Last Words

Recording:

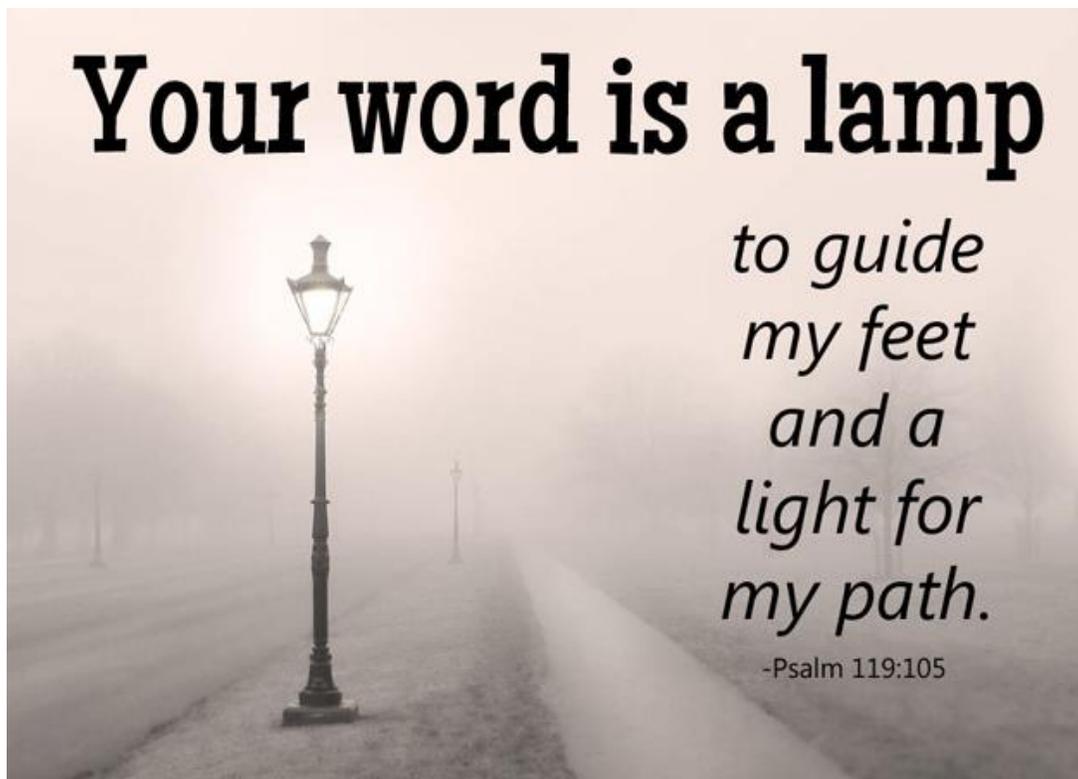
tinyurl.com/SteveWords

Speaker-PM: Kraig Benney

Title: Husbands

Recording:

tinyurl.com/KraigHusbands



Articles

Hope For The Future, 01/05/2023, by Andy Sochor

Throughout the book of Proverbs, a contrast is made between wisdom and foolishness. Since the wisdom described in the book comes from above, those who follow this and live according to its precepts will be righteous. Conversely, those who reject the way of wisdom will inevitably find themselves engaged in wickedness.

Despite their rejection of godly wisdom, the wicked often prosper in life. They may appear to be better off than the righteous. Not only that but the apparent prosperity and success of the wicked often seem to come at the expense of the righteous.

This sense of injustice is nothing new. We often see those who reject the wisdom from above seem to escape the negative consequences of their sin, laziness, wastefulness, ignorance, and more. The same was true when the wise man wrote the Proverbs. Yet notice what he wrote:

“My son, eat honey, for it is good, yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste; know that wisdom is thus for your soul; if you find it, then there will be a future, and your hope will not be cut off. Do not lie in wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; do not destroy his resting place; for a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, but the wicked stumble in time of calamity. Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; or the Lord will see it and be displeased, and turn His anger away from him. Do not fret because of evildoers or be envious of the wicked; for there will be no future for the evil man; the lamp of the wicked will be put out” ([Proverbs 24:13-20](#)).

In the passage above, Solomon explained that the righteous who follow after wisdom have hope for the future. Therefore, rather than getting discouraged about their current situation (or that of the wicked), there were certain things they were told to do and not do. Let us consider his points and see what we can learn from them.

Pursue Wisdom

“My son, eat honey, for it is good, yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste; know that wisdom is thus for your soul; if you find it, then there will be a future, and your hope will not be cut off” (Proverbs 24:13-14).

When God promised to lead the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt, He told Moses that He would bring them “to a land flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3:8). Honey was universally recognized as a blessing. The wise man’s point was that God’s wisdom is a blessing to those who take hold of it. Obtaining wisdom provides hope for something better – either in this life or (most especially) in the life to come. Therefore, rather than following the ways of the wicked, we need to pursue wisdom so that we can enjoy God’s blessings. Paul reminded Timothy that the word of God was “able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (II Timothy 3:15).

Keep Getting Back Up

“Do not lie in wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; do not destroy his resting place; for a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, but the wicked stumble in time of calamity” (Proverbs 24:15-16).

Though the wicked often take advantage of the righteous and elevate themselves at their expense, the wise man warned the wicked that this was ultimately futile. This was because, when the righteous person falls, he keeps getting back up. In contrast, the wicked will ultimately fall since he does not have the same purpose and direction as the righteous person. Even though this was addressed to the wicked, it reminds the righteous not to give up; instead, we must persevere through whatever challenges and hardships we have to endure in this life. The Hebrew writer encouraged his brethren as they were suffering for their faith, “Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised” (Hebrews 10:35-36).

Do Not Gloat Over Your Enemies

“Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; or the Lord will see it and be displeased, and turn His anger away from him” (Proverbs 24:17-18).

Just before this, the wise man warned the wicked that they would “stumble in time of calamity” (Proverbs 24:16). Yet the righteous person, despite the

mistreatment that he may have received from the wicked, was not to rejoice in this. God told the prophet, Ezekiel, *"Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord God, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his wicked way and live'"* ([Ezekiel 33:11](#)). We are to have the same attitude as the Lord. He is *"not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance"* ([II Peter 3:9](#)). Though we may recognize the justice of the wicked being punished for their sin (cf. [II Thessalonians 1:6-9](#)), we should not take pleasure in it. Instead, if we are to have the attitude the Lord wants us to possess, we are to *"love [our] enemies and pray for those who persecute [us], so that [we] may be sons of [our] Father who is in heaven"* ([Matthew 5:44-45](#)).

Do Not Envy the Wicked

"Do not fret because of evildoers or be envious of the wicked; for there will be no future for the evil man; the lamp of the wicked will be put out" ([Proverbs 24:19-20](#)).

It is discouraging when the wicked seem to get away with their evil deeds without facing any consequences. It can even be tempting to engage in the same sinful behavior as they are practicing. Yet the wise man echoed the counsel of the psalmist who wrote, *"Do not fret because of evildoers, be not envious toward wrongdoers. For they will wither quickly like the grass and fade like the green herb. Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness"* ([Psalm 37:1-3](#)). The wise man later recognized this truth: *"Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly. But it will not be well for the evil man and he will not lengthen his days like a shadow, because he does not fear God"* ([Ecclesiastes 8:12-13](#)). As our text in Proverbs indicates, the wicked's *"lamp...will be put out"*; meaning that their hope will be cut off.

Conclusion

While the wicked may seem to prosper in the short term, we must look beyond whatever present conditions exist. There is hope for the future if we will follow God's word and live righteous lives before Him. Regardless of what may happen in this life, let us continue to pursue the wisdom of God and persevere through whatever trials we may have to face. In the end, we can be assured that *"there will be a future"* for us ([Proverbs 24:14](#)). Again, *"It will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly"* ([Ecclesiastes 8:12](#)).