

Sunday – July 23, 2017

Preparation

As we prepare for this week of Daily in the word, let's preface it by understanding that this week will be somewhat of a roller-coaster in content, jam-packed with various principles, lessons, and presentations of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In tomorrow's reading, we will conclude the final three chapters of the book of Proverbs. Proverbs 31 provides insight into the "virtuous woman". Understanding there are three applications of scripture (doctrinal, prophetic, and practical), chapter 31 provides some great principles for women to pursue after. However, possibly more importantly, what we as men can learn from this passage is that the "virtuous woman" paints a picture of what the church should ideally look like. In reading with the understanding that the "body of Christ" is the "bride of Christ" (Revelation 21:2), check out Proverbs 31:10-12, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life." Takes on a whole new meaning, does it not? So, as we close out the book of Proverbs, read this book through "spiritual" eyes, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Corinthians 2:13).

Next, we'll be diving into the book of Ecclesiastes, written by Solomon, howbeit from a completely different mindset than we find in Proverbs. Ecclesiastes is a dark, dark book. The theme of the book is "under the sun", which very much sums up Solomon's viewpoint while writing. Because of decisions he had made throughout his life, Solomon's focus had been switched from God's eternal glory to "things under the sun. No more did he consider "things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1), but rather kept his focus on the temporal. To which his response became, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity." (Ecclesiastes 1:2) As we read through these twelve chapters, may we as believers, be reminded that we are to "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." The opposite will be to end up with Solomon's bleak frame of mind, rendering our lives defeated and useless to the kingdom of God.

From Ecclesiastes, we'll jump straight into Song of Solomon, which again, finds Solomon at a higher point both emotionally and spiritually, as he writes of his love

for his “gentile” bride. Again, if not reading through spiritual eyes, pleading the Holy Spirit to “guide us into all truth”,

then we will surely miss the application of the entire book. As we read of Solomon’s love affair, what we’re actually uncovering is a book of the Lord Jesus Christ’s love affair for the church, His bride, His very own “chaste virgin”, as Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 11:2, “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” Then in Ephesians 5:25 we find “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it”. This book presents Solomon as a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through it we find proof of Christ’s love for the church, the rapture, and so much more. Although, this book seemingly never gets much “pulpit time”, it is so monumental in our Old Testament in shedding light on the church. Let’s not miss the typology throughout this book.

Finally, we’ll close by entering the book of Isaiah. Isaiah is basically a commentary on the entire Bible, providing us 66 chapters (to pattern the 66 books of our Bible) of history and principles to heed. Isaiah’s tone is set in Isaiah 6:1 and 5, “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. (5) Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” As we approach this book, may we approach it with the same mindset as Isaiah did as he saw “the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up”, therefore, providing insight into who we really are in comparison to the LORD, which is nothing more than “undone”. As Isaiah 64:6 says, “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” Therefore, the best we can offer apart from the Lord Jesus Christ is “filth” in the eyes and nostrils of God. May we never lose sight of God’s mercy in providing His Son, for without it, we are, as Solomon put it, “vanity”.

Monday – July 24, 2017

TODAY'S READING: PROVERBS 29-31

OVERVIEW:

More warnings and instructions; the words of Agur; the words that Lemuel's mother taught him.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Because of the vast number of subject changes in each day's reading in the Book of Proverbs this has been perhaps the most difficult of all of the Books we have read thus far in our 365 Days of Pursuit to adequately formulate the "Highlights and Insights" Section. As has been mentioned repeatedly, it is a Book that merits continual reading, study, and memorization.

Whereas the Book of Psalms presents the HEART of GOD, the Book of Proverbs presents the MIND of GOD, or perhaps more specifically, the MIND of CHRIST (I Cor. 2:16). It is the most intricate Book in the entire Bible to show us how God thinks, or to show us *"the mind of the Lord"* (I Cor. 2:16). It basically reveals to us God's viewpoint and opinion on every issue of life. If, as God's people, we would simply make God's opinion as it is revealed in the Book of Proverbs, our opinion, and if we would adopt God's viewpoint as it is revealed in the Book of Proverbs, as our viewpoint, not only would it SIMPLIFY our lives, it would REVOLUTIONIZE our lives!

Whereas the Book of Leviticus is an intricate Book detailing God's instruction concerning the PHYSICAL aspects of Israel's life, I like to view the Book of Proverbs as an intricate Book detailing God's instruction concerning the SPIRITUAL aspects of a believer's life. Any squabble or conflict we face in life, whether it be relational or financial, whether it be in our home, church, workplace or neighborhood, it can invariably be traced back to a violation of something God specifically revealed in this Book. The Book of Proverbs is that comprehensive and that practical!

If we would simply allow this Book to be our wise Counselor for living life, by the time we apply God's wisdom as it is revealed in the first 30 chapters, we would be the "Virtuous Woman" of chapter 31. (Remember, as Christians, we are identified biblically as women. We are a bride – Rev. 21:9. We are virgins – II Cor. 11:2). The question of Proverbs 31:10 is a good one: *"Who can find a virtuous woman?"* The answer in the Laodicean Church Period is, NOT MANY! She is hard to find. She is extremely rare. She is almost extinct. Are you a

“virtuous woman”?

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE ONE WHO DESCENDED FROM AND ASCENDED TO HEAVEN – Prov. 30:4 (John 3:13 – Jesus came down from heaven, even the Son of Man Who is (now) in heaven.)

Tuesday – July 25, 2017

TODAY'S READING: ECCLESIASTES 1-6

OVERVIEW:

The vanity or emptiness of life under the sun (apart from God); the vanity in life's cycles (chapter 1); the vanity in life's pursuit (chapter 2); the vanity of time (chapter 3); the vanity of social status (chapter 4); the vanity of religion and riches (chapter 5); the vanity of long life (chapter 6).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

To help fit the Book of Ecclesiastes into the big picture, understand that whereas the Book of Psalms reveals the HEART of GOD, and the Book of Proverbs reveals the MIND of CHRIST, the Book of Ecclesiastes reveals to us the MIND of the SPIRIT. It is a Book that shows the great contrast between the workings of the spirit of man and the Spirit of God.

Ecclesiastes is written by King Solomon, the son of King David, in his old age after a life full of selfish living and many regrets. He writes this book under the inspiration of the Spirit to spare us the bitterness of learning through experience that nothing under the sun really satisfies the human heart apart from God. This small book in the Old Testament gives us undeniable evidence of our need for a Savior in order to provide us a purpose for living on earth. Without Jesus Christ, and the mission for which he left us to accomplish, we also would be living empty lives without any meaning, as Solomon so eloquently describes for us in this book.

Jeremiah 2:13 says, *"For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."* From this verse we learn three things about people in general:

1) They are empty (they have no God), 2) They are stubborn (determined to be filled with something), and 3) They will ultimately be disappointed (because they cannot be filled).

Ecclesiastes is a book written about things that will not satisfy that men still continually seek after (see John 4:13): wisdom (1:16-18), pleasure (2:1-3), superiority (2:15), hard work/labor (2:19-21), alcohol (2:3), possessions (2:4-6), power (2:7), money (2:8-9, 5:10-11), and music (2:8), just to name a few. Thankfully, Jesus came to meet our every need and to give us an eternal

purpose for our lives here on earth. I Corinthians 15:58 says *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”* Solomon was correct in concluding that all is vanity under the sun, but our labor is not in vain in the Lord!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE SON OF DAVID – Eccl. 1:1. (Matt. 1:1 – Jesus Christ is the Son of David)

TODAY'S READING: ECCLESIASTES 7-12

OVERVIEW:

The vanity of wisdom apart from God (chapter 7); the vanity of hoping in government (chapter 8); the vanity of life's unfairness (chapter 9); the vanity of foolish living (chapter 10); the vanity of selfish living (chapter 11); the vanity of forgetting God (chapter 12); and Solomon's conclusion of the whole matter.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

While we are commanded by God to incline our ears unto wisdom (Prov. 2:2), we will be without fulfillment if it is done apart from God. You can't pursue wisdom (Eccl. 7:23). You have to pursue God, and by pursuing God you get wisdom!

Chapter 8 deals with the vanity of hoping in government or politics to make everlasting change. As believers, if we are going to change the world, it will be done by changing one heart at a time with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The laws of government or the policies of politicians can only change behavior. God is into changing hearts and lives forever. Read Psalm 19 to remind you of the power of God and His Word. No law on earth is perfect, but God's Law is just that perfect (Psalm 19:7). No judgment on earth is true and righteous altogether, but God's judgments are (Psalm 19:9). Place your hope in God and the gospel, not the government!

Some interesting observations from chapter 8:

1. Verse 4 states that *"Where the word of a king is, there is power."* Is it mere coincidence that God's Word for English speaking people is preserved for us in what is commonly called the KING James version? It is one powerful Book!
2. Verse 11 states that *"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil"*. This verse is a perfect explanation as to why the death penalty here in America is not the effective deterrent to crime that it should be (the average wait on death row is over 10 years!). The more practical application to this verse though for a believer would have to do with training our children. Have you found yourself as a father or mother telling your kids to do or not to do something more than once before the command is obeyed? The Bible is clear as to what we as parents should be doing to train our children before we get to the point of frustration and anger because of their disobedience. Parents to need to be consistent and

biblical in their discipline of their children so that their hearts are not *“fully set in them to do evil”*.

Chapter 12 is a description of old age and the dying process:

- Verse 1 – old age is a burden
- Verse 2 – one health crisis after another
- Verse 3a – you start to shake
- Verse 3b – the bowing of the back
- Verse 3c – your teeth are few
- Verse 3d – eyesight is dimmed
- Verse 4a – hearing is fading
- Verse 4b – anything wakes you up
- Verse 4c – voice is weakened
- Verse 5a – difficult walking up steps
- Verse 5b – everything causes fear
- Verse 5c – no drive for life/sex
- Verse 7 – then you die and your spirit returns to God who gave it.

In light of all he experienced under the sun, Solomon concludes that it all comes down to this *“fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”*

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE POOR WISE MAN – Eccl. 9:14-16; II Corinthians 8:9 tells us that Jesus Christ became poor to be able to deliver us.

As THE CREATOR – Eccl. 12:1; see John 1:1-3,14.

Thursday – July 27, 2017

TODAY'S READING: SONG OF SOLOMON 1-8

OVERVIEW:

The song of all songs that describes the love between a man and a woman; this is one of 1005 songs written by Solomon (I Kings 4:32).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

This is a love story that involves three main characters: a lovely maiden, who was forced to work by her selfish family (1:5-6, 2:15); her beloved, a man who had won her heart, who also happened to be a shepherd (1:7); and King Solomon, who is known for his attraction to beautiful women (I Kings 11:3).

While on one of his trips to survey his lands, Solomon meets this lovely maiden and takes her to his palace. There she can think only of her beloved back home (see chapters 1 & 2). She tells the other women (the “daughters of Jerusalem” – 2:7, 3:5, 8:4) not to try to persuade her to forsake her true love. In 2:8-3:5 she even dreams about her beloved! Solomon visits her to try to win her love but it is to no avail, because she cannot forget about her true love back home (3:6-4:16). Her beloved then has a dream about her (5:1-6:3). Once again, King Solomon tries to win her love, but just as before, she refuses (6:4-7:9). She is not impressed with the King's wealth, spices, lands, or flattery. Finally, true love wins out and the maiden is set free. She flees to her beloved and is restored to her family again (8:4-14).

In this story, Solomon is a picture or type of the world that tries anything and everything to lure the believer away from the beloved Shepherd! We, as believers are the bride of Christ and should not allow anything in this world come between us and the love we have for our Savior! We are commanded by God to love Him with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30), and to not love this world at all (James 4:4; I John 2:15)! Let's remember daily, the love that our beloved Savior showed us, so we can return that same love to Him.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE SHEPHERD – Song of Solomon 1:7. (Jesus is the Shepherd of our souls – I Peter 2:25). As THE BELOVED – Song of Solomon 1:14, 2:8, and 8:5; see Matthew 3:17 and 12:18.

TODAY'S READING: ISAIAH 1-6

OVERVIEW:

Israel's backslidden condition; Isaiah's exhortation for repentance; the coming of Christ's kingdom; Jerusalem's glorious future; God's judgment upon sinners; Isaiah's vision of God's holiness.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Israel's spiritual condition in chapter one is a familiar in Israel's history. Once again, they have allowed themselves to spiral downward into apostasy. Isaiah uses seven different terms in verse 4 to describe their backslidden state: 1) *sinful*; 2) *laden with iniquity*; 3) *evildoers*; 4) *corrupters*; 5) *forsaken the Lord*; 6) *provoked the Holy One*; 7) *gone away backward*. The pitiful thing about it, is that though those terms were descriptive of their true spiritual condition, it did not stop them from going through the motions of all kinds of activity that made them think they were doing okay spiritually. They continued all of their religious observances – the feasts, sacrifices, new moons and sabbaths long after they had any meaning in their hearts or bearing on their lives. God says to Israel through Isaiah, "I'm sick of all of your religiousness! Don't bring me any more of your vain oblations! I can't stand it! You're wearing me out with all of this stuff you're doing! I'm going to close my eyes so I don't have to see any more of your hypocrisies! When you lift up your hands in prayer, all I see is all of the sinful things you've been doing with them! Spare Me!"

It is quite interesting how much this passage in Isaiah 1 mirrors the letter our Lord wrote to the Laodiceans in Rev. 3:14-22, describing the spiritual condition of His church in our day. God's people come to church in Laodicea looking the part, they participate faithfully in the offering, they stand and sing the songs, they take copious notes, they nod their head in all of the right places, and yet their heart is not in it, and somehow all of these things they do on Sundays has little, if any, bearing on what will take place in their lives Monday through Saturday!

God's answer in Isaiah's day, just as it is now, is "Get your heart right! And then, get your heart into it!" *"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye*

be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it" (Isa. 1:16-20). The parallel passages in the New Testament are numerous: II Cor. 6:14-18 ; II Cor. 7:1;

Notice a key phrase in Isaiah 1:19; *"If ye be willing AND obedient."* Perhaps the key word in this phrase is the word "AND." Laodicean churches are filled with "WILLING" people. They're willing to serve in a children's class; they're WILLING to be involved as a cleaning servant of the facilities; they're WILLING to offer the Lord a gift of love upon the first day of the week; they're WILLING to do any number of things! The only problem is, they just seldom DO! Willing? Yes! Obedient? No!

On the other hand, Laodicea is filled with "OBEDIENT" people. They would never think about not obeying Hebrews 10:25 by missing a service; they would never not obey I Cor. 16:2 by not participating in the offering; they would never miss filling out a study sheet during the message on Sunday morning; they would never not DO a lot of things! The only problem is, their obedience is strictly a matter of duty. It is ritualistic, legalistic, hypocritical, and the result of self-disciplining and suppressing their real desires, and "cranking out" spiritual-looking activity, rather than the joyous, passionate, heart-felt, Spirit-led response of a WILLING heart. May we surrender ourselves to be "WILLING AND OBEDIENT"!

As we start down the path of the "Prophets," I would challenge you to underline every specific reference to "the day of the Lord" (the Tribulation/Second Coming of Christ/the Millennium). I'll list the ones I see each day, but it'll be a whole lot more fun if you underline them as you find them yourself first. By doing this, you'll understand in a whole new way why we say that "the day of the Lord" is the theme of the Bible!

SPECIFIC REFERENCES TO "THE DAY OF THE LORD":

2:2 – *"And it shall come to pass in the last days"*

2:11 – *"in that day"*

2:12 – *"For the day of the Lord"*

2:17 – *"in that day"*

2:19 – *"when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth"*

2:20 – *"in that day"*

2:21 – *"when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth"*

3:7 – *"in that day"*

3:18 – *“in that day”*

4:1 – *“in that day”*

4:2 – *“in that day”*

5:30 – *“in that day”*

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As the ONE WHO WILL JUDGE THE NATIONS – Isa. 2:2-4 (The Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing – II Tim. 4:1).

As the BRANCH OF THE LORD, BEAUTIFUL AND GLORIOUS – Isa. 4:2 (Zech. 3:8; 6:12; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Isa. 11:1).

Saturday – July 29, 2017

Reflection

This week's reading brought us into four different books in our Bible. We have now read all of Solomon's writings, seeing him in different frames of mind through each book. Proverbs introduced us to Solomon, the wise, while Ecclesiastes gave us a glimpse into the mind of Solomon, the carnal. The contrast in the mindset that Solomon displayed throughout these two books, is a direct result to 1 Kings 11:1-4, "But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father." It should very much serve as a reminder to each of us that "these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." (1 Corinthians 10:6)

To close out the books of Solomon, we read Song of Solomon, which provided us some insight into the love affair between Solomon and the Shulamite woman. As we should know by now, if we're not careful in reading through the book of Song of Solomon, we'll miss the incredible typology that God has preserved through the eight chapters of the book. What we find is that Solomon, devotionally speaking, provides us a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, while the "Shulamite" woman paints a picture of the bride of Christ, the church. That being said, in reading through the book, it is important to read with the mindset of seeing Christ on every page.

Finally, we closed our week of Daily in the word by diving into the first six chapters of Isaiah. As we learned, Isaiah, containing 66 chapters, is a snapshot of our entire Bible. The theme of the book is the "day of the LORD", yet we'll read of the crucifixion, hell, and many other doctrines that are covered throughout the entire Bible. Isaiah began with both an invitation and a provocation in Isaiah 6:8-9, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who

will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.” Let these verses serve as an invitation and provocation to us, and may we respond accordingly, because as we learned, “the day of the LORD” will be both terrible and horrific to those who have rejected Christ. May we do our best to “go, and tell” , for the Bible people see and hear through us may very well be the only Bible they ever see or hear.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

Proverbs 29:18 “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”

Ecclesiastes 1:14 “I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.”

Ecclesiastes 12:13 “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”

Song of Solomon 5:10-16 “My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.”

Isaiah 2:19 “And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.”