

## Proverbs 23-04-26b

We are in Proverbs chapter nine. We're going to look at the last six verses, verses 13 through 18, and then resume our look at chapter 10. We have seen the importance of identifying and dealing very carefully with those who are adamant rejecters of truth.

Do not correct a scoffer. You will only get shame for yourself and harm to yourself. You will be the object of hate.

Look instead for those who are wise. Spend time with the wise. We can speak the truth to one another in love.

Our mutual edification and upbuilding includes the occasional correction. And if we are wise, we will accept that correction in the loving spirit in which it is given, even if it is given with a poor spirit, to take it and weigh it carefully and see if it is something from which we can benefit to return love and not hate, to respond instead of react. This is the part of wisdom.

We pick up now in verse 13. A foolish woman is clamorous, simple, and knows nothing. Three descriptions.

You notice the *she is* is in italics. A foolish woman is clamorous, simple, and knows nothing. It's always a challenge to find the center of a claim, especially when it is an absolute.

If someone knows nothing, we have to decide what is the circumference of nothing. Obviously she knows something, but the Bible says that a foolish woman is clamorous, simple, and knows nothing. Well, knows nothing about what? This is where context is important.

And one of the keys in any passage of scripture, especially including the Proverbs, is the context. What is it that should be known? We have just seen it in the preceding context. Knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

A clamorous woman knows nothing of God. This is quite the statement. Knowledge and understanding of the Holy One will prevent a person, here a woman.

But remember, in the same way that the young man who is warned against the crafty harlot and encouraged to follow the woman of wisdom, this woman, this is not coming down as some kind of an attack on women, but she is put here because there are examples that everyone can think of. And it is a bad example and a bad impression to make on anyone to be clamorous, whether you are a man or a woman. But it is especially egregious in women who were to be known for their modesty, their chasteness, knowing when to speak, being models of elegance, self-control, words fitly spoken like apples of gold and pictures of silver, which we will see before long.

And control of the tongue is a wonderful, acquired attribute in anyone, but especially a woman. Women of few words are greatly admired. Clamoring, this is where you get the character Zantiphy, this is where you get the shrew, taming of the shrew in Shakespeare.

And women who are vociferous and clamorous are especially memorable, let's say, and serve as a useful example. But this is not restricted to women any more than what we've seen previously. A foolish woman is clamorous.

A foolish person is clamorous, but especially so in a woman. Simple and all of the things that attach to simplicity, naivete, dullness, and foolishness that we've seen for the young man in the earlier chapters apply to this woman as well. And this is where you find the balance of the genders.

Simplicity, foolishness is not restricted to young naive men. It can also be a woman of almost any age. It can be a man of any age.

It can be a child or an old person. Simple and knows nothing, knows nothing of what needs to be known to live an exemplary life, a life of blessing, a life such as we are going to see described in chapter 10, the life that is held out as an opportunity by the woman of wisdom that we've seen in the preceding verses. This woman is clamorous, simple, and knows nothing.

She is foolish. She sits at the door of her house on a seat by the highest places of the city to call to those who pass by, who go straight on their way. Whoever is simple, let him turn in here.

And as for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, stolen water is sweet and bread in secret is pleasant. The thrill is in the adrenaline rush from doing that which is improper, that requires sneaking. There's, and this is just a truism, it is such a commonplace and has been that those who are married and then engage in an affair, part of the allure and the enjoyment of that illicit relationship is the danger of discovery, the heightened racing pulse and meeting in secret.

And there is stimulation in the secrecy and the impropriety of it and to the effort to not be found out, to be sneaky and to not get caught. And when they're exposed and when their marriage is dissolved and they decide to get married to each other, it almost never lasts because that element is gone and that was the cheap glue that held the thing together. And once it's exposed and above board and everybody knows, the thrill leaves and they're left just looking at each other.

And here's a couple of people who can't be trusted trying to trust each other. And well, what you did to your spouse, you're probably gonna do to me and they generally do. Then it all just disintegrates and devolves.

So this foolish woman, this clamorous woman posts herself on a seat by the highest places of the city. Why would she post by the highest places of the city? Why not in the back alleys? Why not in the darkness that we saw the crafty harlot inhabiting? This lady is right out in the open. She's clamorous.

Well, A, she's foolish and she doesn't know anything. But she says, whoever is simple, let him turn in here. As for him who lacks understanding, she says, stolen water is sweet and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.

He does not know that the dead are there and her guests are in the depths of Sheol. Once again, this is figurative. This is a literary expression of the harm that comes from yielding to the foolishness of momentary stimulation of that which has promises so much and delivers so little and is inevitably temporary.

The thrill wears off. The secrecy and the sneakiness and the notion that this person is willing to take risks for me and I'm gonna take risks for them has its own weird kind of attraction and seductive quality, but it can't last and it doesn't. And things die.

Marriages die, relationships die, respect, jobs, security, self-respect dies. Your life in so many different aspects and so many different features and facets ends up in Sheol. And for the momentary thrill, you pay a heavy lasting price.

Well, that brings us back to chapter 10. And if you have the structure notes that I made a few weeks ago, and again, these notes are not inspired. They're just observations on my part.

These are the kind of notes I make for myself when I'm studying just to try to get clarity, to see what may not be as obvious when you're just reading down the page. And we looked in some detail at these first two sections. The first section is five verses, very clear demarcation here with the wise son that is the father's joy and the dull or foolish son that is his mother's sorrow.

And at the end of that section, are you enriched or are you impoverished? Are you wealthy or are you poor? At the conclusion, do you sleep during harvest or do you lay in stores during summer? This is such a tightly constructed unit. And what we find is that there are things that are associated. So we're going to look at three of these.

First of all, what are the characteristics of the son that brings joy to his father? And you can pick these out. You've seen, I've put some underlines and some circles around various things that caught my eye in these five verses. But this son is A, wise, B, righteous.

And we see this constant association throughout the Proverbs with righteousness and wisdom. They're almost interchangeable terms. He who is righteous is wise and he who is wise is righteous.

It is a wise, it is a smart thing to pursue and attain the righteousness that comes from God. This is not self-righteousness. This is not the kind of righteousness that Pilate tried to confer on himself when he washed his hands and said, I have no responsibility for this shameful sham trial and this completely illegal, improper, unjust and unfair verdict.

I'm just going to wash my hands. I declare myself vindicated and righteous. We can't do that.

We don't have the authority to judge ourselves. The standard belongs to God and the judgment belongs to God. And only when he declares us righteous are we actually righteous.

He can impute, he can assign righteousness to us based on our making choices that place us in a position where that righteousness can be conferred. We can also produce righteousness as a fruit, as a crop by pursuing the way of wisdom, by cultivating the fruit of the spirit. Those aspects of the fruit of the spirit are themselves expressions of righteousness, love and joy and peace and patience and so on.

So the wise son that brings joy to his father is righteous. He is satisfied. He doesn't have unmet cravings.

He doesn't feel an unmet need. God does not let the righteous go hungry and physical hunger is put for unsatisfied cravings. You don't wind up going through life feeling incomplete, unfulfilled, some shortfall or shortcoming.

What does the apostle Paul say? I have found that in whatever state I am, I know how to be abased, I know how to abound. But in whatever state I find myself, abased or abounding, I am content. I don't have an unmet hunger in my soul.

This is the promise of Proverbs 10, verse three. The Lord will not let the righteous go, move forward, exist for long periods of time hungry. Something missing, something lacking, something unfulfilled.

This is the function of wisdom and righteousness. You are satisfied and industrious. We turn our energies toward that which is productive, helpful, fruitful, that which enriches ourselves and others.

So he is industrious. He has diligent hands and this lack of laziness, this dedication to industry. Remember again, the apostle Paul, let him that stole, steal no more.

Rather, let him work with his hands, be productive. There is great satisfaction in work well done, in steadiness, in reliability, in integrity, in character, in what we do. Doing more than is required, not merely meeting the minimum and can't wait to get away.

But investing ourselves in good, healthy labor that provides for us and can provide for

others, produces goods and services that are beneficial to others. All of these are characteristics of someone who is righteous and wise. Naturally industrious, naturally not pining for some unmet need, looking to the Lord who will not allow the righteous to go hungry.

What is the effect of this person? What are the effects in these five verses? Well, first of all, joy. There is joy for the father and for anyone who is associated with this person. There is joy.

There is deliverance. He is the means of delivering himself and others because of his wisdom, because of his righteousness. There is provision.

This person is a means of satisfaction, a means of deliverance, a means of blessing to others. And this is represented by life and by wealth. So his diligent hands enrich by laying in stores during the summer.

There is provision that sustains life in difficult times. His righteousness, verse two, will deliver from death. The same kind of death that we just saw at the end of chapter nine, this everything going to Sheol in a handbasket is avoided, delivers from death.

Various areas of life are productive and fruitful. Social life, spiritual life, conversations, blessing by association, and an outward flowing of life. We're going to see that in the next section.

All of these are in that area of association because we are observing this structure and these inspired connections. What is the antithesis? What is the negative side? Well, the characteristics of the foolish are all antithetical. Instead of wisdom, there is foolishness.

Instead of understanding, there is naivete and gullibility. The foolish is unsatisfied. There is a constant hunger.

There is a lack. Even when he gets wealth in a nefarious way or ill-gotten gain, it is of no avail. It doesn't satisfy the reasons for which the fool put forth the effort to get this.

Did he steal it? Did he practice deceit? Did he cheat in order to gain these things? It doesn't satisfy. It doesn't accomplish the purpose for which he pursued this gain. The Lord ensures that that craving is not met.

And notice the role of the Lord. The Lord is right at the center of this five-line summary. Right in the middle in verse three, the Lord is the agent that provides satisfaction to the righteous and denies that satisfaction to the wicked, to the foolish.

The Lord denies the wicked what they crave. And a characteristic of the wicked is laziness, lack of industry, lack of a sense of personal responsibility. Dishes need to be done.

Oh, I have conveniently left the room. I didn't stick around for the cleanup. I enjoyed the meal, but I, oh, I suddenly find the need to be elsewhere.

Lack of industry. And it is the opposite of a blessing to others. It isn't supportive.

It isn't encouraging. It isn't the part of wisdom. It is just the opposite.

And his negligent hands cause poverty, not wealth, not sustenance, not provision, not blessing for himself and others, just the opposite. There is a lack of all of these things. It is a vacuum.

There is a vacuum into which even more nefarious and evil things will be attracted. These negative things will be sucked into that vacuum where wisdom and productivity and righteousness ought to be. It is the house cleaned and swept for a believer.

And if it is not filled with these positive things, the demon is gonna return with seven of his friends and the end will be worse than the beginning. All of that is in these first five verses. You could pick up a copy of Psalms and Proverbs and go to chapter 10 and read down through and miss so much of what is here that is designed to be chewed on, reflected on, time spent meditating and praying over this and then analyzing ourselves.

What does my life really look like? If I were to ask people in my near periphery, what are the characteristics? Is it this first set, joy, deliverance, provision, life, wealth, gladness and joy on the part of those who are around me or who are responsible for me or to whom I am responsible? Am I wise, righteous? Am I satisfied? Do I enjoy a day where I get a lot accomplished? Am I industrious? Do I see opportunities to gather in the summer? And I find it satisfying and I'm grateful to God for the health and the ability to go out into the field and to participate in the harvest and bring these things home, whether it is social or spiritual or material. At the end of the day, when I look back over it, am I appreciative? Do I go to the Lord with thanksgiving? Thank you for giving me this day, my daily bread, which I went out into the field and gathered for myself like Ruth in Boaz's fields? Or am I dependent? Dependence is the surest way to depression and to lack of self-esteem. People who are unwilling or unable to do and to provide and to work for themselves are of all men most miserable.

Because like Paul, who uses that to describe a lack of anticipation of resurrection, a lack of anticipation of new life, you lack life. Life is associated with work and production. This is how I know that our eternal life is gonna be characterized by industry and work and production and service in the kingdoms which are to come.

We will be active. Life is growth. Life is change.

It's very interesting. If we review our recent study, we reviewed John 14, one through six in a recent Sunday, I think this past Sunday. And the fact that there is change and progress Jesus says, I'm going to the heavenly realms to prepare a place for you.

That means it's not prepared. Something in heaven is changing because Jesus has gone there to do work, to make something that did not previously exist, which is a place for us. And it just tells you there is so much exciting opportunity and potential after the resurrection.

When we enter into the realms of glory, there is going to be work. So what better way to prepare for function and service in the ages that are to come than to engage in production and service now. Those who are prepared now, you have been faithful in that which is least.

You will be faithful also in that which is much. You've been faithful in a few things. I will make you ruler over many things.

What an exciting anticipation to get to do things and be a part of construction and progress in God's unfolding plan in the eternal future. You have to imagine that this is how the unfallen angels feel, the Gabriels and the Michaels and the faithful messenger angels that are given assignments by God in human history and fulfill them. They come down and talk to Manoah or they talk to Mary and so on to be a functional part of God's plan and purpose.

You have to wonder about the angel. They got to be a lying spirit in the mouth of the prophets in the Old Testament. I'll do it.

What opportunities await us? So these are the positives and the negatives that are expressed. Are we wise or foolish? Are we righteous or are we wicked? They are inextricably linked and we can analyze ourselves. We saw them in the second section, which moves from five verses to six verses, verses six through 11 of chapter 10.

And once again, look at the things that are associated for the righteous. If you are righteous, your head is blessed. Blessings fall on your head.

I used to have a song on the radio, raindrops keep falling on my head. I think it was a Bacharach tune, Hal David, Bert Bacharach, raindrops keep falling on my head. But blessings fall on our head.

And it doesn't matter where you are. You know, in a rainstorm, you've got to try to get under shelter because the rain is everywhere. But if the rain on your head is blessing, what a privilege, what a thing to be thankful for from God.

For the righteous, blessings fall upon our head. And they're falling out of the sky. They're designed by God.

They hit us. We didn't control it. I can't control what falls out of the sky.

I can control where I am and I want to be in the place where God can let those blessings

descend upon my head. But of course the head is the seat of thinking. And there is blessing not only on us physically and experientially, but our thought life is blessed.

Our conversations are blessed. Our intake through our eyes and our ears is blessed. Our outflow from our mouths, our conversation, our effect on others is blessed.

When your head is blessed, everything that goes in and everything that comes out is potentially enabled and empowered with supernatural energy from God. God's blessings are power. And they not only bless us, but they can potentially bless those around us.

Our name is invoked. The righteous, his name is invoked in blessing. We're an example of blessing.

We're respected and favored and recognized as someone whom God has blessed. God is at work to will and to do for his good purpose in that individual's life. I can see it.

Look at their supernatural peace. Look at their supernatural patience. Look at what a blessing it is to be around them, to spend time speaking with them.

I come away blessed. This classically happens when there is a healthy believer in the hospital and you say, I'm gonna go cheer them up. They're in a bad way.

I'm gonna go visit them. And you come away and you're the one that got blessed talking with them. That's a righteous person.

That is the effect and the product of righteousness and wisdom. You're a blessing to others, regardless of your circumstance. And the heart of the righteous accepts commands.

We just saw in chapter nine. And one of the reasons we reviewed it is if we can accept rebuke, if we can accept correction, if we are, you know, people are always talking about being vulnerable. I don't like that word vulnerable.

It is to be willing to accept a thing. You still have to have a filter. Vulnerability means any old thing can get in there and do damage as much as doing good.

But to accept correction, to accept instruction in righteousness and to accept commands, this is what I should do. Therefore, I will do it. A heart that will accept the imperatives, accept commands, regardless of our opinion of the command, it is a command.

It is from duly constituted God-ordained authority. So this is what I'm going to do. This obtains in parents and children.

It obtains in husbands and wives. It obtains in the workplace with a boss. It obtains in the military, obviously.

But when there is duly constituted authority, do we brook? Do we get our back up? Are we willing to push back? Are we going to put up a defensive wall? Or do we accept a command in the same way we accept correction? It is a choice. There is security in righteousness. He who lives blamelessly lives safely.

Being blameless, not being guilty of wrongdoing, all you have to do is watch forensic files or the first 24 hours or the cold case files to see example after example after example of how people position themselves to be victims of crimes. They're at a bar late. They leave alone as a woman.

They're walking in a dark parking lot. It is not always the case. There are hapless random victims, but so often not living blamelessly, living on the edge, associating with people who are unstable and possessed of extremely bad habits and further associations, letting people into your house without knowing who they are or why they're there instead of living a righteous and understanding and wise life.

Wisdom does not let strangers into the inner sanctums of your home. Wisdom says, because I do not know you and because I am here alone as a woman, let me keep you at my locked door. And if you need a phone call made, tell me where to send the tow truck or the ambulance or where the can of gas that you need.

I will make the phone call for you, but I cannot let you into my house because I simply do not know you. And failure to be wise, failure to be prayerful. If you're not going to be a victim and God doesn't want you to be a victim, pray.

Lord, give me wisdom. What should I do in this situation? Always looking to God first. To be instinctively giving because I've decided giving is a good thing in all circumstances is not wise.

It is not wise to always give. There are times when you should not give and you should not allow and you should not permit. And people who just make a rule out of, well, that would be a nice thing to do, so I will do it is not wise.

This is wisdom. Security, the blameless life is the safe life. And notice the mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life.

It's so interesting to see what Jesus says in John 4, 14. You can leave your place here and turn to John 4. Jesus picks up so many of these truths. Jesus is at the well.

You remember John 4? You know your navigation in the gospel of John. John 1 is the theological introduction followed by John the Baptist. Then in John 2, you have the wedding feast of Cana.

In John 3, you have Nicodemus. John 3, 16, coming by night, you must be born again. And John 4 is the woman at the well.

And she says, are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us the well and drank from it himself as well as his sons and his livestock? Because Jesus has said, if you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water, water of life, a fountain of life. This is the subject. In verse 13, whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst, but the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.

A fountain of life from the lips of the Lord Jesus, the water that Jesus gives. This is his teaching. This is his instruction.

This is his example. This is the truth that he came into the world and was born to bear witness to. So many things are explained by what he says to Pilate.

This is why I was born. This is why I came into the world, to bear witness to the truth. This truth is a fountain of life.

And you can't help but think as you flip a few pages over to John chapter seven and verse 38. And I got a fascinating insight to this and I may have to go back and revise my remarks in our gospel of John study. When you get to verses 37 and 38 of John seven, on the last great day of the feast, Jesus stood up and cried out saying, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. And I have always understood this. I have been taught innumerable times and never questioned it until this past week that this is similar to what we see in Proverbs.

In fact, I was going to cite this verse as a similarity that the lips of the righteous are a fountain of life and the one who comes to Jesus and believes in him out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. However, here's something to think about. And I may have to do a special on this.

What is the universal picture in scripture going all the way back to, they ate the same spiritual food and they drank the same spiritual drink for they drank of that rock which followed them and that rock was Christ. Remember, strike the rock, water comes forth. Speak to the rock.

What is the source of the water of life? Even in the new Jerusalem, the river of life flows out from under the throne where God and the lamb dwell, right? The water of life flows from him. There is another and perhaps better way and I'm still working on this, but I share it with you because I know you like to chew on these things. It says, he who believes in me as the scripture has said, and then what does scripture say? There is no scripture that says, if you believe in the Messiah, you will become a fountain of living water.

What scripture says is that the rock in the wilderness is the source of living water. So what is Jesus saying? If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. If you become a fountain of living water yourself, you don't have to go to Jesus anymore to drink, do you? Now you've got your own water.

I can look to myself and get living water. I'm gonna be walking around as a source. What does this actually say? If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

He who believes in me, he who believes in me can come to me and drink of this water, why? Because scripture has promised out of his heart, make that H in his a capital H, out of the Lord Jesus, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. This is the promise of scripture. From the rock in the wilderness that is so dry and barren, living water will spring forth.

The source of the living water is the Lord Jesus. So what is Jesus saying? The living water that I provide to him who believes is the fulfillment of an Old Testament promise, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. So that is the potential meaning of this verse.

So back to our passage in Proverbs, his lips will be a fountain of life. Fountain, meaning water of life. What would this mean? Speaking the truth that is witnessed by the Lord Jesus.

I have come to bear witness to the truth. That truth, Old Testament and new. Rode to Emmaus, he opened the scriptures, revealed all things concerning himself in the Old Testament.

That truth on our lips is a fountain of life because we are giving to others that living water that comes from the divine source, God himself, the Lord Jesus himself. So to have truth as a part of our conversation, to review and discuss and ask questions and investigate what we learn in Bible class, what we see in our reflections and our meditations and our devotions with one another. This is a fountain of life from which others can drink.

It should be a part of our conversation. If we go days and we're never talking to anybody about anything having to do with our identity in Christ, our life in Christ, our opportunities, what we learn from scripture, that is an unhealthy spiritual life. Forsaking the assembling of ourselves together is a bad idea.

We need to find those with whom we can discuss. And have their lips be a fountain of life, have our lips be a fountain of life to others. And it is that water of life that comes first and foremost for us through the Lord Jesus himself that is at issue.

Well, much more to see here, plenty to think about. We'll pick up our study in Proverbs 10 next time, but we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for blessing us with the water of life and its source in the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that as we reflect and meditate on these truths, that the Holy Spirit will make them a source of instruction, rebuke and correction for us, so that we can understand what is your good and acceptable and perfect will and implement it in our lives. We pray it in Jesus name, amen.