

Proverbs 24:30-34

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Preacher: Spencer Baumgardner

[0 : 00] Good evening. Good to be back with y'all this evening. We missed you this morning. Amen. I told Mike we had a good time wherever we was at, or at least I did.

Whether anybody else did or not, I can't help that. Being the Old Testament and the book of Proverbs. I think, maybe I've preached from Proverbs here. I don't really recall.

But if I did, I probably stated how outside of the first nine chapters, and maybe the last chapter, Proverbs is kind of a difficult book to preach from.

Because there's flow to it, and there's theme to it, but it's a lot of different stuff crammed in each chapter. But the passage we'll be looking at this evening is only five verses long.

And it's one that flows with a theme. It's kind of a scathing theme, but a theme nonetheless, in Proverbs chapter 24.

[1 : 10] A lot of people think that Proverbs is just a book of calendar-type devotions that we can scribble down or hang upon the wall or something along those lines, something to give us a little bit of pep.

But folks, the book of Proverbs is a manual for Christians. It's a manual for believers. It draws the line between the righteous and the wicked.

It draws the line between the diligent and the sluggard. It draws the line between right and wrong. It draws the line between all kinds of these things. And the wisdom of God is somewhat assumed throughout the pages of the entire book of Proverbs.

Proverbs. We know from Proverbs that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And again, that's kind of assumed throughout the rest of the pages.

And it's assumed in the passage we'll be in this evening. We'll say those words nobody wants to hear a preacher say. I don't expect to be before you long. I preached four verses this morning.

[2 : 22] I preached for 42 minutes. And I got five verses tonight. So it might be 45 or 50 minutes. I don't know. I really don't think it'll be that long.

But I've been known to be wrong before. My wife will testify to that. But Proverbs chapter 24 beginning at verse 30. Solomon writes, And I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding.

And lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles that covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well.

I looked upon it and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelth, and thy want as an armed man.

Back to verse 30. I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding. Now, if any of you all have got study Bibles, or you have commentary at home, whatever the case is, you probably know that in this particular verse, there's some controversy within the theological realm of whether we're talking about one property that had a field and a vineyard, or we're talking about two properties and two different people here, and a field and a vineyard.

[3 : 51] But folks, I'm here to tell you now, that is unimportant. Whether it's talking about one, whether it's talking about two. The problem here in verse number 30, he says, I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding.

Solomon is trying to tell us what he walked by. Whether it's two properties or one property with these two things on it, it doesn't matter. It doesn't make a hill of beans difference how many properties that we're talking about here.

The problem that Solomon is pointing out to us, and this is a spiritual problem. Now we can look at this, and if we just read through it and glance through it, it's a parable, if you'd like to say it like that,

about farming.

But folks, this goes much deeper. Y'all have heard me say before, if we take something in the Old Testament and can't find a way to apply it to the New Testament church, our interpretation of that Old Testament scripture is more than likely wrong.

And this very much applies, all five of these verses very much apply to the New Testament church just as much as it did back in Solomon's day.

[5 : 03] He says, I went by the field of the slothful. Who is the slothful? The slothful is someone who, what we would call nowadays, in layman's terms, somebody that's lazy. This is someone who doesn't have the problem that they're not able to work.

This is someone that is not willing to work, but is perfectly able. That's slothful. That's laziness. He says, He went by the field of the slothful. And the next line he says, And by the vineyard of the man, void of understanding.

So, we have slothful, and we have someone that is void of understanding. What is void of understanding? We're not talking about someone that's stupid, or someone that's dumb, or someone that has a low IQ.

That is not what Solomon's getting at here. He's talking about someone who lacks wisdom. And again, we learn from the book of Proverbs, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. If we fear the Lord, this is the beginning of wisdom for us. It was the beginning of wisdom for Solomon. It was the beginning of the wisdom for anyone. If we fear the Lord, we have some wisdom about us.

[6 : 09] Some people may have more than others. Folks, we're not talking about knowledge here. Knowledge is not wisdom. Anybody can have knowledge. I had knowledge of the Bible before I was ever saved.

I had knowledge of God before I was saved. I knew the things that had been told me. I knew the things that I had read. I had knowledge of it. But folks, wisdom is the application of said knowledge. And if we fail to apply what thus saith the Word of God to our lives, we will be painfully lacking in wisdom.

We will not have much wisdom of the Lord, much wisdom of the Word, much wisdom of anything at all if we fail to apply our knowledge. That is wisdom. And that's what we're talking about here when He says He went by the vineyard of someone that was void of understanding.

They lacked wisdom. They lacked the know-how because they had neglected themselves. They had neglected the Word. They had neglected God. They had neglected...

[7 : 11] Now, if we're talking about in natural terms here, they had neglected their vineyard. They hadn't pruned the vines. They hadn't kept it. They hadn't done anything along those lines to make that vineyard something that was profitable.

And that's what we're talking about here as far as this field goes. And as far as the vineyard goes, we're talking about something that was meant to produce fruit. Something that was meant to produce.

Something that would sustain for a little while. And these folks here, the slothful and the one that was lack of understanding or lacking wisdom, the one that the Scripture says was void of understanding, they had neglected their field, they had neglected their vineyard.

And this is a picture, unfortunately, of the church nowadays. We are very void of understanding and we are slothful in everything that we do or everything that we don't do for that matter.

The church has become slothful. I'm not necessarily talking about Blessed Redeemer Baptist. I'm not necessarily pointing a finger at any particular congregation. But as a whole, the bride of Christ has become very slothful and has become very void of understanding because we have the knowledge here before us.

[8 : 27] You have the knowledge in your lap or in your pew right now. I have the knowledge upon this pulpit right now. But if we fail to apply that knowledge to our lives, if we fail to apply that knowledge, and to spread that knowledge to the rest of the world, to our families, to our friends, to co-workers, to whomever it might be, we are failing to keep our vineyard.

We are failing to keep our field. And we will end up just as we are about to get into here in the next few verses if we're not real careful. God help us not to do this. God help us not to be like this.

Verse 31, He says, And lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

He says, And lo, in other words, and look, look at what I'm seeing here. This is what Solomon said. And lo, it was grown over with thorns. Folks, it was grown over with thorns.

First of all, let me remind you that thorns are a sign of the curse. It signifies the curse that was laid upon man. It was laid upon the ground over in Genesis chapter 3.

[9 : 35] After Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. After God had cursed them, He cursed the ground as well. He said that the thorns would come from the ground and that man would till it with the sweat of his brow for all the days of his life.

So we need to remember when we read about thorns, we're talking about the curse of God. We're talking about the curse. And it says here, And lo, it was grown over with thorns. It was grown over, folks.

It hadn't been burned. It hadn't been flooded. It wasn't a sudden catastrophic event. This took time for it to grow over with thorns.

And folks, we as Christians can be in the same boat. We are just as susceptible to this happening to us as it did to this field or to this vineyard here.

We are just as susceptible as this vineyard here was in the Scriptures. He says, And lo, it was grown over with thorns and the nettles that covered the face.

[10 : 36] This wasn't something that was sudden. This is something that happened over time. And folks, when we start neglecting our prayer life, when we start neglecting our devotional time with Almighty God, when we start neglecting our reading of the Scriptures, when we start neglecting communion with Almighty God, we start letting fellowship pass by the wayside, we start doing this and we start doing that, folks, the thorns will grow up, the nettles will cover the face of our vineyard, and we will produce nothing for the glory or for the kingdom of Almighty God.

We need to stay on guard. We have got to stay on guard as believers, as professors of Jesus Christ, as those that go out into the world and share the Gospel with this world.

We have got to stay on guard for ourselves. For ourselves, folks, that lays in your lap and it lays in my lap. Salvation is completely, utterly, and totally of the Lord.

But God, God expects us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. God expects us to keep ourselves undefiled from the world. All these things you find in Scripture, folks, that lies in our lap. We have complete and total freedom to go anywhere we want to, to do anything that we want to, and so on and so forth. But a born-again child of God with the Spirit of God dwelling on the inside, that Spirit will let them know, no, you don't need to go there.

[12 : 03] No, you don't need to do this thing. Amen. And when we override that, and we can, when we override that, this is what happens.

The thorns grow up and the nettles cover the face thereof. And we become unfruitful in the kingdom of God. We become unfruitful in the work of God.

Lo, it was all grown over with thorns. It was all grown over. There was nothing. There was nothing there that was salvageable as far as what Solomon was seeing.

It was all grown over with thorns, and the nettles that cover the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Folks, that's the worst part of this verse.

The thorns are bad enough, and the nettles are bad enough, but the stone wall was broken down. Folks, when the wall is broken down, the enemy can come in.

[13 : 01] He can come in unhindered into your life. He can come in unhindered into my life. That wall must stand tall. The wall must stand firm, and the only way to do that is through prayer and through the reading of the Scriptures and through communion with Almighty God.

But when we neglect those things, when we neglect those things, this is what happens in our lives. This is what will happen in my life. Folks, I'm telling you, if I look in my field right now, if I look in my vineyard right now, I will find thorns.

I will find thorns. We don't plant thorns, do we? No, nobody does that. But I promise you, if the field is neglected or if the vineyard is neglected, those thorns will show up.

We have got to stand on guard. And if you're honest with yourself, if you look in your field and you look in your vineyard, you'll find thorns too. Folks, it ain't too late.

It ain't too late to do something about that. No doubt. I mean, any of y'all that have ever tended a garden or any of y'all that have ever farmed land, you know this is true.

[14 : 14] What we're reading here, you neglect, if you've got five acres and you neglect one corner of it, what's going to happen to that corner? It's going to grow up with thorns.

And those thorns will drown out and they will crush and they will kill anything that was of any value in that one corner. But when you go in there and you clear it out to where the sunshine can hit it, where the rain can get to it, where nothing else can quash it out, that's when you get fruit.

Folks, we've got to remain on guard. We have got to remain on guard as children of God. I've heard too many people say, there's no need for me to pray. I've heard professing Christians say, there's no need for me to pray because God already knows everything that I want and everything that I need to begin with.

Folks, I just brought it up this morning, not that particular instance, but I brought it up this morning. God rent the temple, the temple veil in twain from the top to the bottom.

Why did He do that? So that we could all have access to God. Right. So we could all have access to God so that we could all commune with God. And those that commune with God are the blood-bought saints of Almighty God.

[15:28] The born-again Christians, those that have been cleansed and washed in the blood of Jesus Christ. We have access to God. Jesus Christ did not only die that you could have salvation, He died that you could have communion with God.

That's what reconciliation is. Amen. Right. We were cast off. We were cursed. Us and the ground. Turn to Genesis 3 and read it for yourselves.

The entire world and everything on it was placed under the curse of God. And that's much of what we're reading right here. You neglect your prayer life. You neglect your Christian walk.

Neglect your Christian walk. And I'm telling you now, the signs of the curse will manifest themselves in your life. Just like these thorns did.

Do not neglect your Christian walk. Don't neglect your Christian testimony. Don't neglect anything. Don't neglect the reading of the Word. Don't neglect prayer. Don't neglect fellowship with fellow saints.

[16:31] Right. My goodness. It was all grown over with thorns. The nettles that cover the face thereof and the stone wall thereof was broken down too. Verse 32.

Then I saw and considered it well. I looked upon it and received instruction. Then I saw. He's done described to us what he's seen.

He's described to us as filled. He's described to us as a vineyard. He's described it as being overgrown with thorns. And the nettles being on the face thereof. And he's described the wall that was the protection around it that was broken down.

He's described all these things. He says, Then I saw and considered it well. He considered it well. I looked upon it and received instruction.

Folks, and you all I'm sure know some just like I do. And most of y'all and I guess all of y'all have been in this walk longer than I have.

[17:33] What do you do when you see someone that's professed Christ? Someone that may have sung in the choir. Someone that may have preached. Someone that may have taught Sunday school.

What do you see when you see what do you think I should say when you see them out in the world living in open and blatant sin? Do you gossip about them?

Do you gossip about them? Or do you say, God, keep me. God, help me. Help me to not be like that. God, help me to strive.

God, help me to work. God, help me to clear my field. God, help me to take care of my vineyard. Or do we just talk about them? Do we just talk about them? I know a man, a very dear pastor friend that I once had.

And it floored me when he left his wife and three children for another woman in the church. And I was pretty young Christian at that point.

[18:34] It floored me that that happened. Folks, it doesn't happen. I guarantee you, he nor anyone else in the history of mankind has ever woke up one morning and said, I think I'm going to destroy my marriage today.

No one woke up and said, I think I'll become a drunkard today. No one woke up and said, I think today's the day I'll become a prostitute. No one woke up with those thoughts.

It happens over time. It happens slowly and eventually. But folks, that sin will grab a hold. We get into that in the last part of this passage of Scripture.

It grabs a hold. And then it's hard to get it to let go. It's hard to get it to let go. I saw and considered it well. Do we consider it well when we see these things?

When we see... What's Solomon talking about here? He's talking about evidence. He's talking about evidence of neglect. And when we see evidence of neglect from people who once professed Christ, but they're now out in the world, how do we treat that?

[19 : 44] Do we consider it well like Solomon did here? Even more importantly than considering it well, do we receive instruction from it? You read 1 Corinthians 10.

Paul talking about the failures of Israel. Paul explained to the church at Corinth about the failures of Israel. He says they had it all. He said they had the miracles.

They had the baptism with Moses. They had the physical presence of Almighty God and the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

He said they had manna raining down from heaven. They had water from a rock. They had it all. But he tells the church at Corinth. Yet they perished.

And how did they perish? In unbelief. They perished in unbelief. There's a lot of apostasy. A lot of people abandoning the church.

[20 : 43] A lot of people abandoning the faith nowadays. And folks, it's just going to get worse. It's just going to get worse. Now I understand 1 John 2, they went out from us but they were not of us. I get that.

I get that. But folks, if we are not careful, if we're not careful, our vineyards and our fields will end up in the same shape. Us being children of God.

We are no less susceptible than the lost people are to this. Then I saw and considered it well. I looked upon it and received instruction.

Folks, this is what draws the line between foolishness and wisdom. The foolish man will say, well, it's just a little neglect.

It's just a little complacency. It's just a little time that I want to myself. But the wise man sees ruin. He sees ruin and it causes him to tremble in his shoes.

[21 : 47] Like I said, when we see that, when we see that out in the world, when we see it with people who were once in church and now are not, or whatever the case is, maybe it's family members that are in a boat like that.

Whatever the case is, when we see it, does it cause us to tremble or do we just talk about them? No, pray for that person. Pray that God restore them. And if God never saved them to begin with, pray that God saves their soul.

Amen. God help us. God help us to not gossip. God help us to not just talk about them people. Verse 33, yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.

We don't need to concentrate so much on the sleep and the slumbering and the folding of the hands. What I want you to concentrate on is yet a little, a little, a little.

Folks, that's all it takes. That's all it takes. I'm going to skip church today. I'm going to skip church this morning. I'm going to skip church this evening.

[22 : 55] Don't feel like going midweek. I want to pray, but I'm really tired. I know I need to read the Scripture. God bless you. But I just don't feel like reading.

Just a little bit at a time. Folks, David, David done this exact same thing. When the kings went off to war, David being a king, when the kings went off to war, David elected to stay at home for himself, for his own comfort.

That's complacency. And what did that lead to? That led to Bathsheba. That led to an adulterous affair. What did that lead to? That led to deception. What did that lead to?

It led to murder. Amen. But it began with a little sleep and a little slumber and a little folding of the hands to sleep.

Just a little bit. Folks, complacency is not harmless. Complacency is not harmless.

[24 : 03] We need to remain diligent. We need to remain vigilant in our walk with Jesus Christ. Because temptations are all around us.

Temptations are everywhere to pull us away just a little bit at a time. Again, don't pay so much attention to the sleep and the slumber and the folding of the hands to sleep.

Pay attention to the little. Just a little. That has gotten more Christians. I'm talking about born-again Christians. That has gotten more Christians in trouble than anything else.

Just a little. Just a little. Verse 34, We'll be done. So shall thy poverty come as one that traveleth and thy want as an armed man.

What kind of poverty are we talking about? Well, in the physical sense, we're talking about this field and this vineyard has been neglected.

[25 : 07] So the man's got nothing to eat. He's got nothing to drink. He's got nothing to sell. Poverty's going to come. And not only poverty because he has nothing to sell, but folks, he has nothing to eat, nothing to drink.

He has nothing to sustain himself. As one that traveleth and thy want as an armed man. But he'll want those things.

He'll need those things. And that will come on him as an armed man. Something that's sudden. Something that's devastating. Something that's injurious to him.

But again, so shall thy poverty come as one that traveleth. Folks, if we take this and we apply this to ourselves as the New Testament church, so shall thy poverty come as one that traveleth.

How does a traveler come? A traveler comes steadily. A traveler comes surely. A traveler more often than not comes quietly.

[26 : 13] And that's exactly how the poverty will come. But folks, what led up to that? Neglect. Neglect is what led up to it.

Neglect forsaking the things of God. Again, forsaking the assembling of ourselves. Forsaking church. Forsaking prayer.

Forsaking scripture reading. Forsaking fellowship. Forsaking all these things. And that is neglect. And it's just a little bit at a time that it happens. A little sleep.

A little slumber. A little folding of the hands to sleep. It's just a little bit at a time. But before you know it, the traveler arrives. The traveler arrives.

So shall thy poverty come as one that traveleth. And thy want as an armed man. It comes steadily. It comes surely like a traveler.

[27 : 09] And then your want will be, that will seize you like an armed man. And it will be absolutely devastating to you. Don't believe me. Again, take David's account.

Take David's account. Now praise be to God. David repented. David repented. The prophet come to him. Give him a parable about a man and his lamb and a rich man that had all kinds of lambs. And he took the poor man's lamb. And David said, bring this fellow here. We'll kill him right now. David said, thou art the man.

You're the man that did this. Talking about Bathsheba being Uriah's wife. And David took her. Now David repented.

And again, don't take my word for it. Read Psalm 51 sometime. One of the greatest Psalms of repentance. Some of the greatest scripture about repentance that you'll ever read. Psalm 51.

[28 : 12] He repented. But, it got him in trouble. And folks, that trouble followed him and his family all the rest of their days. And even into the present day.

The nation Israel, while it's still surviving, it's still flourishing, the folks, that curse has followed them. It has followed them.

all because it started with a little comfort that David wanted. The kings went off to war and David didn't want to go.

David would rather stay at home. And that led to a little sin of him eyeing a woman from his rooftop. And that led to a little more sin with an adulterous affair.

That led to a little more sin with deceit. And that led to a big sin that we would see of murder when he put your eye on the front lines of the battle.

[29 : 11] All to hide his sin with Bathsheba. And it wasn't hidden. It wasn't hidden. You can hide it from man for a little while. But you cannot hide it from God.

Folks, you can hide your neglect of the Bible. You can hide your neglect of prayer from man for many days, for many weeks, maybe even for years.

But you cannot hide it from God. And as I said before, the longer you go on that path and the longer you are complacent in your walk with Almighty God, the longer you are comfortable and not seeking to move closer to God, the more that will eventually manifest itself in your life.

Remain on guard, Christians. Remain on guard, church. That's this evening's message. God bless y'all. I appreciate your attention.