

## **Peaceful Proverbs, part 1**

(Proverbs 21:1-19)

4/11/18; Wed PM Pine Grove

### **Introduction**

Yesterday, April 10 marked the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

The Good Friday Agreement was a peace treaty between the Catholics and Protestants of Northern Ireland, who had been fighting for nearly 30 years...

The reasons behind the war were numerous, but the essential conflict was the desire of the Protestants to stay part of the United Kingdom, while the Catholics desired an autonomous Ireland...

So for 30 years, they waged war in Northern Ireland and there were over 50,000 casualties of this conflict...

But eventually in 1998, both sides had enough and a peace treaty was brokered and it has brought peace to the region for 20 years...

Peace is hard to come by in a fallen world..

Conflict is the desire of our sinful flesh.

People sinfully crave drama and unrest, and the world suffers for lack of peace...

And that suffering will continue until the Prince of Peace arrives and brings a lasting peace to this world...

However, until then conflict will be the norm for society...

Unrest, violence and war will be part of this world until the 2nd coming of Christ..

However, peace is attainable in the gospel...

The gospel promises the greatest peace of all..

Peace between man and His Maker...

Peace between man and God..

Peace that comes through repentance of sin and faith in Christ...

It is a real peace because it brings a ceasefire to man's war against God in his rebellion and sin...

Yet, that is not the only peace that man can experience in this world...

It is the most important peace that anyone can be given, but it is not the only peace that is attainable in life...

In fact, the peace that the gospel brings in our life only leads to other opportunities for peace in other areas of life...

And I think that Proverbs 21 is going to offer us some of God's wisdom in terms of finding peace in a world filled with conflict...

How can we experience peace, which the dictionary defines as "freedom from disturbance; the sense of quietness and tranquility"?

Well, let's dig into this chapter and my hope is to get through all of it tonight as we seek to find peace in 4 areas of our life...

The first area is simply peace with God's character...

## **I. Peace with God's Character (1-3)**

Let's read verses 1-3...

***1 The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord;  
He turns it wherever He wishes.***

***2***

***Every man's way is right in his own eyes,  
But the Lord weighs the hearts.***

***3***

***To do righteousness and justice  
Is desired by the Lord more than sacrifice.***

In verses 1-3, we are reminded of some of the attributes or characteristics of who God is...

First of all, God is sovereign and powerful...

In verse 1, Solomon reminds us that even the most powerful people in the world are no match for God's sovereign will and purpose...

Even the heart of the king can be directed in the way that God desires...

Kings are often thought of as untouchable and unchangeable...

No one dares to challenge them on their decisions or plan, but even the king does the will of God...

As God directs his heart..

Are you at peace with a God like that?

You should be.

In fact, God's sovereignty brings me the most peace in a very unsure and unstable world...

The second trial of God we see in verse 2 is his omniscience...

In other words, God knows everything...

Man may think he is doing right, but the Lord is able to look into the motivations of his heart...

God has the ability to know the motivations of your heart because he knows everything...

He is not only sovereign in his power, he is sovereign in his knowledge.

Though that may make you uneasy, it should also give you peace...

When you do the right thing, but still get the blame, God is aware of that...

When you say the right thing but have your words twisted, God knows that as well..

There is peace when we know that God knows all...

A final attribute of God is found in verse 3...

God desires obedience over sacrifice...

In other words, the OT was full of sacrifices that Israel was to offer God to cover their sins...

If you did a certain sin, there was a specific sacrifice to cover it...

But what verse 3 is simply saying is this...

God would rather you obey and not offer a sacrifice to Him than sin and have to offer a sacrifice to Him...

Think of this way...

It is good to say you are sorry and it is good to accept someone's apology but it is better to not sin against them in the first place...

This is the nature of God...

He is quick to forgive, but he would you simply obey His commands..

We should confess our sins to the Lord, but it is far better to obey and have less to confess...

God is a God who desires our obedience...

Do that bring you peace?

Well, it should...

It should give us peace to know that fighting against sin is pleasing to God...

It should give us peace to know that our obedience to Him is not in vain...

We need peace with God for sure, but we also need to be at peace with who God is...

And we can be when we understand the nature of who God is...

A second peace we can enjoy is found in verses 4-8...

I call this...

## **II. Peace with the World (4-8)**

As we live in the world, how do we find a peaceful life in this stressful world filled with stressful people?

First of all, we find peace in the world in our humility...

Look at verse 4...

**4**

***Haughty eyes and a proud heart,  
The lamp of the wicked, is sin.***

Haughty eyes and a proud heart are marks of arrogance and pride...

And arrogance literally lights the way for the wicked...

They are his lamp.

In other words, arrogant people are led around by whatever feeds their pride...

And since they follow their sin, they never find peace in this world...

The path to peace in the world and with others in the world is the path of humility...



If you are led by humility, you avoid conflict and trouble with others because you are never seeking your own way....

Another way to find peace in the world is found in verses 5-7...

**5**

***The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage,  
But everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty.***

**6**

***The acquisition of treasures by a lying tongue  
Is a fleeting vapor, the [a]pursuit of death.***

**7**

***The violence of the wicked will drag them away,  
Because they refuse to act with justice.***

Peace also comes through planning...

People who are hasty and impatient often find themselves in poverty...

And poverty is not a place of peace but anxiety...

Poverty also leads people to do what we see in verses 6 and 7...

It leads people to lie to get wealth and dishonesty never brings peace because you are constantly trying to hide behind your lies...

But worse yet, poverty often leads people to violence to gain wealth...

And clearly, violence is not the way the peace...

Violence disturbs the peace of others but it also puts the one committing it on edge since the victim may retaliate...

What is the simple wisdom of verses 5-7...

Plan and find wealth and therefore find peace...

And final way to find peace in the world is simply a summary statement in verse 8...

## 8

***The way of a guilty man is crooked,  
But as for the pure, his conduct is upright.***

The all encompassing wisdom of verse 8 is that pure people live with right conduct and guilty people live crookedly...

If you want peace with the world and with the people in the world, then avoid crooked living...

Live rightly in the world and generally speaking you will peacefully in the world...

So far, we have seen the need to find peace with who God is...

And we have seen the recipe of how to find peace with the world in general...

But now, we will narrow our view to the need for peace in our our personal life...

### **III. Peace in our Personal Life (9-19)**

This little section of Proverbs 21 has two nice book ends in verses 9 and 19...

Let's read those two verses...

Verse 9...

**9**

***It is better to live in a corner of a roof  
Than [b]in a house shared with a contentious  
woman.***

Verse 19...

**19**

***It is better to live in a desert land  
Than with a contentious and vexing woman.***

Clearly, peace is impossible in our lives if we can't have peace with those closest to us...

In this case, there is no peace in a home where the wife is contentious and vexing...

A contentious woman is a quarreling woman..

Some translation say a brawling or fighting woman, while other call her a nagging or complaining woman..

Verse 19 adds to the description of this woman by calling her a vexing woman..

The picture is that this woman is easily angered or provoked....

She is a complaining woman who is looking for a fight...

Now let's be fair here...

Men can and often do have the same qualities, but the big picture is this...

If you can't find peace at home, it is better to live on the roof or in the desert....

And also if you can't find peace at home, you will never have it in any other area of your life...

You must bring peace to your home by not being this kind of spouse, and you must maintain peace in the home by living in peace with a difficult spouse...

We move a little outside the home in verse 10..

## **10**

***The soul of the wicked desires evil;  
His neighbor finds no favor in his eyes.***

We must also seek peace with our neighbors...

There is little peace for the wicked man is always at odds with those around him...

I have often said that you can tell more about a man by his relationship with the people who live around him than by what he claims to be...

Verse 11 speaks of the peace that we can have by how well we receive correction...

### **11**

***When the scoffer is punished, the [c]naive becomes wise;***

***But when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge.***

Some people have no peace because they make everything so personal in their lives..

If you have ever tried to help someone see the sin in the lives and been attacked by the person receiving your instruction, you will understand...

You can never find peace if you think the people trying to help you are out to get you...

Discipline and instruction bring peace in our lives if we receive them well....

Verse 12...

**12**

***The righteous one considers the house of the wicked,***

***Turning the wicked to ruin.***

First of all, this is an interesting verse to translate...

Some Bibles capitalize Righteous One and see this as reference to God in the original Hebrew...

Others, like the NASB and King James simple see this as a reference to a righteous person...

It doesn't imply that they are perfect, but simply pursue righteousness with their lives...

But neither translations changes the meaning here...

This is either God looking on the household of the wicked or a wise person looking on the household of the wicked...

And the simple result is that God ends up judging the wicked's house or the righteous person simply sees God's judgment on the wicked man...

And the resulting wisdom is that God's judgment of the wicked serves to keep the righteous person on the right road of life...

Let me give you an example...

There are shows out there that film the horrors of prison...

They take their cameras into maximum security prisons and they document the violence and even that goes on behind bars...

And the supposed purpose of the show is to scare people enough to discourage them from a life of crime..

Look, you can find in the world by learning from people who have no peace in the world...

The example of the evil man and the example of the consequences of the that come to the evil men are reasons for us to seek peace in our lives...

So we are motivated to peace by the chaotic lives of those who live wickedly...

Now in verses 13-14, we see some other very personal ways to find peace in our lives..

One is in our relationship with the poor...



Verse 13..

**13**

***He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor  
Will also cry himself and not be answered.***

Let me ask us all a question...

What would call us to ignore the cries of the poor?

Pride, arrogance, lack of compassion, forgetting the fact that the poor are also made in God's image...

So if a person finds himself in a place where he finds no sorrow for those in need, he has lost his sense of the image of God that is stamped on every person...

Humility and mercy and grace cause us to hear the cries of the poor...

Saved people are marked by their compassion for others...

Now, that does not mean that we answer every cry of the poor....

That would be an impossibility...

But it does mean that we keep our ears open and our hearts open to the poor, and if we can't share our money, we can always share the gospel with them...

We can always share our prayers with them....

Folks who close up their hearts to the poor will eventually find that their hearts were closed up to God...

And if their time of need, they may cry to God and he will not hear their pleas for mercy..

Find peace in your life but keeping your heart soft for those around you...

There is no peace for those who show no mercy...

Verse 14 also addresses another aspect of personal peace in our lives...

#### **14**

***A gift in secret subdues anger,  
And a bribe in the bosom, strong wrath.***

Folks disagree about how to view this verse, saying that God never would endorse bribes...

And they would be right, but the sense here is not of bribery for personal advancement but rather gift giving for personal peace..

We have seen this wisdom principle before, but the giving of gifts is a good start on the road to ending a feud or settling a dispute...

Gifts reveal our generosity and thought of others...

And where there is anger between people, the simple giving of a gift can mend wounds.

Though most translations use the word bribe here, the same Hebrew word can also mean reward...

In fact, the KJV translates it as a reward, which fits better here...

The simple bit of wisdom here is that peace comes as we seek to be peacemakers in this world...

And often the path to peace begins with a gift signaling our generosity and thoughtfulness directed at our enemy...

Personal peace comes to those who seek to make peace with their enemies...

A final bit of wisdom is found in verses 15-18...

## **15**

***The exercise of justice is joy for the righteous,  
But is terror to the workers of iniquity.***

**16**

***A man who wanders from the way of understanding***

***Will rest in the assembly of the [d]ead.***

**17**

***He who loves pleasure will become a poor man;***

***He who loves wine and oil will not become rich.***

**18**

***The wicked is a ransom for the righteous,***

***And the treacherous is in the place of the upright.***

In verses 15-18, we see a constant theme in the book of the Proverbs which is to contrast the righteous way of life and the wicked way of life...

In verse 15, the righteous love justice, while the wicked are terrified of it...

In verse 16, the wicked wander from the way of understanding and truth...

In verse 17, the wicked squander their lives on pleasure and the wine and oil that goes along with wealthy lifestyles...

And yet, verse 18 says that the wicked are ransom for the righteous and the treacherous is in place of the upright...

And the point here is this..

The righteous live in a way that honors God's wisdom...

The wicked live in a way that rejects God's wisdom...

And in the end, the wicked suffer from the consequences of their disobedience even to the point that they get the consequences of disobedience that should have fallen to the righteous...

Long story short, those who live by the wisdom of God will generally find peace in your life...

While those who neglect God's wisdom will find nothing but chaos and trouble..

And then this section on the pursuit of personal peace ends in verse 19 with a reminder on the need for peace in the home first of all...

Let's stop there for tonight, and we will pick up in verser 20 next week and finish out the chapter...

## **Conclusion**

Let me end with a few thoughts to motivate you to seek peace in all areas of your life..

Though the book of Proverbs offers wisdom in terms of finding peace, are we commanded to be at peace as believers?

Well, that is clear in the NT...

Romans 12:14-18

***14 Bless those who persecute [m]you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but [n]associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. 17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. [o]Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.***

Hebrews 12:14

***14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.***

1 Timothy 2:1-2

***First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in [a]authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and [b]dignity.***

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

***9 Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; 10 for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more, 11 and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, 12 so that you will [i]behave properly toward outsiders and [j]not be in any need.***

Unbelievers pursue drama.

Christians pursue peace.

Sin brings drama.

Right living brings peace.

The first goal of life is to first of all find peace with God through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ by believing the gospel and turning from sin.

The second goal is to keep the peace as we come to know God, live in the world, and interact with those around us...

Ultimately, our pursuit of peace reveals the fact that we are truly saved..

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

Next week, we will see how to find peace with the wisdom that comes to us in the Bible...

Let us pray.

peace with God's wisdom

moderation 20

reward 21-22

humility 23-24



work 25-26

worship 27

honesty 28-29

acknowledgement (30-31)