

## **Agur's Addition, part 2**

(Proverbs 30)

9/12/18; Wed PM Pine Grove

### **Introduction**

The past few days of watching our area prepare for a hurricane is a great reminder of the uncertainty of our world.

Hurricanes are just one of many weather phenomena that man has no control over...

Even though we live in what is called the technology and communication age, man still has no power over the weather..

Hurricanes, floods, wind, tornadoes, fires continue to plague the world even though man has more control over his environment than ever before..

And these natural disasters will continue to bring chaos to the world until the Lord sets the world back in order..

So what does man do?

Well, in terms of the weather around him, he trusts in the wisdom of weather experts...

And when they say that a hurricane is approaching, man listens to his wisdom and acts accordingly..

In the case of this hurricane, the SC governor issued a mandatory evacuation which is quite common with a storm this size..

And sensible people heed the warning and head inland..

Yet, there are always foolish people who hang around the coast..

They even laugh at the wisdom of the experts and plan on taking their chances with the storm..

And what do we do in response to these people?

We laugh at their foolishness..

Some states even require them to sign waivers saying they understand the risk but chose to ignore warnings..

In other words, if a person refuses the wisdom of authorities, he is on his own when the hurricane arrives.

Personally, I like that philosophy..

In fact, I wish we could hand out waivers at church each service, which read..

You are about to hear some wisdom from God. IF you choose to ignore it, you are own your own. Good luck in the storms of life. You will need it.

Well, that would certainly be a good warning to attach to the book of Proverbs, which is full of God's wisdom...

My prayer is that we all have listened to the warnings in the book of Proverbs and we are acting accordingly..

Tonight, we will pick up a few more bits of wisdom on how to live in the world as we close out chapter 30...

Now a quick review..

Proverbs 30 was inspired by God through a man named Agur..

Surprisingly, we know very little about Agur other than he was a collector of wisdom..

If you remember from last week, Agur was most likely a contemporary of Solomon..

And just like Solomon, Agur desired wisdom and knowledge and understanding...

However, Agur learned early on that wisdom was not available to him unless he could go to heaven and get it from God..

Look back at verses 2-4...

**2**

***Surely I am more stupid than any man,  
And I do not have the understanding of a man.***

**3**

***Neither have I learned wisdom,  
Nor do I have the knowledge of the Holy One.***

**4**

***Who has ascended into heaven and descended?  
Who has gathered the wind in His fists?  
Who has wrapped the waters in [b]His garment?  
Who has established all the ends of the earth?  
What is His name or His son's name?  
Surely you know!***

And since Agur couldn't go to God, his only hope for wisdom was found in the words that God had sent from heaven..

So Proverbs 30 becomes a treasure of wisdom from the Lord to Agur and to the rest of the world...

And the theme of the chapter is that God's wisdom when applied to your life offers a best way to live in the world...

Last week, we saw that God's Scripture is better than man's speech..

We saw that living a life of dependence on the Lord is better than living independent of Him.

We saw that a closed mouth is better than an open mouth full of slander and gossip.

And we saw that a life of character is better than a life filled with crime and corruption..

Tonight, we will finish off the chapter with 7 more ways that applying God's wisdom leads to a better life in the world..

Let's pick back up in verses 15-16 with what we can call..

**V. Contentment is Greater than Covetousness**  
**(15-16)**

**15**

***The leech has two daughters,***

***“Give,” “Give.”***

***There are three things that will not be satisfied,***

***Four that will not say, “Enough”:***

**16**

***[h]Sheol, and the barren womb,***

***Earth that is never satisfied with water,***

***And fire that never says, “Enough.”***

These verses serve as an illustration of greed..

Leeches are so greedy that they have two mouths on each end so they can get twice as much from their hosts..

Sheol is the place of the dead in the OT..

And the picture is that death is greedy for more and more people..

The barren woman is greedy for children...

The earth is greedy for water..

Fire is greedy for more things to burn.

In other words the world is filled with greedy people who can never be satisfied, but that is not a good thing..

God wants us content in Him..

Greed leads to sin, contentment with our lot in life leads to more trust in the Lord..

The greater way to live in the world is a life of contentment, knowing that God has you where he wants you and will continue to meet your needs..

People who are never satisfied with their life are also never satisfied with the Lord..

So be warned and repent of a life of greed..

And then be like Paul who said that he could find contentment in all things by the power of Christ at work in Him..

Let's now find another way to live better in the world in verse 17..

We can call this..

## **VI. Honor is Greater than Horror (17)**

17

*The eye that mocks a father  
And [i]scorns a mother,  
The ravens of the valley will pick it out,  
And the young eagles will eat it.*

If you were here last week, Proverbs 30:11 points to the wisdom of honoring a person's parents..

Well, that wisdom is repeated here, but here we see the consequences of not honoring parents in very graphic terms..

Agur writes that ravens will pick out his eyes and the young eagles will eat them..

And the warning is that those who fail to honor their parents usually find trouble in their lives...

Sometimes in very extreme ways..

One commentator puts it this way...

“To shun parental discipline is to embark on a life characterized by lack of discipline and excessive violence and such persons are naturally prone to die a violent death.”



In this case, the violent death left their body exposed to the elements of nature and the appetites of the animals..

Clearly, there is much wisdom in honoring one's parents..

It is much better to show honor to parents than to experience the horrors that often follow those who disrespect their parents..

Let's move to a 7th way to live greater in the world..

## **VII. Conviction is Greater than Carelessness (18-20)**

Verses 18-20..

**18**

*There are three things which are too wonderful  
for me,*

*Four which I do not understand:*

**19**

*The way of an eagle in the sky,  
The way of a serpent on a rock,  
The way of a ship in the middle of the sea,  
And the way of a man with a maid.*

**20**

*This is the way of an adulterous woman:  
She eats and wipes her mouth,  
And says, "I have done no wrong."*

There is lot of discussion about what these verses mean, and you can read a number of possible interpretations that are out there..

WE don't have time to explore every possible options so let me offer what I think is the best interpretation according to the language and context of this chapter..

It seems that the objects of verse 19 are objects that leave no impression on the places that are tied to them..

In other words, an eagle leaves no impression in the sky that it was even there..

The same with a snake on a rock or a ship on the sea..

In fact, the sky, the rock, and the sea hardly even notice that an eagle, serpent, or ship has passed across them...

In the same way, the adulterous woman or man can engage in their sin and never be affected by it..

In fact, the adulterous woman here engages in her sin and afterwards claims that she has done nothing wrong..

And the question is..

How does someone sin and feel no conviction?

Well, continuous sin requires someone to silence their conscience, and a silenced conscience eventually stops speaking altogether..

That is why people can continue in sin for long periods of time..

Their sin leaves no impression upon them..

Just like the eagle leaves no trace in the sky, people who continue in sin allow sin to leave no trace on them.

And that is very dangerous...

It is better to feel and respond to conviction than to live a life of carelessness...

Be wise and respond to your God-given conscience..

An eight way to live better in the world is found in verses 21-23...

WE will call this..

### **VIII. Custom is Greater than Chaos (21-23)**

Verse 21..

**21**

*Under three things the earth quakes,  
And under four, it cannot bear up:*

**22**

*Under a slave when he becomes king,  
And a fool when he is satisfied with food,*

**23**

*Under an unloved woman when she gets a husband,  
And a maidservant when she supplants her mistress.*

The people of verses 22-23 represent people who are in places that they shouldn't be...

A slave does not normally become a king..

A fool does not normally gain wealth and have plenty of food..

An unloved woman does not normally get a husband.

And a servant girl does not normally rise about the woman she serves..

Now in our society, we often pull for the underdog, but it is not always good when the underdog wins..

If a unqualified man becomes king, chances are the nation will suffer..

The same would be true if a fool get rich..

He will simply spend his money in foolish ways since wisdom isn't attached to riches...

In other words, custom is better than chaos in most instances..

Yes, the stories of people rising to places of influence are great and inspiring but they may not always be the best for those impacted by it..

Take for the instance the pulpit...

It may be a nice story for the horrible sinner who got saved and became a preacher, but if the preacher isn't qualified to preach, it will be a disaster for the church..

Wisdom tells us that custom is usually better than chaos..

A 9th greater way to live is found in verses 24-28..

## **IX. Smarts are Greater than Strength (24-28)**

**24**

***Four things are small on the earth,  
But they are exceedingly wise:***

**25**

***The ants are not a strong people,  
But they prepare their food in the summer;***

**26**

***The [j]shephanim are not mighty people,  
Yet they make their houses in the rocks;***

**27**

***The locusts have no king,  
Yet all of them go out in ranks;***

**28**

***The lizard you may grasp with the hands,  
Yet it is in kings' palaces.***

In verses 24 to 28, we are taken to the animal world..

WE all know what ants are...

They are these tiny weak creatures yet they survive as a species because their instincts lead them to collect food for winter..

The lesson is simple...

It is smart to prepare for times of bad in times of plenty..

The next creature is not as familiar to us..

The NASB calls them the shephanim..

They are also called hyraxes, conies, rabbits. or rock badgers in other translations...

But the point is that these small animals which are easy prey for other animals ensures their survival by hiding in the rocks..

The lesson is simple here..

It is smart to find protection in your own environment..

The 3rd animal is the locust, which survives even though it has no single leader..

The lesson is simple..

It is smart to cooperate and strive than to fight one another and be destroyed..

The 4th animal is the lizard, which finds its way into palaces even though it is defenseless and easily destroyed.

The lesson is simple..



It is smart to know your limitations but you shouldn't let those limitations to keep you low.

Now the overall wisdom of these verses is clear..

It is greater to use the wisdom available to you from God and survive that to ignore God's wisdom and perish...

A 10th bit of wisdom leading to a greater life is found in verses 29-31...

WE will call this..

## **X. Dignity is Greater than Debauchery (29-31)**

Verse 29..

**29**

*There are three things which are stately in their march,*

*Even four which are stately when they walk:*

**30**

*The lion which is mighty among beasts*

*And does not [k]retreat before any,*

**31**

*The [l]strutting rooster, the male goat also,*

*And a king when his army is with him.*

In verses 29-31, we stay in the animal world with a lion, a rooster, and a male goat.

And the picture of each of them is a picture of power and authority...

The lion is described as mighty among the beasts.

The rooster is described as strutting, and the male goat lacks description but is seen as a powerful creature as well...

Then in the last line, you have the picture of a king surrounded by his army..

And the wisdom is simple..

Some things in life command our respect due to their appearance...

I think of a judge coming into a courtroom..

There is this certain decorum in life that we must all respect..

Look, I don't care if Obama was president or Donald Trump, I have a certain respect for the office..

And so should everyone else under its authority..

Now, that being said, it is also important for people in position to conduct themselves with dignity and good taste...

Sadly, we live in a culture that has little regard for manners and etiquette..

I think of so many pulpits where men step into them and say inappropriate things and even wear inappropriate clothing..

Look, I am not a stickler for dress or for words, but if pastors have no respect for the pulpits that they stand behind, the people will have little respect for them...

It is much better to live with dignity than to live with debauchery and lack of respect for those over you...

A final example of a greater way to live in the world is found in verses 32-33...

WE will call this..

**XI. Peacemakers are Greater than Pot-Stirrers**  
**(32-33)**

Verse 32..

32

*If you have been foolish in exalting yourself  
 Or if you have plotted evil, put your hand on your  
 mouth.*

33

*For the [m]churning of milk produces butter,  
 And pressing the nose brings forth blood;  
 So the [n]churning of anger produces strife.*

As kids, my grandma used to tell us..

The best way to get into trouble is to make trouble..

And that is exactly what the final 2 verses of  
 Proverbs 30 teaches..

The person of verse 32 is making trouble with his  
 mouth...

He is either bragging about himself or making plans  
 to do some sort of evil...

And the warning is clear...

If your churn milk, you will get butter..

And if you press a nose, you will get blood...

In the same way, if you make trouble with your mouth or in your anger, you will find trouble in your life..

Isn't it amazing when people with out of control mouths are surprised when other people get mad at them...

Isn't it amazing when people with uncontrolled tempers are surprised when people are angry with them?

Yet, anyone who makes trouble with their mouth or their temper shouldn't be surprised when trouble comes their way..

If you stir the pot, don't be surprised when some of the stew splashes out and burns you...

It is much better to be a peacemaker than a pot stirrer.

So keep your tongue and anger under control and strife will not be out of control in your life..

## **Conclusion**

Let's wrap this chapter up with a few quick thoughts..

### ***#1 - Contentment can only be found in Christ.***

The world is driven by greed because greed promises security...

If I can only get this much money, I'll be fine or happy or content..

Yet greed is never satisfied because greed is always hungry and never filled.

Contentment is opposite because contentment says that Christ is enough.

Contentment always finds joy because contentment finds security in the person of Christ..

Contentment is always enough because Christ is all we need.

### ***#2 - Conviction can only be found in a soft conscience.***

Look, conviction is good and healthy in our lives.

Conviction from the word of God tells us that we need to change..

And that is good because that reveals that our consciences are still soft to the word of God.

If you are listening to the word of God and seeing a need to get your life in line with the Bible, praise God for that conviction.

It may be painful to hear and change, but it good to know that your conscience is still responsive to the Bible..

People who harden their hearts to the word of God live very dangerous lives..

Keep your conscience soft and the best way to do that is to obey the Word of God.

***#3 - Calmness can only be found in a self-controlled life.***

If you want a peaceful life, put a cover over your mouth and your temper...

When you open your mouth and spill slander and gossip or pride, you open your life to all sorts of strife..



If you would like to avoid drama, don't invite it into your life with out of control tongue or temper.

Next week, we will get into the final chapter of the book of Proverbs..

Let us pray.