

Woodland Baptist Church
 Wednesday December 11, 2013
 Seeking Wisdom Together - Proverbs 5:1-23

1) Introduction

- a) **Matthew 5:27-30** - 27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

2) Read Proverbs 5:1-23

- i) The wisdom speeches begin with a warning against hobnobbing with greedy men (1:10–19) and conclude with an indictment of a lustful woman (9:13–18).

b) **Verses 1-9** The Father **WARNS** the son about the **ADULTERESS**

- (1) Nothing in life so clouds our judgment and makes stupid fools out of the wisest of us as succumbing to illicit passion. All our useful energies are drained off to defend or conceal that behavior.¹
- (2) **Proverbs 2:16-19** - So you will be delivered from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words, 17 who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God; 18 for her house sinks down to death, and her paths to the departed; 19 none who go to her come back, nor do they regain the paths of life.

- ii) **1 My son, be attentive to my wisdom; incline your ear to my understanding, 2 that you may keep discretion, and your lips may guard knowledge.**

- (a) The honey lips and smooth mouth of the other woman refer more to her flattery than her sexual availability. The man is drawn to her

¹ Hubbard, kindle

because she inflates his ego with hollow praise in ways his own wife will not.²

(2) **3 For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, 4 but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. 5 Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol; 6 she does not ponder the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it.**

- (a) *Drip honey...speech smoother than oil* - Her words may ooze seductive charm—face-to-face, on the Internet, in a text message; but her sweet talk and her flattery, telling you how awesome you are and how she’s been looking for a man just like you, that “honey” will turn “bitter.”³
- (b) *Bitter as wormwood...sharp as two edge sword* - she is bitter as the wormwood plant tastes and extremely sharp on every side, meaning she is calculating and knows how to get what she wants...and in some cases, it could be death.
- (c) *5 Her feet go down to death...path to Sheol...she does not ponder the path of life.....her ways wander, and she does not know it* - we might call her Jezebel. Modern day examples:
 - (i) **Aileen Wuornos** - killed seven men in Florida [mostly truck drivers] working as a prostitute; she was executed in Florida on October 9, 2002.⁴
 - (ii) **Carolyn Warmus** - killed Paul Solomon’s wife, shooting her several times in their apartment right before Paul and Carolyn met for dinner. Paul and Carolyn had met years prior as teachers. Carolyn relocated where Paul was and just prior to their dinner date, went to their home, waited until Paul left to go to meet her, killed his wife, then left and met Paul at the restaurant. Paul had no idea his wife was dead until he arrived home after they met and found her dead on the floor.⁵

² Garrett, logos

³ Ortlund, Ray

⁴ http://www.trutv.com/library/crime/notorious_murders/women/index.html

⁵ http://www.trutv.com/library/crime/notorious_murders/women/index.html

(d) There the warning was simply stated: No matter how flattering are the words of the temptress, she is totally unreliable, having broken her covenant with her husband and her God; the outcome of such treachery for her and her unauthorized companion is death.⁶

iii) Along with Genesis 2:24–25 and the Song of Solomon, this paragraph sounds the note of unembarrassed passion, of open delight, that should fill the air of every household which interprets marital love as a joyous expression of God’s love for His people. The minor key may be named “bitter honey” (vv. 3–4)—its first taste brings a smile; its last, a grimace. The major key is called “sweet water”—its taste is constant; its effect, refreshing; its impact, life-giving.⁷

- (1) First, to listen to her is to be poisoned by “wormwood” (v. 4) always a symbol of bitterness in the Bible (Lam. 3:19; Amos 6:12) and also in Shakespeare, where Juliet’s nurse reminded her ward of the weaning process accomplished by dabbing on her breast wormwood, distilled from a shrub *Artemisia absinthium*, to squelch the young girl’s desire to suckle.
- (2) Second, to listen to the immoral woman (v. 3) is to be mutilated as her words take on the sharpness of “a two-edged sword” (v. 4; lit., “two-mouthed” as though the sword ate alive its victim).
- (3) Third, to walk with her is to embark on the “path” to “death” and “hell” (v. 5), Sheol, the grave and the abode of the dead in Old Testament.
- (4) Fourth, to consort with her is to share her disorientation intoxicated as she is by passion, and to wander (as “unstable” means) off the path of life, the pattern of conduct that leads to survival and success (see emphasis on path in ch. 4), and to be hopelessly lost with her (v. 6).⁸

iv) The Father WARNS the son about the ADULTERESS

c) Verses 7-14 The CONSEQUENCES of giving in to HER

- (1) This time they center not on the confusion and disorientation suffered by the woman but the public loss of dignity endured by a man caught in her clutches.⁹

⁶ Hubbard, *Kindle*

⁷ Hubbard, *Kindle*

⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ *Ibid*

ii) 7 And now, O sons, listen to me, and do not depart from the words of my mouth. 8 Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house, 9 lest you give your honor to others and your years to the merciless, 10 lest strangers take their fill of your strength, and your labors go to the house of a foreigner, 11 and at the end of your life you groan, when your flesh and body are consumed, 12 and you say, "How I hated discipline, and my heart despised reproof! 13 I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors. 14 I am at the brink of utter ruin in the assembled congregation."

- (1) Notice the change to the **plural**, "sons," as if the Father is now addressing a room full of his children or as he would in a classroom setting.
- (2) The first set of losses [vs. 9-10] regards everything the sane person values in the earthly realm:

iii) 8 Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house, 9 lest you give your honor to others and your years to the merciless, 10 lest strangers take their fill of your strength, and your labors go to the house of a foreigner,

- (1) *Honor* and respect in the community;
 - (2) *Years* of building up one's reputation for integrity and reliability, only to have it tarnished by a cruel person who will take vengeful delight in public exposure;
 - (3) *Wealth* (lit., what gives one "strength" to cope with life's needs), which may be lost from the family inheritance and squandered, perhaps by blackmail, into the hands of the harlot and her comrades;
 - (4) *Labors* of a lifetime and all that they have allowed a person to accumulate, as they fly out the window and settle in a place where they do not belong—the house of a foreigner, which may refer also to the place where the adulteress resides.
- (5) The second set of losses [11-14] regards the bitter regret that comes upon realizing the mistakes that have been made:

iv) 11 and at the end of your life you groan, when your flesh and body are consumed, 12 and you say, "How I hated discipline, and my heart despised reproof! 13 I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors. 14 I am at the brink of utter ruin in the assembled congregation."

- (1) *You groan* - because your flesh and body are consumed; from the emotional and spiritual pain suffered from the loss of what has been mentioned already. It literally kills the body, as we have seen many people suffer from broken marriages and acts of sinful sexual immorality.
- (a) **How I hated discipline, and my heart despised reproof!** It hits the conscience hard when he realized that if had only listened to his father's words he could have avoided the entire situation. How many times has the father warned the son?? Several times, yet the son did not listen.
- (b) **13 I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors. 14 I am at the brink of utter ruin in the assembled congregation."** My ears were dulled out to hear the teachings, I did not commit them to my heart and did not obey them and now the consequences are overwhelming me - my life is completely destroyed.
- (i) *The assembled congregation* - the son's sins have been exposed, the words is out about what he did and now every time he walks into the assembly, no matter where that may be (church, work) everyone knows he cannot be trusted because he betrayed the one person he should never - his wife by taking another woman.
- d) The shattering, soul-destroying effect of adultery is the point. It can rarely be kept secret, and its perpetrators are damned if it is and damned if it is not. Kept hidden, it grinds on the spirit and conscience of those who practice it until exposure seems a kind of relief. And many a person has deliberately left traces of a sin for others to discover, as a desperate plea for rescue from enslaving behavior. Made public, adultery brings personal shame, humiliation to loved ones, and loss of respect in the larger community. In recent times, a number of politicians and religious leaders could be summoned to verify the accuracy of the teacher's words.¹⁰
- e) **Verses 20-23** Encouragement to be FAITHFUL to his WIFE
- (1) Here the writer moves from the bitter honey and smooth talking adulteress, to the pure water of fidelity in a healthy marriage.

¹⁰ Hubbard

(2) The contrast between the harlot's honey that goes bitter (vv. 3–4) and the wife's water that stays sweet ("running") is the point of the whole chapter.¹¹

ii) **15 Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. 16 Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? 17 Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. 18 Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, 19 a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?**

(1) **Should your streams be scattered abroad...in the streets?** Should his son have multiple children by random women, or should he keep his children with one woman? Clearly the proverbial writer is advocating for biblical marriage and pushing hard against having multiple relationships with multiple women, resulting in multiple children. [One area where David and Solomon failed miserably and where we as men will fail also if we are NOT completely held accountable by the congregation of a local church]

iii) **17 Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. 18 Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, 19 a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?**

(1) **Yourself alone/not for strangers with you** - your "springs" should be kept between you and your wife...not for "strangers" women outside the covenant of marriage.

(2) Verses 18-19 are filled with encouragement to deeply enjoy the sexuality and Romance God intended for a biblical covenantal marriage - it sounds much like Song of Solomon.

(a) Be intoxicated always in her love! Why embrace the bosom of an adulteress - a woman that is clearly outside the will of God for you.

iv) Encouragement to be FAITHFUL to his WIFE

¹¹ Ibid

f) **Verses 21-23** God SEES everything you do and will give you OVER to your sin

i) **21 For a man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his paths. 22 The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin. 23 He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray. [Romans 1]**

(1) The final verse (v. 23) echoes three notes from the whole composition:

- (a) **DEATH** is the expected result of sexual immorality, since life is robbed of its roots in love and loyalty; physical life may struggle on but the **guilt, compromise, and failure of adultery are a walking death** (see v. 5);
- (b) **REBELLION** against “instruction,” the disciplined self-control that bears suffering and learns from it, is a mistake from which it is hard to recover (see v. 12);
- (c) **FAITHFULNESS** one should be intoxicated with the love of a spouse (v. 19) not the love of an immoral woman (v. 20); where the latter is the case, it is tantamount to being intoxicated (“go astray” is the same verb as “enraptured” in vv. 19–20) or overdosed with massive folly; the outcome is lethal.

g) **CLOSE**

- i) The primary reason that this results in death and hardship is because the person has abandoned God’s way for their life.
- ii) The universe is created by God and when we begin to live in ways that are in outright rebellion against how He has designed it, chaos is produced.