



Proverbs 3
January 14, 2018

Verses Covered This Week

Proverbs 3:1 – 2

Proverbs 3:9 - 10

Mark 4:35 – 41

Isaiah 55:10 – 11

Matthew 17:1 – 4

Revelation 2:2 – 5

So we are walking through the book of Proverbs. I want you to go to Proverbs 3. That's the next chapter we're looking at. And oddly enough there's still context here, but I'm going to walk you over, you stay there, and I'm going to read you a story in the New Testament that you have to understand and if you don't get this, then you'll misapply chapter 3. So we want to make sure we apply that correctly. So you go to chapter 3, but I want you to listen. We talked about this. Remember he starts the book off and he says, "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord." Now we struggle with that because we've got this statement in 1 John, perfect love casts out fear. But there are two different types of fear. There's a fear that He will not take care of me in life, which is rebuked. There's a fear that somehow He and I have a problem even though I'm a child of God, that's rebuked. But the third fear is not rebuked. Now listen to this.

³⁵On that day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let's go to the other side."

So they're on the Sea of Galilea.

³⁶Leaving the crowd, they took with Him, took Him with Him in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him. ³⁷A great windstorm arose, the waves were breaking into the boat so the boat was already filling.

Now remember that doesn't mean anything to us. Because we have Coast Guard and life vests and all this kind of stuff. There's no Coast Guard, no life vests, this boat flips over, they're all going to die. And they know that. These guys have fished on this lake for years.

³⁸But He's in the stern asleep, on the cushion;

There's just not much that bother's Jesus.

and they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"
³⁹He awoke, He rebuked the wind, and He said to the sea, "Peace, be still." And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

Now listen to this. He rebukes them.

⁴⁰He said, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"

Now He rebukes them for that fear, right. But now listen to the very next thing.

⁴¹And they were filled with great fear, a different fear, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

He does not rebuke them for that fear. You're not to be afraid that He can't take care of you in your life and you're not to be afraid that somehow you and He don't have a relationship. But you're to fear Him in the sense that day by day you know who He is more and more and more. Now as you understand who He really is, that's going to create an awe and a fear and a reverence that will impact who you are. Now so I want you to hold Mark 4 right here. And I want you to go with me to Proverbs 3 and I want you to listen to what he says so that we don't misapply this. So we're coming back here. Now listen to what he says.

¹My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; ²for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.

Now listen to what he says, OK. He says that if you take God's commandments and you keep them, now he doesn't mean you're going to live a long time. That's not the statement. Psalm 139 says your days are ordained for you. So that's not the statement. What he does say is, length of days, in other words, the greatness that's in the day will be lengthened for you and years of life and peace will come to you if you obey what God says. Now when he says peace there, you need to understand most of the time it's not that we get along and we have buddies. It's the idea always of God's best in your life. So if I want the Creator's best and I want years of that, years of His life and peace, I want His best, and I want what's good in a day to be lengthened, then I keep His commandments. That, though, is the question today.

We are in a different day. I want you to listen. Rob Bell is a pastor of a very large church, Mars Hill, not the one in Seattle, but another city. And he is renowned among young people. He had a very effective ministry. So in February 2015, Bell and his wife Kristen, are doing a Valentines weekend episode with Oprah. That should be enough right there. But at any rate here's what it says. Bell said, "One of the," and this is absolutely true. "One of the oldest aches in the bones of humanity is loneliness. Loneliness is not good for the world." Now here we go. "Whoever you are, gay or straight, it is totally normal, natural, and healthy to want someone to go through life with. It's central to our humanity. We want someone to go on the journey with." That statement prompted a question from Oprah. "Well when is the church going to get that?" Now here's Bell's response. "We're moments away. I think culture is already there. And the church will continue"

now listen, now you think about what we just read, right, that His commandments give us life, they give us His best. Now listen to what he says, "I think the church will continue to be even more irrelevant when it quotes letters from 2,000 years ago as their best defense. When you have in front of you, flesh and blood people, who are your brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, co-workers, and neighbors, and they love each other and they just want to go through life with someone." So now you're faced with a choice. Is Solomon right or is Bell right? The problem I hear is that for a lot of people it's Bell. We've begun to embrace what our culture says when Proverbs clearly says if I obey His commandments, that's when all this good stuff happens so that, flip side, if I ignore His commandments, it doesn't. And that's where we are. We have to come to a place where we decide, you know what, it is 2,000 years old. It is dusty, but it's still true.

Now this is where you have to come. Rich young guy comes to Jesus, right, comes up and says, "Hey what do I have to do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus, "Well have you kept the commandments?" He says, "Oh yeah, kept them all." Right. "I've kept them all. Done exactly what I'm supposed to do." And Jesus says, "Well, I'll tell you, you've got one more deal here. I want you to take all your stocks, all your camels, all your money, sell it, liquidate it, and give it away, and then I want you to come and hang out with me." Now the Bible makes an interesting statement. It says he left sorrowful because he had a lot of wealth. So what Jesus did, in a brilliant move, is he put this guy in a position, I'm not even sure he would have had to do that, but he put him in a position where he's got to choose that Jesus' teachings will do more for him than his money. That in fact who Jesus is and what He says is going to enrich your life more than your bank account can and he simply can't go there. Neither can Rob Bell and it's where you have to go. You have to come to a place where you say, "You know what, I don't even like what God says, but I think it's the key to what I have and don't have." Now you have to do that. Now let me tell you, you've got to obey the text though, right. He says, if you don't keep my commandments, you have to keep them. You can't be emotionally excited about them. You've got to keep them.

There was a football game on last Monday night. Perfect sermon illustration just for you; deal with it. So at my house when I watch an Alabama game, particularly an important game, I don't have anybody over. I don't cuss, but I can go crazy. So all through the game I heard two statements from my wife, one of which is true and one of which is not. All through the game I heard my wife say, "You're scaring the dog." That's true. I'm good. And then she said, "They can't hear you." And that's not true. I stood nearly the whole game in front of the TV yelling, now I'm just going to say it, I'm taking credit for the game. I'm yelling at Saban going, "Take him out. Put the Hawaiian guy in." Saban heard me. Good kid, Jalen Hurts, but no quarterback. So he took him out, put the guy in, we won. I get the credit. My wife is wrong. So I'm emotional. I'm into it. But at the end of the day, I don't throw a pass, I don't run a route, I don't catch a ball, I don't block anybody, I don't tackle anybody, I don't punt, I don't kick. I should have kicked, but I don't. Because no matter how emotional I am about the game, I'm not in the game. Now you can be emotional all you want. You can go to Breakaway, you can go to church, you can get emotional about what God says, "Whoa that's a really neat truth." You can be emotional about it, but let me tell you something, until you put it in your own life, I don't care how emotional you are, you're not obedient to Proverbs 3 and that's why it doesn't work. It works when he says, you don't forget and you keep those commandments. If I don't keep them, if I don't put them in my life, then it

doesn't work. The Bible doesn't work because you're thrilled about it or because you're excited about it; it works when you pull it into your life. And then it alters who you are.

When the Republicans were in there, remember the Republicans and Democrats were running for office, right, The Primaries. You had like three Democrats and 87 Republicans. Remember that? One of the Republicans, we won't use his name here, claimed to be a great Christian, probably is, but you don't talk about it, his walk through Christ, and all this stuff. So his tax statement came out and it was discovered that he gave zero to his church. Zero. So you look at 3:9:

⁹Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your produce; ¹⁰then your barns will be filled plenty and your vats will be bursting with win.

That's grape juice in the Hebrew. So he says that you honor God, that's the first check you write. And Huckabee, who was running for office at the time, had a great line. He said, about this person, we'll call him Bob, about Bob, he said, "You know it's hard to say that Jesus is first in your life when He's last in your checkbook." And so you have this verse, 9 and 10, you have to decide, it's neat, it's cool, wow I'll give and He'll bless. No, can't be emotional about it. You've got to obey it. When somebody really rips you off at work, they take your idea, they take it to the boss, they get the promotion, they get the raise, they get the money, they get all the stuff. What do you want to do? You want to hurt them. The Bible says that you have to pray for them and bless them. So, again, we've talked about this, you can't pray, "God kill them tomorrow. In Jesus name. Amen." You can't do that. You have to pray for God to bless the person that ripped you off. That's the obedience to the Scripture. I want you to listen, you stay in Proverbs. I want you to listen to this in Isaiah 55. Listen to what he says.

¹⁰For as the rain and snow come down from heaven and do not return there, but water the earth, making it bring forth, bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater;

Now listen.

¹¹So shall be My word that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Now does he say when I read this I have to feel it? Or I have to sense it? No. I read this and He will take it and do in my life what His purpose is for it. Now I'm not trying to be hard today. So I'm going to say this with a smile, OK. When you get up scrolling Facebook and you go to bed scrolling Facebook and you don't turn a page in this book, you just don't get it. You get a lot of likes, but you want to know who He is because when you obey those commandments, that's when things are good in your life. You say, "OK preacher I got it. So I'm going to go home today, I'm going to take His commandments, I'm going to obey them because they're going to bless my life." No. No. Now listen to me. You don't ever take the consequences and make them the purpose. The consequences are if I obey the commandments that years of life and peace, my days and the goodness in those days will be lengthened, that is a consequence of obeying the commandment. But it is not to be the reason I obey the commandment. That is different.

Now. Go with me to Matthew 17. Matthew 17. I want you to listen. Now remember we talked about the fact, right, in Mark 4, Jesus rebukes the fear, in 1 John that you think you and Jesus are not OK. He rebukes the fear that you don't think He can take care of you. But He does not rebuke the fear where you're amazed at who He is and it produces a fear in you that does something unique. Now listen to Matthew 17.

¹After six days Jesus took with Him Peter, James, and John, led them up on a high mountain by themselves. ²He was transfigured before them; His face shone like the sun and His clothes became white as light.

Now come on, these guys are us, they're normal people. If we know anything about Peter, that guy was normal. If you're up there with Jesus, you've been walking around with a guy that really doesn't look any different than you. He's got one thing of clothing, He eats like you do, He drinks like you do, He talks like you do, He sleeps, He gets tired. When you get on top of this mountain and all of a sudden He's transfigured. His face is as bright as the sun. His clothes are dazzling white. Now come on. That's going to scare the b'jeebies out of you, which is a Greek word. Now, behold, in verse 3;

³there appeared to them, Moses and Elijah, talking with Him.

So it's bad enough, right, that you're looking at this guy that you thought really, yeah, He's God, but maybe not. Now, boy you realize who He is and then all of a sudden two guys appear. For some reason you know their names. It's Moses and Elijah, the two greatest figures in the Old Testament and they're standing there now with you. Do not tell me you're not scared. You're terrified. So what does that kind of fear do? Look at the next verse.

⁴Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here; if You wish, I will make three tents here, one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

Listen to me. If you think you and Jesus are at odds, that fear pushes you away from Christ. If you think He can't handle you in your life, that fear pushes you away from Christ. Listen, but when you really get who He is as best as you can get it, that fear pulls you to Jesus. That's why Solomon said, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Why? Because it pulls you to Jesus. It doesn't repulse you. It doesn't drive you away. That fear pulls you into His presence. You've got to be terrified, He's transfigured. Two guys from the Old Testament that are alive, you're standing on the mountain with them, and your first response is, this is great. That fear, that unbelievable awe that you possess as the understanding of who Jesus is begins to widen and deepen in your life. It pulls you into the presence of Christ. And what happens? There's a massive change. Go to the book of Revelation chapter 2. Listen to this. Now in chapter 1, He says, "Golden lampstands are the churches and the angels of the seven churches of the stars." That is, the pastors. So you have a letter to the pastor that he brings to the church. Now listen to this beginning in verse 2. Now here's the church in Ephesus, alright. Here's Jesus. Sent the message to the pastor, he's bringing it to them. Now listen, listen, listen, to Jesus.

²I know your works,

So this church is, right, busy. They got a bunch of ministry going on. They leave the building once a month. Jolynn would shoot me if we even thought about doing that. So they're busy.

I know your toil and your patient endurance,

They don't quit. Even when things are hard, they keep going.

you cannot bear with those who are evil,

They are moral congregation. You're doing something you shouldn't do, they will put you out. They are moral. Look at this.

but you've tested those who call themselves apostles, and are not, and found them to be false;

Their theology is sound.

I know you're enduring patiently bearing up for My name, you've not grown weary.

So understand, right, they're active, they work hard, they don't quit, they have a moral high character, and their doctrine is down the line with the scripture. So you would think, right, Jesus would say, "Keep going." And that is not what He says. Look at this.

⁴I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. ⁵Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the works you did at first; if not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place - unless you repent.

Now I want you to listen to what He said, OK. These guys were obedient. They're moral. They're long-suffering. They work hard. They don't quit. They're sound theologically, and Jesus said, "If you don't fix the problem you have, I'm going to take your church and do away with it." That is a staggering statement. Here's the deal. You don't obey the commandments because of the consequences; you obey the commandments, listen, because you're in love with the One that wrote the commandments, Jesus Christ. You're in love with Him. And that fear pulls me to Him. And as it pulls me to Him, I understand more and more who He is. I fall more and more in love with Him. And if you don't make that your motivation, and you decide to go home and go, "You know I think we'll keep the commandments because it's really got some cool stuff." Listen if you do that, here's what you'll do. You'll focus on the commandments and you'll wreck them. What does the Bible say? Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, right.

So I grew up, Southern Baptist church. Oh my! Sabbath day was holy. Sunday school, Sunday morning worship, training union, Sunday night worship. And in training union, you, none of you will believe this, but you actually had a little piece of paper you had to fill out about this big. You put your name on it and it had five blocks, right. Did I attend church? Did I give? Did I read my Bible verses? And you had little Bible verses and I'm a really fast reader so what I would do, I'd come in five minutes before training union and read the verses and go, "Yeah, I did." I checked the boxes, buddy. Because that's what it was and if you came in and made the mistake of being

honest. When they said, "What did you do this afternoon?" And you said, "Hey, man, we played football." Oh my! You have sinned against a holy God. And when we told them we played poker, that didn't go over well. I remember when I came here, deacon is still here in this church, he operates one of the doors, we're going to call him Bill. I came here 31 years ago. In my first year, I had a lady call me and she said, "I want to talk to you about one of your deacons." OK. "Did you know what he did Sunday? He mowed his yard." I remember thinking, "I'm sorry he did what?" "He mowed his yard." So I asked what I thought was a relevant question, right. I said, "Does he mow yards all the time?" "No! But he mowed it on Sunday and that's against God and he sinned and he needs to be removed as a deacon!" My real thought is, "No you need to be removed from this planet." But I didn't say that. I did think it, but I did not say it. That's how crazy we get. See, if the fear of the Lord pulls me to Him, and I fall in love with Him, and He says to me, "Chris I want you to take one day a week and you don't do what you do the other six days. I want you to love Me on that day and I want you to relax on that day." "Well, Lord, what does that mean?" "Doesn't mean anything except those two things. However you love Me on that day and worship me with other people, and what you do the rest of the day, that's your deal. I just want you not to work on that day." And all of a sudden I've got this incredible freedom in Christ which I will have if I focus on who He is and not trying to get commandments to make my life good. I don't focus on the commandment; I focus on the One that wrote the commandments.

When I grew up there was a movie that terrified me. This is embarrassing to admit, but the movie that terrified me the most was The Wizard of Oz. The reason it did was because of those flying monkeys. Wasn't worried about the witch. I had a squirt gun. So I wasn't worried about the witch. But those flying monkeys scared me to death because they flew in open windows and took you out of the rooms. So you had to sleep carefully. In that movie, once they got past the flying monkeys and the witch, they wind up in Oz and they find out, when they go behind the curtain, right, that this guy is a fraud. He's a short guy with a big loudspeaker. He's a fraud. And so the movie at the end, see we're not like that. When God opened up His veil, we see Him; King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Creator of the universe, six days spoke it in existence, put His Son on the cross to pay a penalty so you could be His child. That's who you see behind our veil. You find Him and this other stuff will fall right in place.

Let's pray.

Father thank You for Your truth, the amazement of it, the impact of it, and Father create in us in this room a healthy fear of who You are so we love You so that when we obey Your commandments we do them with Your freedom, Your power, and Your blessing. Honor us in that today. I ask You that in the name of Jesus Christ.