

WORSHIP SERVICE - 8.28.2022

POVERTY GUARANTEED

I. INTRODUCTION

Proverbs 6:1-11

- 1 My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor,
have given your pledge for a stranger,
- 2 if you are snared in the words of your mouth,
caught in the words of your mouth,
- 3 then do this, my son, and save yourself,
for you have come into the hand of your neighbor:
go, hasten, and plead urgently with your neighbor.
- 4 Give your eyes no sleep
and your eyelids no slumber;
- 5 save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter,
like a bird from the hand of the fowler.
- 6 Go to the ant, O sluggard;
consider her ways, and be wise.
- 7 Without having any chief,
officer, or ruler,
- 8 she prepares her bread in summer
and gathers her food in harvest.
- 9 How long will you lie there, O sluggard?
When will you arise from your sleep?
- 10 A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest,
- 11 and poverty will come upon you like a robber,
and want like an armed man.

II. THE SNARE OF FINANCIAL ENTANGLEMENTS

- 1 My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor, have given your pledge for a stranger,
- This is the potential foolish situation that the son may find himself in.
- The chief warning is for the son to avoid making impulsive and indiscriminate financial dealings or speculations.
- What does it mean to put up security for your neighbor and give your pledge for a stranger?
- In the ancient culture of Proverbs, a person who found themselves in debt to someone else, would put up something of value as a guarantee that they would repay the loan. If they defaulted, the creditor could seize that and more.
- But someone else could help the debtor out. That person was called a surety.
- The surety assumed responsibility for the payment of the debt in the event the debtor defaulted on their payments.
- They would pledge themselves as a guarantee of another's debt.
- "Have given your pledge for a stranger" literally means in the Hebrew to "strike your palm". It was how the agreement was sealed. It was a legally binding verbal agreement.
- It's possible there could be some financial gain for the person putting themselves forth as surety.
- In that case, being surety was viewed as a risky investment or gambling.
- The best modern equivalent might be co-signing a loan for someone.
- Solomon's teaching is that impetuous, impulsive financial entanglements can jeopardize his son's future financial wellbeing.
- Wisdom dictates that putting yourself up as surety is never a good idea.
- Speculating on easy money and easy gains is not the path to financial wisdom.

TRAPPED

- V2 if you are snared in the words of your mouth, caught in the words of your mouth,
- This is presented as a foolish act because of the consequences of the impulsive benevolence or speculation of easy gain.
- The images are hunting metaphors.
- A snare is a trap that lures the prey in with some type of bait.
- He is snared by the words of his mouth. His mouth, which made the pledge, is what gets him in trouble.
- We need to be very cautious of the financial deals we get into.
- We need wisdom so we don't get ourselves into trouble.
- We have all made foolish financial decisions through our impulsiveness, greed, ignorance, selfishness, or plain old stupidity.
- We've gotten into bad debt and that is a trap.
- **Proverbs 22:7** ...the borrower is the slave of the lender.

SAVE YOURSELF

3 then do this, my son, and save yourself,

for you have come into the hand of your neighbor:

go, hasten, and plead urgently with your neighbor.

4 Give your eyes no sleep

and your eyelids no slumber;

5 save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter,

like a bird from the hand of the fowler.

- How can the son get out of this terrible situation if he has foolishly pledged himself as surety?
- He needs to save himself from it.
- The moment he became surety is the moment he was no longer in control of his financial future and wellbeing.
- He got himself into the hand of another and now by his own hand has to get out of it.
- The admonitions the father gives are strong. They imply urgency, energetic and immediate action to free himself from the snare he got himself into.
- Go to the person who you made yourself surety for and get yourself out of that situation.
- Plead with them to take care of their debt and get you released as surety.
- "Give your eyes no sleep..." You can't sleep until you're out of the mess you got yourself into!
- Spring yourself from the snare of financial debt like an animal wants nothing but to be free from the trap they are in.
- Be diligent in getting out of debt.
- There is a reason why God's Word exhorts us continually to work hard and not look for the easy way to gain.

- Financial entanglements are not the way of wisdom!
- Jesus taught a lot concerning money, wealth, and treasures and all of it is tied to our heart.
- Our financial problems many times stems from how we view money and material possessions.
- We look to those things for security, status, and comfort.
- But that is a trap.
- This is why Jesus exhorts us to store up heavenly treasures.
- We need to see money, wealth, finances, purchases, and investments through a gospel lens.
- We need to value the eternal over the temporal.
- We need to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit, which is self-control, and steward the resources God gives to us in a wise manner.

III. LAZINESS IS THE PATH TO POVERTY

6 Go to the ant, O sluggard;

consider her ways, and be wise.

7 Without having any chief,

officer, or ruler,

8 she prepares her bread in summer

and gathers her food in harvest.

- Proverbs contrasts two particular ways of living: the productive and enriched life that comes through hard work and diligence, and the unproductive and impoverished life resulting from laziness and slothfulness. (Proverbs 10:4-5; 13:4)
- This lesson is addressed to the sluggard.
- The sluggard is the lazy, unproductive, and useless individual.
- They go against the created order, the wisdom of how this world works.
- God made man to work. Work is good, even though work became harder after the Fall.
- The sluggard has a sinful reaction in regards to hard work.
- They take on as little responsibility as possible, they don't work hard, they avoid work, makes excuses to not work, and sleep is the thing they value most.
- Some of their favorite phrases are, *"I'll get to it tomorrow."* *"I'll do it in a little while."*

GO TO THE ANT

- Solomon's rebuke to the sluggard begins with a command. "Go to the ant, consider her ways, and be wise."
- He instructs the lazy person to go to the smallest of the creeping things on the earth for instruction.
- Why study ants? Because they tirelessly work for their survival. They are industrious. They are busy. They are productive.
- They instinctively know how to prioritize and order their work wisely.
- The sluggard is told to consider how the ant doesn't need someone telling them what to do.
- They prepare. They gather. No one needs to tell them to get up, get busy and go to work.
- The sluggard is the opposite of the industrious, self-motivated, self-directed ant.
- The sluggard has no initiative. They are not motivated.
- The sluggard is all talk and no action.
- The sluggard starts things and doesn't finish them.
- The sluggard avoids hard tasks. The sluggard always takes the easy way.
- The sluggard wants their needs met without having to work for them.
- The lazy person usually doesn't think they are lazy.
- There are many people who claim to be busy but in reality they are lazy.
- They do what they want to do instead of what they need to do.
- Laziness can take the form of a person who is unable to finish tasks.
- Proverbs 12:27a Whoever is slothful will not roast his game,
- How much work do you actually do during the hours you are paid to work by your employer?
- There are many who work hard at avoiding work or delaying work.
- Procrastination is laziness. Doing assignments the day before they are due, is slothfulness.

- Proverbs 26:16 The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.
- That's one of the keys to understanding laziness, you often don't know or think you are lazy.
- We've convinced ourselves that we are busy and working hard when we're not.

THE SLUGGER CONDEMNED

- The path of the sluggard is death not life.
- That's why the sluggard is condemned.
- 9 How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? 10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, 11 and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.
- Solomon's rebuke is aimed at waking the sluggard up, admonishing them to repent of their foolish laziness and get up and get to work.
- Sleep is the defining characteristic of the sluggard.
- The point being driven home is that the sluggard doesn't have any perception whatsoever of the unseen consequences of his behavior.
- The threefold repetitions of the word "little," reflects how all of these little things will bring on disaster.
- The sluggard is self-deceived thinking that their little delays will not lead to their ruin.
- V11 Poverty is the outcome of the way of life of the sluggard.
- Like an armed robber that suddenly comes upon someone to steal from them, poverty will come suddenly and by force upon the sluggard.

OUR RESPONSE TO LAZINESS

- Laziness is not just a character flaw, it is sinful.
- And it's not just laziness in work and tasks. We can be spiritually lazy as well.
- Ephesians 5:15-16 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.
- Romans 13:11 Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.
- Laziness is a reflection of a heart attitude that is not in line with the new heart we've been given in Christ.
- Paul addresses the lazy, the unproductive, and the idle, in a couple of his letters.
- 1 Timothy 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.
- He ties someone's faith to their productivity in providing for their own household.
- **2 Thess. 3:6-15** Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. 9 It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. 10 For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. 11 For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. 13 As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. 14 If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.
- We need to encourage one another to work hard and not rely on everyone else to take care of us.
- We need to encourage each other to be diligent workers, to strive to be the best employees, best students, most reliable and trustworthy employees that any company would be proud to have.
- Why? Because our work ethic reflects whether we are in the faith or not.
- The way we steward our time, the way we manage the resources God has given us, is a reflection of how we are living for Him and honoring Him.
- It reflects whether we are walking the path of wisdom, which is Christ, or away from him.

CONSIDER CHRIST

- The world was created by the work of the Wisdom and Word of God.
- As he walked this earth, his life was characterized by his work.
- John 4:34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work"
- As he prayed to the Father, Jesus says, "I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do." (John 17:4)
- Jesus worked up to the point of his death, completing the work he came to accomplish, declaring, "It is finished!"

- He gave his life for us. Weak as we are, sinful as we are, falling short in our work ethic and he offers us forgiveness and grace.
- By His Spirit we are being transformed and conformed into the image of Christ, and that means entering into work and productivity.
- Not working FOR our salvation, but working OUT our salvation.
- Tomorrow when you rise from your bed, determine the priorities, determine to work hard and be productive.
- And consider Christ. Do everything in your life, how you work, the quality of your work, how you deal with your finances, how you steward your resources and gifts, do it all for the glory of God! (1 Cor. 10:31)