

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE -

10.30.2022

OVERCOMING LAZINESS

I. INTRODUCTION

- Recap: A Brief Theology of Work
- Work is good—given prior to the fall (Gen 2:7-8, 15).
- Work is hard—the Fall made work really difficult because the ground was cursed (Gen 3:17-19).
- Work is redeemed—the good news is that because of Christ’s redeeming work, our own work is transformed. We work to the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31).

- Today we'll explore what Proverbs teaches us concerning the outcome of the lazy person.
- Many don't consider laziness that big of a deal.
- Well, it is! God's order and God's Word tell us that it is a really big deal.
- In fact, slothfulness is a sin with devastating consequences.

- Thomas Brooks, *The Privy Key of Heaven*, warns the idle, “*By doing nothing men learn to do evil things. It is easy slipping out of an idle life into an evil and wicked life. Yes, an idle life is of itself evil, for man was made to be active, not to be idle. Idleness is a mother-sin, a breeding-sin; it is the devil's cushion—on which he sits; and the devil's anvil—on which he frames very great and very many sins.*”

- Here's the challenge—the lazy person often doesn't think they are struggling with laziness.
- Many have this tendency in their heart and don't recognize it because they have someone else they hold up as a standard of laziness with which they measure themselves against.
- Let's look at the individual proverbs to develop the portrait of the sluggard.

II. A PORTRAIT OF THE SLUGGARD

Proverbs 24:30-34 I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense,

31 and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. 32 Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction. 33 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, 34 and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

- This man's laziness is evident to everyone.
- This man is not working the ground, he is not cultivating the vines to produce wine.
- He lacks the drive and requisite work ethic.
- The sage makes an observation. Wisdom teaches us that there is an order to the world.
- We do not produce without productivity.
- This man however, is not sweating and therefore not producing or providing.
- He has the resources around him to produce but he has to work for it.
- This man loves his sleep.
- And the result is disastrous, he will come to poverty.
- If you do not do what needs to be done, if you love sleep more than work, then your life will be in disorder and you will end up impoverished and unable to provide for your family."

1. THE SLUGGARD HAS UNDISCIPLINED SLEEP HABITS

- Proverbs 6:10-11 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.
- Those who are lazy and rest when they should work will be impoverished.
- **Proverbs 19:15** Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger.
- **Proverbs 20:13** Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes, and you will have plenty of bread.
- This is the portrait of someone who loves their bed too much and is leaving the important things undone.
- **Proverbs 26:14** As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed.
- This is the individual who loves the snooze button. You can't earn a living if you're sleeping your life away.

2. THE SLUGGARD HAS DIFFICULTY WITH WORK

a. STARTING

- Proverbs 14:23 In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty.
- Generally if you work, there is gain. At least you'll eat.
- But the sluggard is all talk and no action.
- Proverbs 20:4 The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing.
- The lazy person does not work when they should be working. They're doing everything but what they should be doing.

b. FINISHING

- Proverbs 12:27 Whoever is slothful will not roast his game, but the diligent man will get precious wealth.
- This is a great word picture for the sluggard. He doesn't finish what he started.
- Proverbs 26:15 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth. (Prov 19:24)
- The sluggard has right in front of them what they need or want but they won't reach out and take it.
- The lazy person always wants others to do things for them so they won't have to exert much effort.

3. THE SLUGGARD MAKES AN IDOL OUT OF BEING IDLE

- The sluggard's god is sleep, leisure and pleasure.
- Proverbs 12:11 Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense. (Prov. 28:19)
- If you get up every day and go to work, you will have plenty to eat, you won't go hungry.
- There is a time for leisure and pleasure, but the lazy person lacks the sense to discern that his love of worthless pursuits will bring him to poverty and ruin.

- Proverbs 21:17 Whoever loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich.
- Wisdom teaches us that humans have the tendency to take good things and make them god things; we turn pleasure seeking into our work and make it the ultimate goal in life.
- When Paul catalogs the list of vices and sins marking godlessness in the last days, He writes to Timothy, that people will be "lovers of self, lovers of money, and lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:1-5).
- Doing things according to God's order enriches.
- Making an idol out of our idleness, impoverishes.

4. THE SLUGGARD ALWAYS HAS AN EXCUSE

- Proverbs 22:13 The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!" (Prov 26:13)
- Some of the most creative excuses for not working or getting something done comes from the sluggard.

5. THE SLUGGARD HAS UNFULFILLED DESIRES

- Proverbs 13:4 The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.
- Proverbs 21:25-26 The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labor. 26 All day long he craves and craves, but the righteous gives and does not hold back.
- Bruce Waltke writes, "*The appetite keeps normal people alive by driving them to work to satisfy it, but it kills the sluggard because his hands refuse to satisfy it. His unfulfilled craving kills him both by starvation and frustration.*"
- The lazy person desires so much but those desires ultimately end up destroying them and they remain unfilled and unsatisfied.
- They want but they won't work to get it.
- The less they are engaged in productive work, the more those desires get bigger and bigger with no outlet for their realization.
- They want more and more but they get less and less.
- What happens then? They end up indulging their sinful desires.
- Charles Spurgeon, John Ploughman's Talk: Plain Advice for Plain People, writes this about the idle person, "*A man who wastes his time and his strength in sloth offers himself to be a target for the devil, who is a wonderfully good rifleman and will riddle the idler with his shots: in other words, idle men tempt the devil to tempt them. He who plays when he should work has an evil spirit to be his playmate; and he who neither works nor plays is a workshop for Satan.*"

6. THE SLUGGARD BRINGS RUIN ON THEMSELVES AND OTHERS

a. THEMSELVES

- **Proverbs 12:24** The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor.
- If you work **diligently**, generally, you will be **rewarded** and **promoted**.
- The **lazy** person will find that they will have **less and less freedom**.

Proverbs 15:19 The way of a sluggard is like a hedge of thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway.

- Your laziness will have **repercussions** for **years to come**.
- **Getting out** of the **pattern of laziness is painful**.
- We have to **own up to our responsibilities** and **engage** in **whatever sphere God has entrusted** us with and be **productive** in it.
- The **longer you persist in your laziness** the **deeper** and **denser** those **thorny hedges are** that you will need to **walk through**.
- But look at the **path of wisdom for the righteous**. Their path is a **level highway**.

Proverbs 19:15 Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger.

- Hunger, impoverishment, difficulty in life, all of these are **consequences of laziness**.
- The lazy person's life is in **disorder**.
- And it's **not just financial ruin and poverty**, but **spiritual also**.

b. OTHERS

- Proverbs 10:4-5 A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. 5 He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.
- Those who need us lose out because of our laziness.
- You need to consider how your laziness is hurting those around you and those who depend on you.
- **Proverbs 10:26** Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him.
- "Those who send him" refers to those who depend on him.
- Because they're lazy, it's like something bitter to the taste or getting smoke in your eyes, the lazy person is unpleasant to be around and annoying.
- **Proverbs 18:9** Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys.
- The sluggard is **compared to a violent person**.
- Laziness is **violence**, only **violence works quicker**, whereas **laziness works slower**, but the **outcome is the same**.
- Laziness is **neglect that injures others**.
- **Proverbs 26:16** The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.
- Lazy people are **arrogant**, always **justifying themselves**.

III. OVERCOMING LAZINESS

1. Repent

- See laziness as a destructive pattern of sin.

- Begin to see how your laziness has led you to excuse away your sinful behavior.
- Recognize how laziness has hurt people around you.
- Proverbs 3:7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.

2. Determine to work to the glory of God

- Christ has redeemed us and therefore redeemed our work.
- God has given us good work to do in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:10).
- Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,
- Titus 3:14 And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful. (Unproductive)

3. Redeem the time!

- Ephesians 5:15-17 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. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
- Prioritize what needs to be done over what you want to do.
- Prioritize your spiritual walk, everything else flows from this.

4. Look to Christ

- We've already talked previously about Christ's example of work.
- He was not lazy. He did everything the Father sent him to do.
- He completed the work.
- We can look to him as our example of diligence.
- Proverbs 21:25-26 The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labor. 26 All day long he craves and craves, but the righteous gives and does not hold back.
- In contrast to the sluggard, the righteous is generous, he has enough to give and not hold back.
- We can't be righteous of our own.
- The only way to become righteous is by trusting the only righteous one —Jesus Christ.
- He offered himself up for our laziness.
- You won't work yourself out of the hedge of thorns your sinful condition has brought without looking to Christ and turning to him for salvation.
- Because he did not hold back in his redeeming work, we have forgiveness and righteousness and can live productive lives for the glory of God.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?