

Proverbs of Solomon – Proverbs 28:1

There are two or three truly proverbial proverbs here in this chapter. By that I mean, they are so common that they are lifted from this book to become a part of many sermons. *“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.”* We may spend a few minutes on **verse 9** next Wednesday. **Verse 13** is also a well-known statement – *“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaken them shall have mercy.”*

This evening, I might have skipped over **v.1**, if the Lord didn't make me look at it again in the light of **v. 5**. *“The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.”* *“Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things.”* These verses don't say the same thing, but they shed a little light on each other.

Why do the wicked flee when there is no one pursuing them?

This has been the theme of thousands of stories down through the centuries – both fiction and true. Isn't this a part of *“Les Miserables.”* Sometimes the guilty man goes insane – driven there by the chauffeur of his own heart.

Sometimes he becomes obsessed about doing good to offset the evil he committed in his youth. Then after years of fear, he is relieved when he is finally exposed.

Why do the wicked flee when no man pursueth? Because God created into every human heart something we call a *“conscience.”* The word comes from Latin and speaks about *“knowing oneself.”* That wicked man is guilty, and he knows it, even if he refuses to admit it publically. And as a result, he is constantly looking over his shoulder expecting the police or a judge. That Old Testament Israelite who never confessed to causing the accidental death of his neighbor, should have fled to the city of refuge, but he didn't. And for months, or years, his conscience forced him watch for the dead man's *“goel”* – his avenger.

Why do the wicked flee? Because God has created into everyone of us, a certain degree of imagination. The guilty can easily imagine the danger they are in. But it's not just fanciful flights of imagination – it is God directed imagination – it is a well-placed fear. Deep down in the depths of his heart he knows **Numbers 32:23** to be true – *“behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.”*

But sometimes, through months of erosion, the wicked man's conscience begins to form a callus. A scab keeps it from bleeding quite so much. Or that guilty man has taken a hot iron and burned his conscience over and over so that it becomes seared. Its spiritual nerves have been killed. It is no longer able to speak and point to the man's guilt.

We have to admit that this verse refers to a general principle, and not all wicked men flee. With time some of them get over their feeling of guilt, until they finally come face to face with God either in conviction or in judgment.

The problem is, as **verse 5** says, – Those *“evil men understand not judgment.”* It is said that there is honor among thieves – that is, there are rules that even wicked men follow. But those rules vary between groups of thieves and their respective covens. Robin Hood thinks that stealing from poor people is a crime, but taking from the rich is permissible. Someone else says that since someone is covered by insurance there isn't a crime in stealing from him. And another convinces himself that if there is no blood shed, then the crime is acceptable. None of these evil men understand the nature of God's judgment. Sin is never acceptable.

The time to run to the City of Refuge is when the crime is still fresh, and the city gates are still open. The wicked may fear retaliation and run away from it, but they don't understand God's judgment. They don't understand its extent or its thorough nature. They can't fathom God's righteousness or His omniscience. One of the darkest areas of their lack of knowledge is that God's judgment is sure – it is guaranteed. They may flee the police; they may fear the vengeance of the kinsman redeemer. But they almost always reject the concept of God's Great White Judgment Throne. They just don't understand. We must all appear before either the Judgment Seat of Christ of **II Corinthians** or the Great White Throne of **Revelation 20**. This is where **verse 13** comes into play – *“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaken them shall have mercy.”* Be a man and face your guilt while there is still time.

“The wicked fled when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion.”

In contrast to the fearful, guilty man there stands the bold righteous man. He is not bold because he is sinless, but because He has been declared righteous by God. He is not bold because he is self-righteous and proud to have not committed the sins of that wicked man. He is not bold because of his pride at his accomplishments or his self-restraint. He is bold because he is standing on the righteousness of Christ as a foundation of solid rock.

He is bold in the sense that he has no reason to flee or even to look over his shoulder. He has been forgiven of his sins and crimes by the King – the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is not simply that God is now looking away and

pretending that the man is a good citizen. This righteous man wears the imputed righteousness of the Lamb of God – who paid the penalty proscribed by the law. This righteous man is wearing the robe of Christ’s righteousness and the avenger of blood cannot touch him.

Speaking of lions, look at the boldness of Daniel when he is pushed into the lion’s den. He had nothing to fear from the teeth of king of beasts because he was enrobed in the grace of the King of kings. And then there were his three friends – Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah – facing the incinerator. Would they have been bold in their to answer the king if they had been guilty of even for a moment obeying his wicked command? *“O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”*

“Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things.” Why are the righteous bold? It is because they understand stuff. They understand that above and beyond the judgment of human courts there is a supreme court. They understand that God is the final Judge of sin and righteousness.

Do you remember what Christ said about the ministry of His Spirit? *“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”* Those who are righteous understand that statement – all three points of that statement. And they also understand the basic nature of God’s deliverance from sin – ie. they understand salvation.

So they are bold as a lion, because they are standing on a foundation of righteousness. And *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with (their) spirit”* of their freedom and position before God. *“The fear of the Lord is strong confidence and his children shall have a place of refuge” – Prov. 14:26.* David declared, *“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”* Isaiah encouraged the righteous by praying on our behalf, *“(Lord) Thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”* God will keep in perfect peace the man who understands and trusts that salvation is in Christ, So *“trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.”*

“The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion.” *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.”*

As Paul said in **Romans 8** – *“If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*