
Sermon Notes

June 23, 2019

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Look and Learn
Proverbs 24:30-34

Out for a Stroll

- ❖ Learning from unlikely sources
- ❖ While out for a stroll, Solomon makes a sudden stop at the field of a sluggard, a man lacking sense
 - Solomon uses this scene for self-examination
 - Solomon considers the dangers that loafing, laziness, idleness and procrastination can bring into his own life
- ❖ If we have eyes that see, ears that listen, hearts that want to learn, we can find lessons any and everywhere
 - "To minds that are spiritually awake and alert, nettles have their use and weeds may serve as a source of doctrine." (C. H. Spurgeon)
 - weeds remind us of what sin does in the world as well as in our hearts
 - weeds show us the kind of produce we will reap if we sow seeds of rebellion against God in our inner selves

Wasted Land... Wasted Life

- ❖ The sluggard's vineyard is both uncultivated and unprotected

- ❖ The sluggard is lacking in mind, will, heart
 - yet, the sluggard is a person of property
 - but, the sluggard lacks the sense he needs to know what to do with his land
- ❖ True wisdom is practical
 - wisdom seeks to make the best use and the best end of everything
 - wisdom makes the best use of the time because the days are evil (Eph 5:16)
- ❖ The sluggard has
 - opportunities he does not use
 - responsibilities he does not fulfill
 - capabilities he does not utilize
- ❖ God never calls you to any service for which He does not equip you
 - God looks for you to serve Him and to serve others out of what you have, not out of what you don't have
 - Jesus' parable of the talents
 - if God has given you the power to do good, DO IT
- ❖ In some way or another, we all have a tendency to put some things off or to "kick things down the road" a bit
 - it is possible the sluggard has every intention of being earnest, working hard and making up for lost time
 - Solomon draws a connecting line between the sluggard's field and our souls

- procrastination and putting things off becomes the norm rather than the exception
- do not be negligent or slothful when it comes to the Lord's work
- ❖ Solomon points out that whether or not the sluggard tends his field, it **WILL** produce something (either a fruitful crop or weeds)

Unprotected

- ❖ The sight of the unprotected field is part of what fuels Solomon's meditation
 - the broken fence causes Solomon to consider a backslidden, unprotected life
 - an unprotected heart and mind is an open invitation for Satan to move in with every sort of stray thought, lust, desire, imagination and attack an unfenced soul
- ❖ You may have gotten off to a good start in the Christian life, but, over time, you have neglected the "fences" of your life
 - what was once so bright and clear, so alive and vibrant is hazy and fuzzy and sometimes forgotten
 - how vital it is for you to guard yourself and keep the fences of your life in good condition when it comes to issues that deal with truth
 - we are meant to have backbones and stand strong for the truth
- ❖ *For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.* (Matthew 7:13-14)

- ❖ Keep your fences secure and your spiritual backbone strong
 - *Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life.* (Prov. 4:23)
 - cultivate holy habits (Bible reading, meditation, prayer)
 - rid yourself of evil habits
 - pick up your cross and follow Christ
 - stay close to Christ
- ❖ Some holy habits must be developed alongside others
 - family prayer and devotions
 - small groups and shared worship
 - a public profession of faith through baptism
- ❖ For some, it is time to wake up: *Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.* (Eph 5:14)
- ❖ For some, it's time to humbly give praise and thanks to God and to worship Him with unrestrained joy

Personal Reflection

1. Do you make the most of the opportunities God gives you? Do you fulfill the responsibilities God entrusts to you? Do you utilize the capabilities God gives you? If not, how can you "step up" in any of these areas?
2. In what areas of life do you tend to procrastinate? What will you do to overcome these tendencies?
3. Which items from the list above of things to do to keep your fences secure and your backbone strong are you going to pursue in your life?