

Sermon title: Interesting Proverbs - 1

Sermon text: Prov 11:22

Introduction

1. In the past, we have studied Proverbs:

a. topically – lying, fear of the Lord etc

b. practically – hard work, laziness,

c. relationally – husband-wife, boss-employee, kings-subjects

2. Today, these are a set of interesting, unusual proverbs.

+ counter-intuitive (goes against our human nature/experience)

+ easy to understand but difficult to practice (we refuse to believe that the proverb is true)

+ difficult to understand the meaning of the proverb

List of interesting, unusual proverbs

1. Prov 11:22 – difficult to understand the proverb
2. Prov 15:1 – counter-intuitive proverb
3. Prov 20: 22 & 24:29 – easy to understand; but difficult to practice

1. Difficult to understand proverb

Prov 11:22 Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.

Background

Women in ancient Israel worn gold nose rings for ornamental purposes. (Gen 24:47; Isa 3:21; Eze 16:12)

Interpretation

gold ring :: externally beautiful :: attractive woman

pig :: internally unclean :: woman who shows no discretion

Immediate meaning

No amount of attractive external accessories (hair curls, Dior perfume, manicure, pedicure etc) can change an inherently immoral/immodest woman.

Extended meaning

No amount of attractive external accessories (Rolex, freehold properties, Michelin star restaurants etc) can change an inherently ungodly person.

Application

1. Young women

Be truly beautiful – dress modestly & reflect the values of a godly woman.

2. Young men

When looking out for the gold ring (attractive woman) – watch out if the gold ring (attractive woman) is on a pig (immodest woman).

2. Counter-intuitive proverb

Prov 15:1

A gentle answer turns away wrath but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Observation

This goes completely against our experience in the world. In our experience, the louder you shout, the more often you shout, the often you get your way – you get things done.

This is an example of “soft power” / “soft diplomacy”.

Application

Here, the Teacher invites us into an alternative world – an alternative experience.

The Teacher wants us to adopt “soft power” – to speak gently:

- + in the midst of a crisis when everyone else is in panic and shouting mode
- + during a difficult and contentious discussion with an unreasonable or an ungodly boss
- + in our encounter with a contemptuous counter person in a hotel (Grindelwald) or at the airline counter.

3. Easy to understand; but difficult to practice

Prov 20:22

Do not say, “I will pay you back for this wrong!” Wait for the Lord and He will avenge you.

Observation

+ “wait” – Our natural reaction is “for how long??”

+ “He will avenge you” – Our natural reaction is “when??”

Application

As we “wait for the Lord” – however long it takes – we begin to take on God’s character of patience.

We begin to take on God’s attitude towards His enemies – us! (Rom 5:7 – 8)

Easy to understand; but difficult to practice

Prov 24:29

Do not say “I’ll do to them as they have done to me; I will pay them back for what they did”

Observation

+ “I do to them as they have done to me” – Our natural reaction is “I won’t exceed this limit!”

Application

1. We over-estimate ourselves (our ability) to measure out revenge.
Our natural tendency is to take revenge way out of proportion.

2. In the corporate world, there are certain things which only our boss or senior partner can handle.
Sometimes, we don’t have the correct:

- a. skill or knowledge
 - b. authority
 - c. temperament
- to handle it

Therefore, we leave it to our senior partner to handle it.

Similarly, as Christians, we have a senior Partner – revenge is His dept.
Therefore, leave revenge to our senior Partner to handle it.

Application

1. God wants us to wait for Him – not because God is unable to avenge us.

Rather, it is because God wants us to adopt a little more of His character.

2. God is also patient with us; God does not repay us immediately for our sins.

3. Let's learn from David:

a. 1 Sam 24 – First time David spares Saul

b. 1 Sam 26 – Second time David spares Saul

The example of David

S/No	Description	1 Sam 24	1 Sam 26
1	Saul hunts David with 3,000 men	1 – 2	2
2	Saul is caught off-guard	3	7
3	David's men say that "God has delivered Saul to David"	4a	8
4	David takes physical proof	4b	12
5	David rejects his men's suggestion to kill Saul	6 – 7	9
6	David confronts Saul	8 – 9	17 – 19
7	David reveals the physical proof	10 – 11	22
8	Saul is conscience stricken & admits his sin	16b – 21	21
9	Saul and David part ways	22b	25