

DO NOT FORGET
May 21, 2017 Morning Service
Proverbs 31:1-9

Take your Bible and go to Proverbs 31 today. In our second service we'll recognize our graduates and we're focusing in there but this message – what I asked Grace to share is what one thing is it you'd say, "Don't forget this"? Well that's exactly what Proverbs 31 in the first nine verses has to say to us. "Do not forget these things." Proverbs 31. Most of us think of that, about who can find a virtuous woman. Well that's good but that doesn't start until verse 10. The first nine verses mother is giving advice and we find the word of God saying in Proverbs 31:1.

*The words of King Lemuel, the oracle which his mother taught him:
What, O my son?
And what, O son of my womb?
And what, O son of my vows?
Do not give your strength to women,
Or your ways to that which destroys kings.
It is not for kings, O Lemuel,
It is not for kings to drink wine,
Or for rulers to desire strong drink,
For they will drink and forget what is decreed,
And pervert the rights of all the afflicted.
Give strong drink to him who is perishing,
And wine to him whose life is bitter.
Let him drink and forget his poverty
And remember his trouble no more.
Open your mouth for the mute,
For the rights of all the unfortunate.
Open your mouth, judge righteously,
And defend the rights of the afflicted and needy.¹*

Three times Lemuel's mother uses the word "What? What? What?" When you begin to look in the construct of that Hebrew word here, "Listen, my son, the son of my womb. I birthed you. The son of my vows. I vowed unto God." The word there is remember. "Don't forget this. I've poured this into you, young man. Do not forget these things." Have you ever looked at your child and they've done something and you just say, "What?" Well if you've got kids you have. "What were you thinking?" And they look at you like, "Thinking?" It never entered their mind. You're trying to say, "I taught you and don't forget these things." There are four statements I want to make to all of us, to our Internet audience, television, radio, to those of us in the room, and then very pointedly will I say these things to the senior class but this is for everyone this day. Do not forget what we find here.

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Number one. Do not forget, sexual immorality will destroy you. Sexual immorality will destroy you. Look what she says in verse 3. Do not give your strength to women or your ways to that which destroys kings. If you back up in Proverbs to chapter 7 you find the long, long discourse about the adulteress and when you get to verse 21 you find these words: *With her many persuasions she entices him; with her flattering lips she seduces him. Suddenly he follows her as an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as one in fetters to the discipline of a fool, until an arrow pierces through his liver; As a bird hastens to the snare, So he does not know that it will cost him his life.*

You listen. Sexual immorality before, during, and after marriage, it will destroy you. God has set a fence around the marriage bed. He has said, "One man and one woman is all that makes marriage under God, that sexual intercourse is honored and holy only inside that fence." Do not forget that sexual immorality will destroy you. I've watched it in this church for years and now the last ten years for a young man and a young woman to come to the marriage altar pure, they're looked on like they've lost their minds. It is still God's way to save yourself for one until marriage for life, til death part you. Our world attacks that on every side. Then I see inside marriage and people's eyes begin to wander and adultery comes. It wrecks and ruins a marriage when one of the partners stray. It begins with a simple flirtation. I'm telling you, sexual immorality will destroy you. The world laughs at biblical purity.

The most watched comedy on television in the last five years is "The Big Bang Theory." It's funny. These folks are absolutely incredible. They make \$1 million apiece per episode. It all started with a bunch of nerds, science nerds, but it moved from scientific nerds to fornicators. The scientists that couldn't even get a date then began to live and sleep with friends. One of the jokes always made was Sheldon's mother, the Bible-believer from Texas. The world laughs through its sitcoms at biblical purity. Archie Bunker and "All in the Family" is where it really started. Down through the years media has attacked broadside Bible living. Do not forget sexual immorality will destroy you. Be pure, be true, be holy. Be pure, be true, be holy. Be pure, be true, be holy.

You reach over and take her hand for the first time. The socks run up and down your legs like a window shade. Make sure you keep courting one another and taking care of yourself so the window shades keep going up and down.

I will never forget 1976. Liz and I were to get married. I was a pastor of a church. I said, "I think we're supposed to talk to somebody," Brother Wayne. I couldn't hardly counsel myself so I called to the Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Dr. Charles Carter, who's preached here for us. We went over and spent four hours with Dr. Carter on a Wednesday afternoon. He put all the counseling into one deal.

I will never forget he looked at me and he said, "Young man, never forget this. Sex is like climbing a ladder." In my mind I can remember until today what I thought. This old man has lost his mind. He said, "What do you see on television? Somebody meets somebody for the first time. They run to a room, jump in the bed, run to the top

of the ladder, and ring the bell.” He said, “Young man, it does not work that way.” He said, “Your relationship with this lovely girl. How do you climb a ladder?” I said, “One rung at a time?” He said, “Precisely.” He said, “Never stop climbing the ladder. It was the greatest advice I ever got from my marital relationship. Always reaching for the next rung on the ladder. Amen.

I see some of you in this service that have been married 116 years. It does me and it does these seniors a world of good when they see a senior, senior adult couple holding hands walking out of church. Amen. Kind of leaning on each other, headed to the finish line because they were pure, they’re true, they’re holy, and they plan to finish that way. Oh what a great legacy you hand to your family when you start right, live right, and finish right.

Sexual immorality will destroy you. Number two, Lemuel’s momma said, “Alcohol will ruin you.” She gives Lemuel in verse 4, “It’s not for kings to drink wine or rulers to desire strong drink.” They drink and forget what they decreed. A king will give a law and get drunk and forget what he wrote. Proverbs chapter 20, verse number 1 says: *Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is intoxicated by it is [stupid, he is] not wise.*

When you read in the 23rd chapter of Proverbs, many of you read these Proverbs every month, every day as I’ve encouraged us to do it. One Proverb, there’s one for every day of the month. It’s good to read those every day and as you’ve read through you’ve gotten to chapter 23 again and again and then you find that all about wine and alcohol and intoxication. When he gets down to verse 29 he says: *Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long over wine, those who go to taste mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things and your mind will utter perverse things. And you will be like one who lies down in the middle of the sea, or like one who lies down on the top of a mast. “They struck me, but I did not become ill; they beat me, but I did not know it. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink.”*

Don’t forget. Alcohol will ruin you. Now you talk about going counter-cultural. My Lord. You bring up alcohol in our culture today, it’s as if you’ve said something perverse about your mother. Richard Rojas was 26 years old. He got kicked out of the Navy because he was a drunk. Last week he drove his car into Times Square in New York where most everybody here that’s traveled any at all and walked in that area, ran his car through there and many people were injured. He’d been smoking marijuana laced with PCP. The drunk man was high and he ran over and killed Allyssa Ellis, 18 years old. One year ago this week in Michigan she graduated from high school. She was in New York with her family, with her little 13-year-old sister, and this addict, this drunk took her life. He ruined the family vacation. He ruined that girl. He ruined that family and he ruined his own life. Alcohol will do that.

You say, "Pastor, I like a little red wine with my pasta." Remember, your preschooler's watching. Remember, you've got a testimony or you used to have. I know I'm old foggy here. Even young preachers today all across our Southern Baptist Convention are saying, "You've got to divide this. It's okay to drink as long as you don't get drunk." Well I've got a little insight for you. If you don't drink you'll never get drunk. Folks that are going to graduate from high school, many of them are going to go and get fallen down drunk the night after they get their diploma. Well come on back. We meet every Tuesday and Friday night at Most Excellent Way. You crawl up in that bottle and you can't get out, come on. We'll help you. We'll help you get out. Come on. We'll get you a bed over here at the Charis House after get you out of jail. You've lost your job, broke your momma's heart.

Friend, you ought not drink because it's your testimony. Number two, the Bible says don't make your brother stumble. It's a stumbling block to other people. You say, "Well, I just like it. It calms me a little bit." Well God love you. Just read the word of God and pray. No good thing will come out of that. You can't show me one good deal that'll come out of that bottle. I know that you can't even hardly illustrate with it because I was shocked. I was absolutely shocked when I found out that the President of the United States, Donald John Trump, will not touch alcohol. He does not drink a drop. He owns the largest winery in the world but he doesn't drink any. He makes money off of everybody else getting drunk. He just says, "No good thing comes out of it," because he had a brother that killed himself through the bottle. He nor his children drink. I was shocked. I went back and found multiple sources to find out that was true because I've had people say to me, "You know, in this world you can't become anything if you don't drink with the crowd." Well you evidently can become President of the United States without doing it.

Friend, hear me. The Bible condemns drunkenness on every turn and alcohol will ruin you. Sexual immorality will destroy you. Alcohol will ruin you. Number three, Lemuel's momma says, "The least of these need you." Amen. Don't forget that the down and out need you. He says it right here in the text when you read verses 8 and 9. *Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all the unfortunate. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the afflicted and needy.* He says two times. Open your mouth. There are times your mother says, "Shut your mouth," but here she says, "Lemuel, open your mouth. Speak up and speak out." Who does he speak up for? Who does he speak out for? The mute, the unfortunate, the afflicted, and the needy. Those are the four people that she listed.

The mute. Speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. We have people all around us that can't have a voice but you can have a voice. Some of you know the Congressman but other people don't know him. Speak up for them. It's not just the mute that can't make a sound. It's also those that don't have a voice themselves. Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Number two. Speak up for the unfortunate. That's the orphan. The word in the Hebrew literally is the vanishing, those that are vanishing that you never see. They're

just going away. Speak up. They need you. Thirdly for the afflicted. These are the poor and the weak and the lowly.

The City Council of Pensacola is going through a rough patch right now. What to do with homeless people begging on the street. You walk up and down Palafox. There are days you almost have to step over people. I understand if you have a business there. It's very tough. Yet at the same time trying to care. It's a two-edged sword and I understand it. Dear friend, when we find people that are down and out and they're afflicted, they're poor and they're weak and they're lowly, we need to speak up for them. We need to try to be of help. It doesn't mean you don't have rules and regulations. We have people come to church here drunk. When they make a disturbance we try to help them and when we can't help them we call the law and the law comes and they help them. They give them a good place to sleep and something to eat. I'm not saying that you let the inmates run the place but I am saying, friend, when people are down and out and hurting, don't turn a closed mouth and have no voice.

When you leave – well you won't but if you stayed til the second service, if you went out the back gate of Olive you'll see a group of people that are having church out on the soccer fields. There's a group of eight, ten, twelve and there's a family or two that get with them. These are the homeless people that live in our area. They have a worship service out here and have a little lunch for them every Sunday on our property. You say, "Why won't they come in here?" Well we know they're welcome but they don't feel welcome. They don't look welcome. They often don't smell welcome. It's a hard place for them to come. Well some of our people go to where they are. Thank God for that.

The least of these. The mute, the unfortunate, and then the needy. That's the beggar, the homeless that we've just been talking about. George Barna, who is one of the great religious surveyors of our time, he says teenagers, when surveyed, nine out of ten teenagers believe one person can make a significant difference in our world. They simply wrestle with how to do it.

Friend, that's why we started the Ministry Village at Olive. When we started that I said, "It rests on three legs, the stool of the Ministry Village." Number one. It's needed. There are hurting people. Number two, it's biblical. It's right. We do the right thing. Thirdly, it's a place for people to serve. There's a whole group of senior, senior saints. They're servers. Hundreds of thousands of baby boomers retiring every day and looking for something to do after they get tired of playing golf. They ought to go out there and go to work. These are the folks that volunteer. I said, "We ought to have a place at Olive where you can volunteer." Friend, if you're looking for a place to volunteer, come to Vacation Bible School. We've got a place for you. We've got the leadership in place. We just need a lot of folks to come help us. Kool-Aid, cookies, bounce houses, teaching the Bible, helping special needs kids. There's all kinds of places. You need to serve.

Don't forget the least of these need you. God didn't give you a job for 40 years and a big sack of money to sit on so you can take a cruise around the world and live there for every day. God blessed you so you can be a blessing. When you get to the other side, He's not going to ask you how many states you visited. "As you've done it to the least of these, you've done it unto Me," Jesus said.

Don't forget. Don't forget. Sexual immorality, it'll destroy you. Alcohol will ruin you and the least of these needs you. There's one more thing I want you not to forget and it's in this text. Belonging to God is priority number one. You read Proverbs 31. The words of King Lemuel. Now the question begs. Who in the world is Lemuel? Well the word Lemuel means belongs to God. Now there are two interpretations of who Lemuel was.

Number one. Some Bible interpreters believe that this was Bathsheba's name for Solomon. It's just a theory. Because Solomon is the man in Proverbs and writing that this is just another name for him. It could be. Others believe that Lemuel is a convert to the worship of the true God, a man who is Arabian by descent and has come out of paganism to confess Jehovah as his Lord. Whichever one, this king belongs to God and prior to number one in your life, in yours and mine and yours and everyone, the number one priority ought to be you belong to God. That you are God's child and that you are God's servant and that you are living for God. You ought to be sure you're saved.

Dear friend, you're in this room or you're watching by Internet, live stream. Are you sure you're saved today? Do you know you're saved? Jesus died for you. He died for everybody in the world. He died for our sins but not only our sins but the sins of the whole world, the Bible says. He died for you and you can be saved. You hear His voice and you come to Him. You can be saved. But be very careful. Proverbs 29:1 says that he that is often reprov'd and hardened of his neck shall suddenly be cut off and that without a remedy. Dear friend, you can come to a day where God no longer calls you. You can come to the place that you hear me and hear me and through me and other preachers and other teachers and other soul winners, you can hear the voice of God but God will not always, He'll not always call. There is a day when you've crossed the deadline.

Friend, if you don't know God today you ought to make it priority number one in your life, to know that you know you know, that you're saved and going to heaven when you die. You never know, if you're a high school senior you may get run over next year and die. This little girl did. The probability is that you'll live longer than you've got money but you may not live through the day. Make it priority number one that you know God. You ought to be a saved man or woman. You ought to be a spirit-filled man or woman. Amen. I mean filled with the Holy Ghost of God. Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on me. You ought to walk in contradiction to the norms of the culture. Be different. Salt and light in a dark and perverse generation. Priority number one. Be sure of your salvation. Be spirit-filled. Be scripture-saturated.

My son, old Bennett. He worked here for us for six years. Old Bennett will be home next Sunday. He'll be here for the summer. He's going to be at our house ten weeks. I ordered 14 yards of dirt last week. I've got it out there in the yard waiting on him. He's got a job for the summer but if he's going to live at my house he's going to shovel dirt. Eat at my table. I sent him a picture of it, a big mound of dirt, a shovel stuck in there. I said, "Come on home. We're ready. If you're going to eat and drink at my house, we've got a little yard doings to do." He sent me back a "Yes, sir," with an exclamation point after it. A little smiley face. Yeah, lying like a dog. Old Bennett will be home and if all goes well on Friday he'll spend the night with his grandma and granddaddy and then coming here Saturday.

That boy's read more words this last year in law school than he's ever read in his life. Every time his mother sends him a care package she'll say, "What do you want?" He said, "Send me beef jerky and yellow highlighters." He said, "I'm out of highlighters." He's read more pages. I always remind him, "Son, there's some pages you don't need to forget." I don't care how busy you are, you ought to be saturated in scripture. Read the word of God.

My Bible every now and then gets a little – well my eyes are not as good as they used to be. I got a guy doing a little work on me. At the end of June I'm getting a little more work done. He promised me I'll see even better than I do now. I'm doing fine. I'm not blind. You know, it's not as quick. So in my quiet time I'm reading through the Bible this year and I just set my phone over there and I opened it up and I began to read and I let the phone read it out loud while I watch it on scripture. I'm hearing it and seeing it. I said to myself, "Why didn't you think of this a long time ago?" Two things. Number one, it just is a double enforcer and the words you don't know how to pronounce they help you with it. Amen. So I just read the word and listen to the word. You can run it back and say, "I don't know what that was."

Be scripture saturated. You're going to be full of something. People are going to tell you you are. You're full of yourself. You're full of the devil. You're full of.... You ought to be full of the scriptures. Priority number one is to belong to God. Know you're saved, spirit-filled, scripture saturated and number four last, surrendered to God's ways. I surrender all.

This Thursday night, Ordinary Men group's meeting. The group's just kind of arisen in our church. Just an organic gathering of men of every age group. I'm praying every senior high student and boy that graduates will go to that Ordinary Men's group. Mark July 1. We're going to have a prayer meeting for the City of Pensacola on July 1. I'll tell you where it's going to be next week. I'm working on a place. It's going to be a cool place if I can get it. Daylight July 1, Saturday morning, we're going to get on our knees and pray for our city and ask God to do a work. We've got to be surrendered unto the Lord. I can hear them now. "Oh Lord, Saturday morning, 6:00." You'll get up and go bird hunting, deer hunting, go to a ball game at 4:00 in the morning. Am I telling the truth? You'll get up and go fishing. You can't even see the water. That's okay if you bring me fish but I'm just telling you.

Forty-five years ago this month I walked across the stage at Pisgah High School. It was hot as a gym with no air conditioning because that's where we were. It was an old cracker box gym where I spent half my life. I prayed at my high school graduation. I wasn't the president of the class. I wasn't the most likely to do anything. They asked me to pray. God had called me to preach when I was a senior in high school and I started preaching. The first sermon I ever preached was in the book of Kings where Elijah was going down the road and they made fun of him and God sent the bears out of the woods and killed those troublemakers. I don't know what the sermon was but the title was, "The Bear Facts." That was the title. It was about 11 minutes long. Some of you wish I would go back there. I just had one passion in my life when I was 17 graduating from high school. I wanted to please God with my life. That's what I wanted to do.

You see, I grew up in the Jesus Movement. They had Jesus on the front page, on the front cover of *Time Magazine* in 1970. Jesus was sweeping the country. We've not seen a revival since then. It's been nearly 50 years since America's seen a genuine revival across the continent. I'm going to say to these seniors at 11:00 and I'd say to you. I believe He can do it again. He's just looking for one somebody. He's looking for one here, one there, over here that'll stand like a Daniel and stand alone and say, "I belong to God."

It's priority number one. If they kill me, I'll stand for Christ. If I lose my job, I'll stand for Christ. If it costs me everything I've got, I'll stand for Christ. So I got me a book. A King James Thompson Chain Reference Bible. I preached at the New Home Baptist Church on that Sunday. The next Sunday I preached at the Pisgah Baptist Church. Then they called me to the Emmanuel Church in Flat Rock, Alabama. I preached a weeklong revival. They gave me \$50. I bought my Bible with it. It cost me \$45. I've got it laying on my desk today. The first preaching Bible I ever had. I hope my kids fight over it when I die. It sits right on the corner of my desk.

All I wanted to do was preach the word. I wasn't very good at it but I got surrendered. I went off to college and played basketball and they invited me to the first Baptist Church of Scottsboro, Alabama. Let me tell you, friend, that is high cotton for a boy from up on the mountain. That was the county seat town. That was the bunch we hated in basketball. Scottsboro Wildcats. I'd rather beat them as eat them and they invited me to the First Baptist Church where doctor somebody was the pastor. I preached and my basketball team came to hear me. Two of those old boys got saved that night. It wasn't because of the preaching. It was because belonging to God was priority number one.

God will let you run on passion for a while but He expects you to get smart to go along with it. If you're not careful you'll begin to rely on your smarts and forget your passion. You can't have that. You see, if you've just got the Spirit of God you'll burn up. If you just have the word of God you'll dry up. But if you take the word of God and

the Spirit of God and put it together you'll grow up. You've got to have both of those things. Priority number one has got to be belonging to God.