“Delightful Diligence”

Proverbs 24: 30-34

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Sean Hoisington, Hayden Bible Church, 12/27/20)

The Book of Proverbs contains blessings from God for living your Christian life. God wants us to walk in wisdom because He is our loving Father and He wants what is best for us. He wants us to live disciplined and successful lives. He wants the wise to listen and become even wiser. After all, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Proverbs 1:7a)

Today’s scripture was given so that we could learn from someone else’s destructive lifestyle. 2020 has taught us that many things are beyond our control, BUT God reminds us that there are some things we can choose to control, especially in our spiritual lives. Consider today that our spiritual lives are a stewardship from the Lord. The lesson for today: neglectful living produces undesirable results. My diligent, spiritual stewardship produces rich, fruitful abundance.

Proverbs 24:30 describes a man who has been blessed with a field and a vineyard, but has neglected his responsibility. If you are like me, there have been times when you have neglected your spiritual responsibility (like your times of devotion to God, or your meeting together with other believers). (Q1) A sluggard lives as if diligence were bondage instead of self-control. Sometimes our neglect of responsibility has gotten so bad that we are overwhelmed: we don’t know how to get back. Our “stone wall has been broken down.” If our “stone wall” is broken down, anyone can sneak in with false doctrines and false information. (Q2) The longer I neglect my spiritual stewardship, the more impossible it seems to return to a right relationship with my Father.

The wise man ponders the example of Proverbs 24 and sees how the life of the sluggard might be a warning. (Note: Proverbs 26:16 indicates that the sluggard himself might be offended to think that he might need spiritual instruction!) But the wise man is humble and learns from the Father.

Proverbs 24:33-34 implies that diligence is to be a part of the Christian life. All through the Bible there are imperative verbs commanding us to “remember” and “repent” and “abide”. (Q3) If we neglect our souls, it leads to spiritual poverty and profound loss. Pastor Sean said, “Inactivity leads to immobility.” This is true spiritually as well as physically. (Q4)

THIS STUDY TODAY DOES NOT PROMOTE A DOCTRINE OF SELF-HELP, but instead, a call to come daily to Jesus for a relationship with Him. Where are you today? What is the condition of your vineyard? Does the thought of cleaning up your spiritual life seem so overwhelming that you don’t know where to start? Proverbs has some more advice for you. Look in Proverbs 6: 6-8. Consider the ant. He carries one tiny scrap of food at a time and eventually gets the job done. Methodically, faithfully, diligently… he gets the job done. It’s also true with us: my diligent, spiritual stewardship produces rich, fruitful abundance. (Q5) Lord, help us on this journey of sanctification. May we grow to be like You.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What else is involved in your spiritual stewardship (responsibility)?
2. What is our “stone wall”? How is it repaired?
3. What else are we commanded to do in scripture? (Hint: check in a concordance if you need help!)
4. Many of us have seen muscles atrophy from lack of use. What does “spiritual atrophy” look like? Who does it hurt?
5. Pastor Sean mentioned several aspects of diligent, spiritual stewardship: daily prayer, daily Bible reading and meditation, fellowship with other believers, memorization of scripture… Can you name others?
6. Speaking of memorization, two of us “old timers” have memorized Psalm 86:11. You can do it, too! It may take 2 or 3 weeks, but work on it a little at a time, like that industrious ant!

“Teach me Your way, Lord, that I may rely on Your faithfulness;

Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear Your name.” (Psalm 86:11) (NIV)

“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus” (Charles Wesley)

Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,

Born to set Thy people free;

From our fears and sins release us,

Let us find our rest in Thee.

Israel’s Strength and Consolation,

Hope of all the earth Thou art;

Dear Desire of every nation,

Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver,

Born a child and yet a King,

Born to reign in us forever,

Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.

By Thine own eternal Spirit

Rule in all our hearts alone;

By Thine all-sufficient merit,

Raise us to Thy glorious throne.