

## The Liberal Soul

### Proverbs 11:18-25

- A person could read the Proverbs daily for years and still learn something new
- There are words of wisdom from heaven provided sentence after sentence
- Each thought, arranged in verse-format in our Old Testament, challenges us
- To consider something we have never considered before
- Or to remember something we had almost forgotten
  
- It's another journey through Proverbs today
- This time, eight verses in chapter eleven
- Many times setting right, just behavior against wrong, sinful behavior
- Sometimes describing both the righteous and the evil person and telling us the difference
- Always giving us something to think about
  
- Today, "The Liberal Soul"
- From Proverbs 11:18-25
  
- I have a standard reminder when we approach Proverbs
- That is, it will take us freely from one topic to another, often without pause
- Sometimes connecting two successive verses
- Usually not
  
- The dictionary defines a proverb as "a brief popular epigram or maxim"
- An epigram is "a terse, sage, or witty and often paradoxical saying"
- And a maxim is "a general truth, fundamental principle, or rule of conduct"
- The Proverbs of scripture fit these descriptions, but come directly from God
- Not just from religious tradition
  
- Very likely the written format "proverb," in today's thinking, is modeled after this section of scripture
- And the definition is likely, in part, a result of the content you'll find in these Old Testament Proverbs
  
- Let's begin looking at each of these Proverbs near the end of chapter eleven, individually...

### Proverbs 11:18

18 The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

- The results of wicked works, the wages (you could say) of wicked works, are deceitful
- That is, they bring no reward or profit
- And whatever reward or profit the evil man hoped to receive, never comes
- He was deceived into believing his evil would bring him something good, but it cannot
- Wicked works, done for selfish reasons, destroy, rather than create

- If someone follows God
- And follows after that which is right
- Taking actions and performing works consistent with Godliness
- There are certain rewards that come
- Eternal rewards
- Rewards that can never be taken away
- Because they are provided by, and preserved for us by, God
- This is why it is always best to do right, even if it means temporary discomfort
- Because long-term, permanent gain is the result
- Doing wrong, while it may get us out of a jam right now, leads to long-term pain
- The next proverb has similar thoughts...

#### Proverbs 11:19

19 As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death.

- Performing some evil act today is more likely to endanger life than to enhance life
- Wickedness is risky, it complicates things, and it puts us in harm's way
- This is true both in the short and long-term view
- A person trusting God, following Him, is on the path to life eternal
- A person rejecting God, following their own way, is on the path to eternal death
- So, whether your wrong actions today endanger you today or not, the long-term forecast is bleak
- It is always bleak
- While the lover and follower of God has life to look forward to - here and in eternity
- How does the Lord look on our hearts for good or evil?

#### Proverbs 11:20

20 They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are his delight.

- The word froward means distorted, crooked, false
- And a person with a heart like this is abhorrent
- They don't have faith in God, reject His way, and receive the consequences of that rejection
- But it is a joyous thing to know that the upright
- And that word means entire (figuratively or morally), a person with integrity, sound
- These kind of people are obviously following God, humbly submitting to Him
- And living in a way that acknowledges who He is, and what that means for their behavior
- The froward person can turn to God
- He is merciful and kind

- And He has provided a way of salvation through His son
- That froward heart can be changed into an upright heart
- One delighted in by God
- But every distorted, crooked, false heart must turn to Him and be transformed
- And there is punishment ahead for the crooked...

Proverbs 11:21

21 Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.

- I think a restatement of this verse may help us
- From the ESV...

"Be assured, an evil person will not go unpunished, but the offspring of the righteous will be delivered."

- There is no doubt that the evil will be punished
- This is not a theoretical punishment
- It means quite real punishment not only in this life, but the life to come
- Those who reject Jesus, God's son, have their part in the lake of fire
- Where there is no relief, and no escape
- Those who are right with God, through His son Jesus, are delivered
- In many ways during this life
- But, of course, also in the life to come
- Even the children of righteous people have deliverance
- Right actions often make this possible, but God also remembers
- Now, this does not mean salvation for our offspring, every person trusts Christ individually
- But it does often men residual blessing
- Because doing right so often means good outcomes for the righteous and many of those connected to the righteous
- As we do so often in the Proverbs, changing topics...

Proverbs 11:22

22 As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.

- We're talking about a beautiful woman, who lacks judgement here
- And we know with certainty that bad character and bad judgement blemish anyone
- But this proverb is focused
- It says that lacking discretion in the life of this fair woman, is similar to a gold ring in a pig's snout
- Whatever value we place on beauty is quickly decreased when we consider character
- No amount of beauty can overcome a lack of judgement
- The beauty is marred by that shortcoming

- And this is a wise thing to remember
- These proverbs go on...

#### Proverbs 11:23

23 The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

- That which the righteous person desires, results in only good
- We praise the Lord that He changes our desires when He saves us through Christ
- And if we are walking closely with Him, His desires for us, become our desires
- We know that if we live according to His desires, blessings follow
- He has promised us this would be the case
- And we can make that claim, often, in this life
- But more often, and more importantly, in eternal life after death
- We still face all the standard challenges in life
- And we still encounter hardships
- But we encounter all of them with Him at our side
- He grants peace and comfort and all the grace we need
- And this is indeed good
- But the wicked can have only one expectation and that is wrath
- Their challenges and hardships in life come as well
- But they come without the benefit of new life in Christ
- And the end of a life rejecting Christ is a catastrophic end
- One in which the sinner faces the punishment for sin alone and for eternity
- Two counter-cultural proverbs to close our time...

#### Proverbs 11:24

24 There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

- There is a good restatement of this verse in the ERV...

"Some people give freely and gain more; others refuse to give and end up with less."

- This goes against nearly all of man's wisdom on the subject
- We think those who give, have less
- But often learn from generosity that this is a lie
- Holding onto anything, hoping to use it for selfish reasons, ends in poverty
- Poverty in the financial arena, perhaps
- But poverty of soul as well

- We should be what the next verse encourages us to be...

Proverbs 11:25

25 The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

- In this, we are talking about a person who is generous
- They give freely
- They provide charity liberally
  
- They provide water where water is needed
- But they never find themselves lacking water
- Or anything else they have ever given
- Because good things come back to them
  
- And we can be certain that God has made this the case
- For He is generous Himself

*Christopher Harper, Take Note 2022*