

The Stingy Man

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 November 2009

Preacher: Jason Webb

[0:00] Have you ever made a major miscalculation? We all have. Suppose you're in fifth grade, and you like a boy or a girl, whatever the case may be, and you're pretty sure that they like you too.

So you take a few deep breaths, you swallow your nerves, and you pass them a note that says, will you go out with me? Circle, yes or no?

And the note comes back with a circle around the no, and the word never is in a heart.

And you're crushed. How could you have been? How could I have been so stupid? What was I thinking? You thought it was a good deal, thought it was a done deal, but in the end you came up empty.

Looking like a fool. That's a major miscalculation for a fifth grader. And as we get older, we usually graduate out of fifth grade size miscalculations, and we graduate to giant, tragic, devastating miscalculations.

[1:16] We marry someone thinking they're our dream come true, only afterward to find out that we've walked into a nightmare. Or we work for a great company, so we think, and we take all of our retirement in company stock, only to find out that that company is a house of cards.

And we and the company are wiped out. We thought we had a good deal. We thought it was all going to work out. We ran the math, we worked the calculator, only to come out empty-handed and looking like a fool.

Well, Proverbs is a book from God to keep us from living life, only to come up empty-handed and looking like a fool at the end. So today what we're going to talk about is what Derek Kidner calls the miser's miscalculation.

The miser's miscalculation. Turn in your Bibles to Proverbs 28, verse 22. Proverbs 28, verse 22.

Listen to the Word of God. A stingy man is eager to get rich and is unaware that poverty awaits him.

[2:37] A stingy man is eager to get rich and is unaware that poverty awaits him. We want to ask two questions as we apply this proverb to ourselves today. The first question is, who is this proverb about?

And the second question is, what waits for him in the end? So who is this proverb about? The NIV says, the stingy man who's eager to get rich.

Literally, he's a man with an evil eye, an evil-eyed man. Well, what does that mean? The same word is used in Proverbs 23.

So turn over there to Proverbs 23. And we're going to find out, we'll get a little bit better of a feel for what this evil-eyed man is.

Proverbs 23, verse 6 and 7. Do not eat the food of a stingy man. That's our word there. Do not crave his delicacies, for he is the kind of man who is always thinking about the cost.

[3:39] Eat and drink, he says to you, but his heart is not with you. So you're at the table with an evil-eyed man, and he puts all of his delicious food in front of you, and he says, eat and drink.

And he appears to be happy. He appears to be joyful in what is going on. He appears to be generous in sharing. But go behind his eyes and look into his heart, look into his mind, and what do you see?

Well, as you're bringing your fork of potatoes up to your mouth, what is he doing? He is the human calculator. He's thinking, and these are just round numbers.

These are not accurate at all. One potato equals one dollar. And he just ate a quarter of a potato. That's 25 cents. There goes another 25 cents.

There goes another 25 cents. There goes another and another. Oh no. Now he's getting seconds. And does he really have to eat so much chicken? Isn't he full?

[4:44] This meal is going to cost me \$5 a plate, and I have six people here, and that's \$30 total down the drain. What a waste.

I could have invested that \$30 at 10% in 10 years is... I don't know. But on and on he goes.

The evil man, the evil-eyed man, is selfish. He doesn't love people. He loves money. Now, why does the evil man do that?

Why is he doing all that calculation? Why is he forever calculating? Because he wants to get rich.

And he thinks by loving money, by never sharing with others, that he will get rich.

Well, why does he want to get rich? So he can spend it on himself. Remember, he's only appearing to be generous. He's not a generous man. He wants to make himself happy.

[5:45] He thinks the way, the path, the happiness, and satisfaction, and security is through the accumulation of wealth. And so he is eager for riches because he thinks that through them that he can get what his heart desires.

He thinks that he can make for himself a life that satisfies him. And that's who this proverb is about.

It's about a man or a woman who sees wealth as the way to happiness.

It's about the college student who picks a career completely based on the salary potential. He

doesn't figure on how he can serve others. He doesn't think about how he can serve God.

He's in it for himself. Everyone else, they are roadblocks to getting, standing in his way for achieving what he wants.

And that's riches. So we're not just talking about Scrooge here. We're not just talking about obvious misers. We're talking about stockbrokers on Wall Street who give their lives to their work.

[6:52] That's true. But we're talking about people like you and me. People at Grace Fellowship. People in our families. People in our neighborhoods.

This proverb is about middle class Americans trapped in the American dream. If I only had two kids and two new cars in the garage and some nice furniture or nicer furniture than what I have now, then I would be happy.

And we're talking about middle class pastors and middle class business owners and middle class high school students and middle class moms and dads. We're talking about anyone here who looks at wealth and they want it.

They want it more than they want it. They want God. They love it more than they love their families.

They love it more than they love God. They love it. They want it.

They worship it. They see it as the road to happiness. happiness. And so we're pretty much talking about everyone here from time to time. And we're talking about some people all the time.

[8:05] So if that's you, and I know it's me from time to time, then we need to hear what this proverb says. That brings us to our second question.

What waits for him at the end? What waits for him at the end? It says that he is, he's unaware that poverty awaits for him.

Evil eyed men, men who love riches, will come to poverty. At the end of the road, they don't come to a pile of cash. They come to a big black hole.

And that's their poverty. See, says Solomon, the miser, the person who loves riches, makes a tragic miscalculation. He runs the numbers.

He thinks this is the best way forward. This is the way that I can be happy. This is the way I can be rich, so to speak. And it's all a giant miscalculation.

[9:08] For all of his pursuit, for all of his mad rush to get rich, he ends up empty. The joy he wants is gone. The happiness that he sought is just swallowed up in poverty.

And his love note, it comes back, circled no, and he comes up empty-handed, looking like a fool.

Well, what kind of poverty are we talking about?

Oftentimes, people like this end up in financial poverty. Financial poverty. The money that they want, it takes wings and flies away. They're so eager for it.

They have dreams about how to get it. And so they pursue those dreams. And that's all they have at the end. And you see this with people playing the lotto, don't you?

They're poor people who are eager to get rich. And so they chase that dream. And what happens at the end? Well, 99.999% of the time, they end up broke.

[10:18] And you see it with a person who is eager to get rich, and so he breaks the law in order to get rich quick. We've seen that countless times in Wall Street, haven't we?

You can think of Bernie Madoff or the Enron, the leaders of Enron. Their desire for wealth made them break the law, and now they're in prison, broke as broke can be. Well, those are the big fish, but the small fish take the bait too. How many people every day are taking money out of the cash register at the restaurant where they're working, thinking, I need this money.

I need this money. And it works for a while, then they get caught, then they get fired. And there's others who don't file their income tax, who cheat on their taxes in order to make money.

I used to work with a man who was as poor as poor can be, and it turns out why he was so poor was that for five years, he just didn't file his income tax.

[11:23] He knew he was supposed to, but he didn't want to. So for five years, life was good for that man, but not so much anymore.

The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. In a thousand different ways, the love of money will make you, will deceive you, take you by the hand, and lead you down the road to financial poverty. But there's other kinds of poverty besides financial poverty. That's included in this verse, but there's other kinds of poverty. There's a poverty of time and the enjoyment of life.

Ecclesiastes warns us of that. Listen to what Ecclesiastes says. Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind.

And later it says this. Whoever loves money never has money enough. Whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless.

[12:30] So there you have Joe, factory worker. And every time he has the opportunity to work a 12, a 16-hour shift, he works it.

And he'll work as much as you allow him. Why? Because he wants to be rich. He wants the things that money can buy. And so he loves the things that money can buy, so he works and works and works.

And the whole time, he never stops to think, what am I doing this for? Why am I doing this? Why am I striving and toiling?

And I never have time to enjoy it. I never can sit at home and just rest and relax. This Thanksgiving, there's going to be hundreds and probably thousands of people who will be sitting at home with their family and friends all around them, itching to go back to work.

They're sorry that they have to take the day off. They want to earn more money. And it's tragic. The love of money robs you of your ability to enjoy this life.

[13:40] So the love of money, it doesn't allow you to enjoy your friends. It doesn't allow you to enjoy your family or your neighbors. We read of it in Proverbs 23.

You sit down with them to eat and to enjoy life. And he can't enjoy it. He's always thinking about what it's costing, what his investments are doing, what he could be doing at work.

He's thinking about everything except enjoying what God has given him. And so the love of money leads to a poverty of time and the enjoyment of life.

You're all familiar probably, at least the older people are familiar with that song by Harry Chapin. It goes like this. My child arrived just the other day.

He came to the world in the usual way. But there were planes to catch and bills to pay and he learned to walk while I was away. And he was talking before I knew it and as he grew, he'd say, I'm going to be like you, Dad.

[14:49] You know I'm going to be like you. And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon, little boy blue and the man in the moon. When are you coming home, Dad?

I don't know when, but we'll get together then. You know we'll have a good time then. And Solomon is saying in this proverb, don't do that. Don't do that.

Don't waste your life pursuing money because in the end you're going to come up empty looking like a fool. So if you struggle with these things, if you're eager to get rich, if you want to keep up with the Joneses, then stop and ask, what am I doing this for?

Your desire for wealth is stabbing your ability to enjoy life. And if you struggle with the love of money, then beware. You're on the road to a sad, sad life.

So financial poverty, poverty of time and the enjoyment of life. What other kind of poverty can we talk about? Poverty of spiritual light.

[16:01] Poverty of spiritual light. Well, what does that mean? That's not altogether clear. Turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 6. Matthew chapter 6.

You'll see what I'm talking about in Matthew chapter 6 and beginning in verse 19. This is Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light.

But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness?

[17:05] Jesus talks about two different kinds of eyes. Good eyes and bad eyes. And he's using the same language and the same imagery that we saw in Proverbs. When he talks about a person who has a bad eye, he's talking about the evil-eyed man in Proverbs 28, 22.

He's talking about that stingy man. He's talking about those who love and worship money. And so what does Jesus say about the person who has a bad eye, an evil eye?

Well, you saw it in verse 23. Your whole body will be full of darkness. And if the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness?

And that's why I say the love of money brings you into a place of spiritual poverty, of spiritual light. You don't have spiritual light in your life.

The evil-eyed man, in other words, is spiritually dark. Their eyes are dark. Their inside is dark. They can't see. They can't appreciate spiritual realities.

[18:14] Their eyes can't see the light of God. Their eyes can't see the glory of God. You show them Jesus. You show them Jesus. The radiance of God's glory.

The off-shining of His glorious being. The glory of the Father who lives in inaccessible light. And they can't see anything.

The love of money blinds them to the greatest realities in the universe. And it blinds you to God's love. It blinds you to God's mercy and pity on sinners.

You show them Christ. You show them Christ in all of His glory, dying for helpless sinners. And they see nothing but darkness.

Their love of money steals away their ability to walk in the light of God's presence. You see, Jesus Christ came to be the light of men.

[19:20] He came so that sinners could see and enjoy and be with God. That they could have life. And not just merely scraping by at life. That they could have life in abundance.

That they could have glorious, everlasting life. And you were made for Him. You were made for Him. You were made to know Him and enjoy Him and walk in His light.

But money, the love of money, blinds you to it all. And so what is the result? You walk in darkness. If you love money, then you're a fool.

You trade darkness for light. You think there's joy there. But there's nothing there but misery and emptiness. Just look inside of a person who loves money.

Go behind and look into his heart and tell me what you see. The minute you walk in, you walk into a dungeon of darkness.

[20:20] And there's only skeletons there of old desires that went unfulfilled and bitter regrets at how they spent their money.

And there's prisoners there biting the ends of what could have been if something had turned out different. And there's hunger. There's hunger in a person who loves money.

They're desperately hungry for the next thing. They want the next game, the next phone, the next computer, the next furniture, the next house.

And do you see what Jesus meant when he said, if the light within them is darkness, then how great is that darkness? No one can serve two masters. You can serve God or you can serve money.

You can't serve both. And money makes a horrible master. So poverty waits for the evil-eyed man. Financial poverty, poverty of life and joy, spiritual poverty, and finally, finally, worst of all, the worst of all poverties, the poverty of death and hell.

[21:36] Death comes to the good and the evil. Death strips everything away from everyone. It takes everything that anyone here works for on this earth.

It takes our houses and it takes our cars. It takes our gap clothes. It takes our 401ks. It takes our checking accounts and it takes our savings accounts.

It takes our businesses. It takes everything. Your last purchase will be a coffin and then they will put you and your last purchase into the ground.

Dust we are and dust we will return. And so poverty awaits us all. But for those who have treasures in heaven, this is no great loss.

The minute we die, who have stored up treasures in heaven, we come into our wealth. We inherit our wealth. But those who love money, who have an evil eye, they come in to their absolute and complete poverty.

[22 : 44] The prestige that they longed for. The protection and security that they thought they would have from money that they yearned for. They wanted.

In the end, it all turns out to be their undoing. And this is the miser's miscalculation. It seemed like a good deal. You thought the numbers added up, but in the end, you come up in poverty.

You come up empty and you wake up in hell and everything fades to black. And in hell, your poverty will be complete and God will punish you.

You will be like the prodigal son. Ran away to a faraway country, spent everything and everything. And then the famine comes. And you will long to feed yourself with the pods that the pigs eat.

But at the end, you will have no father to run to. You'll have no one to deliver you. No one to rescue you. You chose money.

[23 : 54] And you pursued the pleasures of wealth in this world. And in the end, you must learn that in the day of judgment, wealth cannot save you.

But the question is, why learn that lesson that way? Why learn it the hard way? Proverbs is written so that we can avoid that kind of poverty.

Well, why make that calculation? Why make that miscalculation? Because, let me tell you, God has already run the numbers. He's already figured it out and how everything works out in the end.

And He's telling you that it doesn't work. In the end, you come up empty looking like a fool. So don't go that way. It doesn't work.

It says here in the end, it says here in Proverbs 28, the stingy man is eager to get rich and is unaware that poverty awaits him. He's unaware.

[24 : 52] He doesn't know it. He doesn't know what's ahead. And so he just keeps on going down his course. But now you know what will happen. Proverbs is telling you what will happen. So don't go that way.

When Satan dangles the love of money before you and money before you, look behind the bait and see the hook. Because there's a hook there and it's called poverty.

So instead, instead of that, instead of worshiping money, worship God. God offers you everlasting treasures. Things that you cannot, no one can take away from you.

He offers you light instead of darkness. He satisfies your hunger. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled. Pleasures forevermore are at God's right hand.

So do you see, young people, the choice is not between pleasure and no pleasure. pleasure, the choices between pleasure that's been cooked and the poison of poverty that ends up killing you in the end and pleasure that will last and really satisfy you.

[26 : 04] So you were made for God. You were made to live in His light and enjoy His presence.

You were made to seek your joy and happiness there and in Him. And if you seek it there, you'll be wise and you'll be happy.

And you'll have none of the terrible hangover that comes from the pursuit of money. So who or what will you give your life to?

If you're going to give your life to something, will you give it to God or will you give it to money? No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve both God and money. So which will you choose? Which will you choose? Well, if you long to give your heart and your life to God again, then turn with me in your hymnals to hymn 492 where we say, Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee.

We say, Take my silver and my gold. Not a mite do I withhold. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, I pray that you would keep every single one of us from making that horrible miscalculation of pursuing wealth, pursuing money, pursuing the pleasures of this earth and only to come up empty at the end, to have lived a tragic life and to wake up in hell where we will be punished for our idolatry.

[27 : 45] Father, thank you that there is salvation in Jesus Christ, that there is an alternative to living for ourselves and dying for ourselves.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for coming and saving your people, rescuing us. We pray that you would go on doing that work until the day when the number is complete and your plans for this world are fulfilled and that we are brought in and we are introduced to the joy of our Master.

Will you help us to enjoy him now and grow in our joy and our satisfaction that we would find no satisfaction in money. Help us to be godly men and women.

Will you bless us on our way? In Jesus' name, amen.