

Proverbs of Solomon – Proverbs 27:12

There are several books in the Old Testament from which it is easy to preach the gospel. *Isaiah* is the first to come to mind; *Isaiah 53* for example – *“Surely he (Christ Jesus) hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”* *Chapter 53* is not the only place in *Isaiah* from which to preach the gospel. Following that there are many verses and passages in *Psalms* which point us to Christ. We could also start with *Genesis* and *Deuteronomy* among others. The minister who neglects the Old Testament in his gospel preaching is not as diligent as he ought to be. As I was reading through *Proverbs 27*, asking the Lord for a message for this evening, my heart landed on a verse which could easily be taken for the text of a gospel sermon. And that led me to consider a couple of questions. *“How many of these Proverbs open the door to a message of salvation through Christ?”* And second, *“How many times have I used Proverbs to begin a gospel message?”*

As to the second question, I went to my notes for the messages I've preached over the last 45 years. I have listed slightly more than 400 of sermons under the category *“salvation.”* Then there are about 300 each listed under *“sin”* and *“Christ.”* So roughly speaking I have preached at least a thousand messages which ended up with the gospel. And I'm sure that there are other gospel sermons recorded under different categories. Then I asked my computer to tell me how many of those sermons began with verses from *Proverbs*. There have been 6 under the heading of *“sin,”* but they may not have all been about the gospel. Sadly, I found that I have never preached *“Christ”* beginning with any one of the *Proverbs*. And there have been only 2 sermons on salvation from this book. I believe I've often referred to *Proverbs* in my preaching, but rarely taken my initial text from this book. 8 out a thousand means less than 1%. Now let's go back to my first question: *“How many Proverbs could be used as texts for gospel messages?”* As I say, one verse here in *chapter 27* got me thinking along this line. From there I made a quick and unscientific survey. I'll let you decide if we could preach the gospel from this book.

Let's begin here with Proverbs 27:12.

“A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.” This verse says nothing about the death, burial and resurrection of Christ for our sins. In fact you'll look in vain throughout this book for any exposition of the cross. There are no detailed explanations of how the blood of God's sacrifice makes an atonement for the soul. Never-the-less we could probably get there from a number of verses – including this one. In this case, I might point out that God must be faithful to Himself; God must judge sin. *“A prudent man foreseeth the EVIL, and hideth himself.”* I would point out that the Bible doesn't limit the word *“evil”* to *“wickedness”* or *“sin.”* It can, and does in this case, speak of bad stuff – trouble, adversity, problems. And there is no greater problem than eternal judgment – Hell – the Lake of Fire. Biblically speaking *“evil”* is a perfectly good word to use to describe God's judgment. *“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”*

A prudent man – a man of wisdom and discernment – can see the judgment of God when he is presented with the gospel, and he will hide himself. But the fool – the simpleton – may hear the same Bible message, but because he is a fool, he moves on. And he *“shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power”* – *II Thessalonians 1:9*.

In the course of that message I might add *Proverbs 14:9* – *“Fools make a MOCK at sin; but among the righteous there is favor.”* Foolish sinners can't see sin for the hideous poison that it is. For them it is often a source for humor. Or they puff on their marijuana; they chew their tobacco; they snort their cocaine and think of themselves as immortal. They live in immorality, thinking that it is fun, and there is no way for their lives to be ruined by it. Or they think that they are too smart to get caught committing some crime. *“I have nothing to fear, but fear itself.”* But God says, *“Fear me”* – *“Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

“A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself.” And where is the only sufficient hiding place from the judgment of God? Right in the middle of the arms of the Judge – in the Ark of God – in a cleft in the Rock of Ages. Couldn't we preach the gospel from this verse?

Proverbs 3:5-6 is a scripture which could be applied in several ways – including salvation.

But in this case I might start with *Proverbs 14:12* – *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”* Then I'd go to *“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”*

Man, who is by nature a sinner, is also innately proud – pride is a part of our fallen nature. And that has demonstrated itself many, many times in our attempt to devise our own salvation. We have so many self-saving philosophies – ways which seem right to our fallen minds and hearts. But they all end up in disastrous failure. There is only one way to deal with sin – the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this same light, we could preach a gospel message from **Proverbs 17:15** – *“He that justified the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord.”* To tell a wicked person that his soul is in good shape before God is an abominable thing. There are hundreds of funerals every day in this country which are abominations to God as people try to justify the lives and religions of their wicked relatives. Conversely, there are others who condemn the people of God – because they have the audacity to say that they are justified by faith alone. *“He that justified the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord.”*

Again, deliverance from sin begins and ends in the Saviour – the Lamb of God. Not only did Christ shed the sacrificial blood necessary to cover our sin and redeem us. But He draws us to the safety which is in Himself and even provides the faith by which we cling to Him. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.”* Where is boasting in man’s salvation? It has been eliminated by God’s law of faith.

Could you develop a gospel lesson from Proverbs 11:4?

“Riches profit not in the day of wrath; but righteousness delivereth from death.” You could point to someone about to stand before God to be judged – his eternity hangs there. What is he going to plead before the Lord? His generosity and hospitality; his tithes and offerings? He who praised the widow for her three mites, doesn’t even blink at our thousands of offerings. Only righteousness delivers from eternal death. *“Riches profit not in the day of wrath; but righteousness delivereth from death.”*

Ah, but it’s not **OUR** human **righteousness**. *“We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags”* – **Isaiah 64:6**. The only righteousness accepted at God’s great white throne is the righteousness of Christ, because only His is perfect. And *“(God) hath made (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”* – **II Corinthians 5:21**. The great Apostle Paul was looking forward to standing before the Great Judge, *“And (to) be found in (Christ), not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”* Only the righteousness of Christ is capable of delivering from eternal death.

Proverbs 16:6 speaks about a wonderful pair of divine blessings.

“By mercy and truth iniquity is purged.” The truth is – God hates our sin and must judge it – and us – for eternity. But He has taken steps to permit a substitute to die in our place – the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. The truth is – God cannot judge the same sin twice – a divine form of double jeopardy. So if Christ died for my sins, the just for the unjust, then I cannot die for those same sins.

And the fuel which drove that transaction to its conclusion is made up of the love and mercy of God. *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his **MERCY** he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost”* – **Titus 3:5**. *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his **abundant MERCY** hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”* – **I Peter 1:3**.

I think it would be easy to preach the gospel from Proverbs 19:29.

“Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools.” The world is filled with scorners and fools. Biblically, a fool is anyone who lives his life in rejection of God and the Saviour. They were all fools who rejected the gospel preaching of Noah, and they perished in God’s judgment. The people of Jericho were idolatrous fools, and their foolishness was made even darker by the faith of Rahab. The Pharisees, in Jesus’ day, the knew much of the Old Testament scriptures, but they were fools for scorning the Saviour/Messiah.

And what will be the end of them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ?

“Judgments are prepared for (those) scorners...” *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: (but) he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

It might even be easier to preach the gospel from the rhetorical question of Proverbs 20:9.

“Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” Job asked that question and promptly answered it – *“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.”* Later, his friend Bildad echoed his thoughts – *“How*

can a man be justified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" The implied answer is – No one. Some feminist might take offense at Bildad, but he wasn't casting aspersions on women, but on all humanity. It was just as David said, *"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."* The problem isn't with our mothers or women in general; the problem is with humanity in general. *"There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not"* said Solomon.

No one can say, *"I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin."* But millions can say, *"I am pure from my sin, because the blood of the Saviour has been presented to God on my account."* *"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" – I Corinthians 6:11.*

Conclusion:

It is possible to preach the New Testament gospel of Jesus Christ from any book of the Bible. All it takes is a regenerated heart and a Spirit-lead mind. And it is quite easy to preach the gospel from more than a dozen verses in *Proverbs*.