

# Hope for the Future

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Proverbs 24:13-20

Throughout the book of Proverbs, a contrast is made between wisdom and foolishness. Those who follow the wisdom from above and live according to it will be righteous. Those who reject this wisdom will engage in wickedness. However, even though the wicked reject godly wisdom, they often prosper in life – and often at the expense of the righteous. In our text, Solomon explained that the righteous who follow wisdom have hope for the future. Rather than getting discouraged about their current situation (or that of the wicked), there were certain things they were told to do and not do.

## **Pursue Wisdom (Proverbs 24:13-14)**

- When God promised to lead Israel out of Egyptian bondage, He described the promised land as a “land flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3:8) – honey was universally recognized as a blessing; the wise man’s point was that God’s wisdom is a blessing to those who take hold of it
- Obtaining wisdom provides hope for something better – in this life or (especially) in the life to come; rather than following the ways of the wicked, we must pursue wisdom to enjoy God’s blessings; we do this by learning and practicing the word of God (2 Timothy 3:15-17)

## **Keep Getting Back Up (Proverbs 24:15-16)**

- The wicked often take advantage of the righteous and elevate themselves at their expense – yet this was ultimately futile for the wicked because the righteous person keeps getting back up; in contrast, the wicked would ultimately fall; lacks the purpose/direction that the righteous has
- Reminder to the righteous to not give up – persevere through whatever challenges we face in life; admonition to those who were suffering for their faith (Hebrews 10:35-36); God’s people need to be faithful until death (Revelation 2:10)

## **Do Not Gloat Over Your Enemies (Proverbs 24:17-18)**

- The wise man just said that the wicked would “stumble in time of calamity” (Proverbs 24:16) – despite his mistreatment from the wicked, the righteous were not to rejoice in this; instead, recognize this as the sad consequence of their behavior
- God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11; cf. 2 Peter 3:9) – we need the same attitude; we may recognize the justice of the wicked being punished (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9), but we are not to take pleasure in it; we are to love and pray for our enemies (Matthew 5:44-45)

## **Do Not Envy the Wicked (Proverbs 24:19-20)**

- It is discouraging when the wicked seem to get away with their evil deeds without consequences – we may even be tempted to engage in the same sinful behavior (cf. Ecclesiastes 8:11); yet in the end, justice will be done, sin will be punished, and the righteous will be delivered
- This echoes the counsel of the psalmist (Psalm 37:1-3) – despite any short-term prosperity of the wicked, it is better to fear the Lord (Ecclesiastes 8:12-13); in the end, the wicked’s “lamp...will be put out”; his hope will be cut off

## **Conclusion**

- The wicked may prosper in the short term – we must look beyond whatever present conditions exist
- There is hope for the future if we follow God’s word and live righteous lives before Him – continue to pursue the wisdom of God and persevere through whatever trials we may face
- In the end, we can be assured that “there will be a future” for us (Proverbs 24:14) – “It will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly” (Ecclesiastes 8:12)