

Self-Counsel

Harmony M.B.C., August 2, 2009 (Morning)

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Isaiah 5:21 Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

Job 18:7 The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down.

Job 18:8 For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare.

Job 18:9 The gin shall take *him* by the heel, *and* the robber shall prevail against him.

Job 18:10 The snare *is* laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way.

Job 18:11 Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet.

Job 18:12 His strength shall be hunger-bitten, and destruction *shall be* ready at his side.

Humans are the ultimate production of God's earthly creation. They have so many attributes that are given only to them among earth's creatures. One very unique attribute that sets humans a universe apart from other creatures is their unique ability to do complex reasoning. While a dog can figure out how to dig out of a pen in order to run free, a beaver can figure out how to lay mud and sticks together to stop a certain water flow, and a chimpanzee can figure out which set of steps to do in order to get a reward, and can even communicate with humans in a crude way, these are all primitive capabilities when measured against the human ability to lay down a set of figures and calculate the diameter of a star a thousand light years away from earth; or set up a sequence of molecular chain reactions that release the horrendous energy of an atomic bomb; or build a tubular object driven by engines he has invented with fuel he has refined from crude petroleum that can be shot into space and landed on the moon. These kinds of accomplishments are feats that human-kind has done which shows their reasoning power, and the power their minds have to derive the right answers to mysteries of the universe.

For all this mind power and ability to think straight, it seems amazing that when it comes to spiritual matters that human-kind cannot think beyond kindergarten. We recognize that humanity can reason about what God is, and how spiritual things are. We see it every day in the multitude of religions and in the diversity of gods that mankind worships. We see it in secular writings that acknowledge the existence of God, and in failed attempts by some secular writers to define what spiritual things are all about. So, there is no lack of evidence within the doings of men to show that he thinks on spiritual things. Yet, for all this thinking, reasoning, expounding, the race of man in his natural state, is still totally ignorant of the nature, attributes, purpose, and works of God and the true spiritual reality. I have mentioned this in many sermons, and have shown by scripture why this is the human condition. I won't be looking at that this morning. But, I do want to look at an aspect of this condition as it relates to the sad failure of humans to make sound judgments.

Our text in Job which describes how a man falls into a kind of downward spiral as a result of his own devices is a great outline of what happens to humans who travel a road of dependency on their own counsel. So, this portion of scripture becomes a doorway into the subject for us this morning.

The aspect I want to preach about is how humans are all too prone to be convinced that they are wise and prudent beyond reality and because of this they are also prone to rely on their own perceptions of things and their own reasoning about things when making decisions that affect time and their eternity. Then, by doing this they set the stage for difficulty and defeat in their lives. Most importantly, they paint themselves into a corner regarding the possibility of ever coming to an understanding of spiritual realities.

I. Humans Who Follow Their Own Personal Human Counsel Cause Their Own Difficulties and Failures

- Job 18:7 The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down.

II. Self-Counsel In The Business of Our Lives Produces Its Own Traps and Outcomes

- Job 18:8 For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare.
- Job 18:9 The gin shall take *him* by the heel, *and* the robber shall prevail against him.

- > Mama Tried - Merle Haggard
One and only rebel child
From a family meek and mild
My mama seemed to know what lay in store
Despite all my Sunday learning
Towards the bad I kept on turning
Til Mama couldn't hold me anymore
And I turned twenty-one in prison doing life without parole
No one could steer me right but Mama tried
Mama tried to raise me better but her pleading I denied
That leaves only me to blame cause Mama tried

III. The Complications That Await Those Who Rely On Self-Counsel Happen Because of Where Those Counsels Originate

- Job 18:10 The snare *is* laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way.
 - > First, the fallacy and failure element of human devices thought up by self-counsel have their origins in the worldly or carnal process of reasoning (the ground)
 - We have a word picture here of a snare that has been set in the ground to catch the prey (Describe the deceptiveness of a well set snare; hidden; custom set for the prey targeted)
 - > Second, the end result of human self-counsel awaits those who follow it down worldly-wise paths (the way). (Describe how we set traps in what is the known path of travel of our prey. We calculate or determine where they will step.)

IV. Sooner or Later, Self-counsel's Failures Brings Forth The Fears and Responses of a Cold Reality

- Job 18:11 Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet.

- > When humans finally face the reality of the failure of their own delusions, they are like those that God describes in Leviticus 26:17 where he says “...they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none persueth you.”
- Job 18:12 His strength shall be hunger-bitten, and destruction *shall be* ready at his side.
 - > People who rely on their human wisdom, knowledge, etc. Will find that it does not sustain them when the real trials come. They will also find that the end of that reliance is destruction.
 - Prov. 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.
- God has made a statement about humans who follow their own counsel and depend upon it despite it’s flaws. That statement sums up the end of such things:
 - > Pro 1:25 But ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:
 - Pro 1:26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;
 - Pro 1:27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.
 - Pro 1:28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

V. What Is The Solution to This Failed Pattern of Self-Counsel?

- Rev 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.
- Pro 19:21 *There are* many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand
 - > Paul’s own testimony contrasted against Jesus Christ’s intent for him speaks about this:
 - Paul: Acts 26:9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.
 - Christ: (to Ananias about Paul): Acts 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

AFTERNOON SERVICE:

VI. We want to look at the counsel that Jesus provides:

- His counsel for His people:
 - > He is counselor to them; so he did in person, when on earth and that counsel stands today;
 - he advised sinners to repent; Mat. 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
 - encouraged souls to believe in him; **John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.**

- directed the weary to come to him for rest; Mat. 11:28 Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
- counseled the hungry and thirsty about food and water;
 - ^ Concerning physical needs: Mat 6:25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?
 - ^ Concerning spiritual needs: John 4:14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.
 - ^ John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.
- such as were healed and pardoned, he counseled them to sin no more;
 - ^ John 5:14; John 8:11
- and he advised his followers to do to all men as they would men should do to them; Matthew 7:12
- to behave in an humble and modest manner; Matthew 18:4
- He continues to counsel His churches after ascension as we see He did to the church at Laodicea: (Rev. 3:18-our last scripture point in the morning service) “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.”
- Counsels the spiritual leaders of his churches: 1 Peter 5: (Peter’s writings are to the elders of the church); which is beneficial to both the leaders and the churches
- to bear reproaches and persecutions cheerfully; Matthew 5:11-12
- to love one another; John 13:34; 15:12
- and to pray to his Father, in his name, for all things they wanted: John 14:13-14
- and now he gives his people counsel by the **ministry of the word**,
 - which is the counsel of God, the produce of his wisdom, a transcript of his eternal council and covenant,
 - a declaration of the will of God, and of Christ; Psalms 33:11 - The counsel of the Lord standeth forever.
 - and in which:
 - ^ Christ counsels the poor in spirit to come to him for riches,
 - ^ the naked for clothing,
 - ^ the ignorant for spiritual light and knowledge,
 - ^ such as are ready to perish for salvation;
 - ^ and he **counsels those that believe** to abide in him, and by his truths and ordinances;
 - + which counsel is wholesome and suitable, hearty, sincere, and faithful;
 - + is wise and prudent, and freely given;
 - + and which being taken, infallibly succeeds:
 - ^ He counsels about business practices - Luke 16:9-13 (advice about doing business with the material things of the world [unrighteous mammon])
 - ^ Counsels about attitudes toward life and righteousness - Matthew 6:33

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness....”

^ Counsels by warning about the deceptiveness of sin - James 1:15 “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

(About Israel) Psalm 106:13 They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel:

Job 38:2 Who *is* this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

Isa 81:12 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: *and* they walked in their own counsels.

Pro 12:15 The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel *is* wise.

Jer 7:24 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels *and* in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

Luke 12:17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

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Psa 106:39 Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.

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Pro 1:26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

Pro 1:27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

Pro 1:28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

Pro 1:29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

Pro 1:30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

Pro 1:31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.