

Hopewell ARP Midweek Sermon
Wednesday, October 16, 2024

Proverbs 4:10–27

10 Hear, my son, and receive my sayings,
And the years of your life will be many.
11 I have taught you in the way of wisdom;
I have led you in right paths.
12 When you walk, your steps will not be hindered,
And when you run, you will not stumble.
13 Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go;
Keep her, for she is your life.
14 Do not enter the path of the wicked,
And do not walk in the way of evil.
15 Avoid it, do not travel on it;
Turn away from it and pass on.
16 For they do not sleep unless they have done evil;
And their sleep is taken away
unless they make someone fall.
17 For they eat the bread of wickedness,
And drink the wine of violence.
18 But the path of the just is like the shining sun,
That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.
19 The way of the wicked is like darkness;
They do not know what makes them stumble.
20 My son, give attention to my words;
Incline your ear to my sayings.
21 Do not let them depart from your eyes;
Keep them in the midst of your heart;
22 For they are life to those who find them,
And health to all their flesh.
23 Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it spring the issues of life.
24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth,
And put perverse lips far from you.
25 Let your eyes look straight ahead,
And your eyelids look right before you.
26 Ponder the path of your feet,
And let all your ways be established.

Do not turn to the right or the left;
Remove your foot from evil.

Listening Your Way into the Right Path

Main idea: Give your heart to the Lord and His Word, and enjoy true and everlasting life.

Introduction: Hear and give attention! (cf. 1:8, 2:2, 3:1, 4:1). What you will get, where you will go, and how you will get there.

1. **What you will get** (v10–13)
 1. Many years of life (v10)
 2. Guidance (v11)
 3. Effectiveness (v12)
 4. Genuine life (v13)
2. **Where you will go** (v14–19)
 1. Don't enter, don't walk, don't go near, don't travel, turn away from... the path of the wicked. (v14–15)
 2. Real living, as opposed to the false sleeping, eating, drinking of the wicked (v16–17)... so that you end up neither similar to them nor their victims.
 3. Ending up at real life (v18) as opposed to real death (v19).
3. **How you will get there** (v20–27)
 1. Guarding input: ear (v20), eyes (v21a), heart (21b, 23)
 2. To produce proper output: mouth/lips (v24), eyes/desires (v25), feet/walking (v26–27)

Conclusion: Keep your heart! And let light and life continue to shine brighter and brighter—even as you look forward to the arrival of your perfect day.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Proverbs chapter 4 verses 10 through 27. These are God's words. Here, my And receive my sayings. And the years of your life will be many. I have taught you in the way of wisdom. I have led you in right paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hindered.

And when you run, you will not stumble. Take firm hold of instruction. And do not let go keep her. For she is your life. Do not enter the path of the wicked. And do not walk in the way of evil. Avoidant. Do not travel on it. Turn away from it and pass on.

For they do not sleep, unless they have done evil. And their sleep is taken away unless they make someone fall. For they, eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence. But the path of the just is like, The Shining sun. That shines ever brighter and to the perfect day, The way of the wicked is like, Darkness.

They do not know what makes them stumble. My son give attention to my words incline, your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes. Keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are. To those who find them and health to all their flesh.

Keep your heart with all diligence. For out of its spring, the issues of Put away from you. A deceitful mouth and put perverse lips far from you. Let your eyes look. Straight ahead and your eyelids look right before you Ponder, the path of your feet and let all your ways be established, do not turn to the right or to the left.

Remove your foot. From evil.

Hey man, so far, the reading of gods inspired and an errantwort

There's much listening to do in the Christian Life much thinking to do in the Christian life and this is especially helpful to us who live in an age. Not of listening and learning but of feelings. And Identities. The identifying. With others. But we are to identify with the Lord, and our feelings are to be informed by him, and by his word, And so, It's a help to us that.

So often the Bible uses thinking words, Consider meditate upon believe Etc. But one of the Things that we have heard over and over again, just four chapters. Now into the Book of Proverbs are hearing words. Here. My son and receive my sayings verse 10 begins. My son gave attention to my words incline, your ear.

To my sayings. Verse 20 begins. And so we are to be a hearing people, a listening people. A people who give our attention, who incline our ears, To the word of God. Who saw this in chapter 1 verse 8. My son here, the instruction Of your father and chapter 2 verse 2 so that you incline your ear.

To wisdom. In chapter 3, verse 1. Let your heart keep my commands in chapter 4 verse 1. Here. My children or hear children the instruction. Of a father. Well, there's not just instruction here to listen to instructions. Not just telling us to listen and to hear but the Lord And the Lord presents to us.

Incentive. He motivates us to listen to him. He tells us what we will get. By listening to him, he's just given us remember in the end of last week's portion. Benefits that lady, wisdom, pays and now Speaks again, about the What we will get? By listening to him. By listening to God.

As children to a father. And when Christian children, listen to a Godly father, who gives the kind of instruction that we hope that our sons will be gaining from the time that their newborns So that one day, they can teach their own children. Like we heard last week, So what we will get and a big part of the, what we will get By receiving instruction is the where we will go.

Where we will go in this life, what path we will travel on and where we will go when it concludes where that path ends. Because, While it's become popular in our culture and in the church to say, oh, it's not The destination, it's the journey. Well, praise God. There is blessedness in the Journey of a Believer but it very much is the destination.

And, There is cursedness. And the journey the path of the unbeliever. But oh, it's not nearly as Dreadful as the destination. And so, there's the Where we will go. And then the manner in which we will get there in verse 20 through 27 as he turns back to the The listening again.

So what we will get Here, my son and receive my sayings and the years of your life will be many. Now, this is generally true when we live wisely. On balance. God has so ordered his Providence that those who live wisely do generally live longer, We take better care of body and mind more than that.

We take good care of the creation and God by the creation, and by his Blessing upon work, takes care of us. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord says, Psalm 128. He will eat from his hands labor And so generally speaking, many are the years of the life.

Of the righteous in this world. But there are many righteous who are Cut down. And their, Many, who Live. Comparatively brief lives in this world. But if you belong to God and the Lord Jesus Christ, if you are living by a wisdom, that is not just being clever at life.

But is by the life of God in you through Union with Christ and applied to you by your by his holy spirit, the years of your life in this world, be there ever. So few, or ever so many. Are not to be counted but a small fraction. Of the Of your life.

For you will live forever. The man who begins and walks in the good path from this passage spends years, Shining ever brighter. But he will spend Everlasting years. In perfect day. And so it is true, many of the years of your life. And only someone short-sighted. Thinking apart from the purpose for which we were created to know, God and image him in his creation.

Only someone short-sighted would look at How short or few or the years of some of those who have walked according to the word of God and say that's not true. Oh, it is true. It is true. Generally speaking in this life, it True in the case of every single believer, When we count their life as a whole.

So you get And you get guidance. Verse 11, verse 12. Sorry, verse 11. I have taught you in the way of wisdom. I have led you in right paths. How often we in life? Wish to know that we are on the right path. It is a great anxiety, that weakens a man.

It keeps a woman from doing her, duty cheerfully. It keeps a man from diligence and Zeal. If he's always wondering if he's on the right path, wondering if what he's doing is useful wondering if what he's doing is going to have a good effect. But if you walk according to the word of God, you know, that you are in the way of wisdom, you're in the way of knowing the Lord and fearing him.

Not only that you are in the right path, the straight path. And so you get by listening to wisdom, you get everlasting life you get reliable guidance, that frees you to live with joy and diligence and Zeal. Not second guessing Always moving forward in the straight path. You get Effectiveness.

This is the consequence of verse 11 in verse 12. When you walk, your steps will not be hindered when you run. You will not stumble. You get genuine. Take firm hold of instruction. Do not let go. Keep her for. She is your lifeful. Think about this more? When we We come to the third section and the manner in which we get there.

And the life that God gives us by fellowship with him in his word. But this is life for the human being. It's not merely to have organs that are functioning and to have your body animated by your soul. To have life as a human being is to live in fellowship with God.

We received our life. We received our soul by the Breath of God into our first father's nostrils. God, who is preparing us to know the Lord to see the Lord and producing in us that peaceful fruit of righteousness and teaching us to pursue the Holiness without which we will not see him.

He is the father of our spirits. And so it was a continued giving and sharing of his life with the man when he gave Adam instruction about what to do in the garden. Where God spoke to him face to face. This is. To know our creator. To know him as our purpose to know him as our pleasure.

And to know him as one who speaks to us. Who communicates himself to us. Who gives us his fatherly instruction. Isn't it sweet for you? Dear children. When? Not just know your dad and have a good relationship with your dad. But when you get those moments, when you get to sit face to face with him, And he talks to you and he communicates himself to you.

Perhaps other households are like ours. Uh, my children don't just tolerate the same. Recounting of things from my childhood and things from my life but they enjoy the fellowship that we have together. That's such a small picture. A father communicating himself to his children in this life, that's a small picture.

Of your heavenly father your creator, your Redeemer, the purpose for which and for whom you exist, communicating himself to you. And not just communicating himself to you. But giving you that guidance. Giving you life from himself and guidance from himself and Effectiveness at living from himself. This is the path of the righteous.

And so he's already characterizing for us. What the path of the righteous will be. The first section verses 10 through 13, what we will get. Because a big part of the what we will get is where we will go. There are two paths One is the path of the righteous one is the path of Life.

The path of light, the other is the path of wickedness. It's a path of death. It's a path of Darkness. Oh, do not let your remaining fleshliness. Do not let any suggestion. Of the devil or any of the Devils do not let the The ideas and desires and words of other people deceive you into thinking that walking in your own way.

Walking without the counsel of God, that this is somehow freedom. That the pleasure of that path is. Is somehow good. And that the things the Comforts that you have in that path are safety or security. No, it is the path of death and the path of darkness. And so if we have been taught in the way of wisdom, one of the things that it does for us, is it?

Assures us, urges us exhorts us. Keeps us on the right path.

Verses 14 and 15. Tell us warn us off the path of the wicked. Do not enter. The path of the wicked. This is so important that we're going to get even. Avoidant in verse 15. So it's not just do not enter the path of the wicked, but as far as you can see, the path of the wicked in your life, don't go near it.

Don't play the foolish game or tell yourself. Foolish and proud idea that so long as you don't enter the path of the wicked, you can, you can go near it, we can tolerate a little bit of A little bit of worldliness. We can live for ourselves a little bit after all God created, man, to be joyful and to celebrate things.

That's true. But we must be careful to Define. What is truly joyous and And to be guarded and how we celebrate things. What we, what we call pleasure by his word. Do not think that you

can. Go near it. And if you happen to come to a place where you've got the option, you've got the choice and you will be tempted, especially the more, you know, about the Bible.

The easier it is and the stronger, the Temptation to start rationalizing. Choosing what, you know, is wrong with clever, theological arguments, and clever spiritual reasoning. No. When you get to that point and you have the opportunity to do something that, you know, maybe you don't remember at first everything from the Bible.

Why it's wrong. But it instinctively, as you feel the, the battle between your flesh and your new life in Christ, did you know it's wrong. Verse 14. Verse 15 says, turn away from it and pass on. Verse 14 says, Do not enter but verse 15 says avoid it. Don't even go near it and if the avoiding it is unsuccessful and you find yourself with the opportunity Turn away from it, run away.

There are many Christians who struggle with particular sin. Whether it's lust. Or gossip. Our gluttony or drunkenness. There are many Christians who struggle with a particular sin that must remember that one of the keys to battling that sin is to give it a strong. Whenever opportunity presents itself and another key to battling that sin is not to go near it.

Not to make rules. About what going near it is or isn't for other people. But for yourself, To know where the entryway is into the path. You have been there before. Avoid. And if you see the opportunity, And give it the no turn away and pass on. If you have, If you have, Failed on those two things.

If you have come near the path and you had the opportunity and you entered it and you were on it, Do not walk. Do not walk in the way of evil. As soon as God brings to your attention, As soon as the spirit convict, you reminds you of a scripture text or you have That sudden realization that you are in the middle or have become sitting.

Immediately stop do not walk, do not travel, do not think to yourself. It's safe for me to do this a little bit. I'll repent later after all. I've already begun sinning. I've already begun gossiping. I'll just uh I'll just finish this conversation out. No, you immediately say forgive me.

I shouldn't be talking about this. And if you have to leave the conversation, leave the conversation. And whatever it is, whatever sin it is that you are dealing with. You must do the same. Do not enter, do not walk, don't go near, don't travel on it, turn away from it.

It may look. Safe. And it may look. But behold in verse 16 and verse 17, the living of the wicked is no living at all. It is dying. They do not sleep until they have done evil, their sleep is taken away unless they make someone fall. This doesn't even necessarily mean that they know.

That this is what they are doing. It's so much the substance of the life of the one who is an unbeliever who does not belong to God through faith in Jesus Christ. That his daily doing his daily life. Is doing evil.

Indeed earlier, we Red of Violence of the wicked. And in verse 17, you have the, the violence. Of the wicked. But you catch the end of verse 16.

Violence. That walking in the way of the wicked.

They make one another. They say things like has God really said. Oh, dear children. How many have grown up hearing and even thinking that they agree with in their mind or in their heart so much of what God teaches us in his word but they weren't careful. About the path in which they walked and they weren't careful about with whom they walked on that path.

And as they shared their life, with those who were unbelievers, they shared their life with those who were in darkness and going to death day after day. The seeds of Doubt are sown For the unbeliever is confused. He does not know. God, his path is not straight. His steps are hindered.

He's always second guessing and stumbling. And he verbalizes his doubts and he counts casts doubt on the existence of God and he casts doubt on the reliability of the word and he casts doubt on what is right and what is wrong and what is truth?

Their sleep is taken away. Unless they make. Others to They may not even know it about themselves. Indeed for them, wickedness and violence are like, eating and drinking. It may look like Fellowship. But that's not. Just bread. It's the bread of wickedness. All we want the bread of righteousness.

We want the bread that comes from our heavenly father. We want the bread that knows him. Not only to have been the creator of all things but the one who works all things according to the Council of his will. So that you learn from our Lord Jesus to pray.

Give us this day, our daily bread, and then it's not just bread that you're eating, is it? Enjoying the goodness of your God to you in that bread. Never more. So, Than when it's the little bit of bread that you get at the Lord's table. When your soul is feeding upon Jesus.

Not, so the wicked. They do not know him from whom their bread come. Even they're eating is a wickedness. Even they're drinking. Is violence. Oh, watch against. A shared life with them. You see these two paths are not just Completely opposite one another In the walking in the daily living, they are completely opposite.

One another verse 19 and 19 in the destination. The path of the justice like The Shining Sun that shines ever brighter. If you are not growing as a Christian and you are troubled by it, that's good. Be troubled by it, cry out to God. With the end of Psalm 119, like we have been thinking, and singing, and praying, not just this week, praise God.

It's one of your favorites. One of our favorites as a congregation. Seek me. Who like a sheep has strayed or As it is, I have strayed like a lost sheep. I've gone astray like a lost sheep. Seek your servant. The Christian Life is not one in which there should be plateauing or stagnation.

That is not the ordinary way. The Christian Life operates, there is real sanctification. There is real maturation, there is real increase in the knowledge of God, and the enjoyment of God, and the love of God and obedience to God. Our catechism children, the littler children are thinking this week about What it means.

When we pray thy will be done in Earth as it is in heaven. Well, it means more and more that your life will be a little bit of Heaven. Isn't that what verse 18 is saying? You already have The Shining sun because the light of the knowledge of the glory of God is shining in your heart, in the face of Jesus Christ, but it shines ever brighter.

And it does. So with the knowledge that there is a day coming. When he who began that good work in you. And he is, who is working in you both to Will and to work according to his good pleasure. So that by his working in you you work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

There's coming a day that when he who has begun that good work in you. Will have brought it to completion in the day of Christ. Jesus. The perfect day of Verse 18, Oh, how pleasant is the

path on what you walk? When its destination is the perfect day. I've not only seeing the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But having been conformed. To His Image conformed to the image of his son so that he is the firstborn among many Brethren And those whom he has Justified. Have chloroform, he will have glorified. The opposite is true or the converse is true. Rather Verse 19. The way of the wicked is.

Like darkness. Not just in darkness, the path itself. Darkness. And they. They sink deeper than the grave. They fall into. Hell itself. One of the phrases that the Bible uses over and over. To describe. What hell is? Is utter Darkness. And so you cannot walk in a path that is darkness and end up with any light.

So here and give attention to wisdom. And just for what you'll get. Not just for where you'll go both the path and the destination in verses 14 through 19. But what you will be like, on the way. How you get there? It's our time. Fleeing from us will have to go quickly in verses 20 through 27.

But basically, you have guarding input to produce proper output. My son gave attention to my words incline, your ear to my sayings. Guard, what you listen to guard, whom you listen to Do not think that you can continually fill your ears and your eyes with that which does not begin in the knowledge of God and have it not affect you.

Out of the Overflow of the heart, our mouths speak and our eyes desire and our feet walk. You see that in verse 24 and falling, put away from you, a deceitful mouth and perverse lips far from you. Let your eyes look. Straight ahead and your eyelids look right before you Keep your focus, keep your desire on what is right in the path of righteousness.

Ponder, the path of your feet and let your ways be established. All of these things are what? Spring out of the well-kept heart in verse 23. Keep your heart with all diligence. For out of it spring, the issues of That means be diligent about what you listen to. And to whom you listen.

Be diligent. About what you set your eyes upon. What you read? Lord, helping us. Take up. Regular. A careful spiritual well visits. Proper pastoral visitation sometime. Um, In the near future. One of the things that I would ask. You know, usually talking to the husband or the father. What are you reading?

What is your wife reading? What are your children reading? Be careful. What you set your eyes upon. You keep your heart with all diligence. By what you hear and Bubba, you see these are ways that things enter in your heart and you should let you should focus on having the word of God take up.

Its residence in your heart. And here we are in verse 22. Again, thinking about life, they are To those who find them and health to all their flesh. You know, to be a healthy human being. As not merely. To have a good VO2 Max and to be strong and Have.

Good muscle percentage and strong bones and a functional immune system. All of those things are bodily health and bodily training profits, a little says the Apostle But spiritual training, the training of the soul of the health of the soul, in the Lord, Jesus Christ is for this life. And the next, You will not be able.

To maintain the body that you have right now. Until and through the resurrection. You won't even be able to maintain it. The way it is right now for more than a couple of decades. Before inevitable, Decay sets in True Health. Permanent. Is by the life of God. By the wisdom of God.

From his word, and And so, keep your heart. With all diligence, don't listen to those. Who might tell you that? Meditating much on spiritual things. Keeping an active devotional life. Both secretly you individually between you and your creator and Redeemer. And then also, as a household, For whom the word of God is not just to be in your heart and and on your lips.

But as As a sign on the doorpost of the house. And then Lord, blessing enough households together becomes a sign on the gates of the Keep your heart with all diligence. There is a. There is a diligence, a self-discipline, a prioritizing, a regularity. And earnestness. To the maintaining of piety.

To maintaining the life of God in the soul of, man, through the means that he has given Because they are means by which the spirit applies Christ to And it is from that Life of Christ in our hearts. That we wish the Overflow to come out of our mouths.

It is that Life of Christ in the heart. That will shape what you look at and desire with your eyes. It is that Life of Christ in the heart. That will keep your feet. On the right path. So, keep your heart. Keep your heart and the light and life of the Lord.

Jesus will grow brighter and brighter in. Until you finally arrive. That perfect day. Amen.