

Proverbs Ch6v12-19 - Wisdom Heals

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- [0 : 00] Let's go to Proverbs chapter 6. Proverbs chapter 6. And just to say that before you leave this morning, please pick up this free little booklet.
- ! This is your summer reading for you, one for everybody. It's called Visible Grace, Seeing the Church the Way Jesus Does.
- So as you come this morning, how do you perceive, how do you think about the people around you? Well, as we begin to see the church, as Jesus looks at us today, we will see a display of his amazing grace, which will overflow in thankfulness to God for one another.
- It's only a little short book, which I like, and it's got big words. So yeah, very easy to read. Visible Grace, pick up your free copies there this morning.
- Let's pray and ask for God's help as we look at his word together. Father, thank you for this book of Proverbs.
- [1 : 28] Please help us, please help us, by the power of your spirit, to take on board your word that would filter into our hearts and change us into wise people who love Jesus and love his ways.
- Encourage us all today, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. What do you hate?
- Or what is detestable to you? I don't mean do you dislike broccoli or loathe pineapple on your pizza. I mean, what do you see around you that causes outrage and disgust.
- Well, the recent events in Northern Ireland angered and upset me. To see a young, pregnant mum having her windows smashed and her living room destroyed, all because she came from a different country.
- The scenes of communities handing out what are called non-white people was disgusting. Or the daily accounts we see on our news screens of innocent children being maimed and killed angers me.
- [3 : 15] Bombs and bullets dropped and fired, causing devastation and heartbreak. The pictures of communities being destroyed are at times unbearable to watch.
- So what do you hate to see? What is detestable to you? Well, if we look at chapter 6, wisdom will tell us what is detestable.
- Verse 16. There are six things the Lord hates. Seven that are detestable to him.
- Haughty eyes. A lying tongue. Hands that shed innocent blood. A heart that devises wicked schemes.
- Feet that are quick to rush into evil. A false witness who pours out lies. And a person who stirs up conflict in the community.
- [4 : 32] That's a lot of things, isn't it? That the Lord God hates and detests. But there's one that stands out above all the rest.
- You see, verse 16 is a way of highlighting something. It's like getting your yellow highlighter and marking what is the thing that God detests the most.

Verse 16. There are six things the Lord hates. Seven that are detestable to him. It's a way of saying that of everything I hate, the most detestable is the seventh.

Look at the end of verse 19. A person who stirs up conflict in the community. God hates conflict.

God detests conflict. In fact, we should treat conflict with the same attitude that God does.

[5 : 41] Look at what God says to his church. I have it written on the screen. Warn a divisive person once. Then warn them a second time.

After that have nothing to do with them. You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful. They are self-condemned.

You see, conflict is serious, isn't it? It is detestable. In chapter 5, wisdom taught us the dangers of sexual freedom.

Well, in chapter 6, wisdom teaches us the dangers of conflict. Proverbs teaches us that there are campers.

How many people? Two people. There are those who go the way of wisdom and the way of folly. And wisdom will show us that conflict is dangerous.

[6 : 49] And those who sow seeds of peace are wise. So let's look at three things about conflict. How it starts. How it works.

And how we can bring healing to conflict. So first, how conflict starts. Where does it begin?

How does it start? Well, look back at verse 12. A troublemaker and a villain. Who goes about with a corrupt mouth.

Who winks maliciously with his eye. Says one thing. But means another. Signals with his feet.

Leads you into thinking of going one way. But is actually going another. And motions with his finger.

[7 : 51] Points to one course of action. But is taking another. Who plots evil with deceit in his heart.

He always stirs up conflict. You see, conflict is something that rises up from inside. Verse 14 tells us that deceit is in his heart.

He always stirs up conflict. Go back to chapter 4, verse 23. Chapter 4, verse 23.

Above all else, guard your heart. For everything you do. For everything you do.

Flows from it. You see, our desires and our choices. And our behaviours and our attitudes. All come from within inside.

[8 : 51] From the heart. That's why we need to guard our hearts. From sowing seeds of conflict. It comes from deep within.

In fact, the seeds of conflict have their roots in the great conflict. We know that story, that account recorded for us in Genesis 3.

The first conflict ever to take place. The attempt to push God off his throne and overtake his rule. Adam and Eve turned against God's good and loving rule.

And it set off a tsunami of chaos and destruction that continues to flood and destroy our lives and communities. That conflict with God ended in conflict with everything else.

They suffered a conflict within themselves filled with shame and guilt. They suffered conflict with each other as they began to blame each other and try to suppress and rule one another.

- [10 : 02] They suffered conflict with creation itself as disorder and decay set in. The conflict was deep.
- And so every generation since continues to follow from our first parents. The impact we see and experience all around us.
- What we see on the television. Conflict between Palestine and Israel. Both blaming atrocities on each other. The ongoing battle between Ukraine and Russia.
- This week it was reported that over 350,000 people have been killed and one million have been wounded in that conflict.
- Men, women and children blasted to their death because of the seeds of conflict that arise within the human heart.
- [11 : 08] But we don't have to look at the battles that are out there. We see it close to home, don't we? Families fall out. They don't speak to one another.
- Marriages break up. Friends separate. People leave their churches. conflict all starts because of an unguarded sinful heart.
- We're obsessed with being right, taking offense, getting even, holding grudges. It comes from within and it's dangerous.
- Proverbs reminds us that a perverse person stirs up conflict and gossip separates close friends.
- Or this one, an angry person stirs up conflict and a hot-tempered person commits many sins.
- [12 : 19] You see, God has created a good and beautiful world. Harmony, beauty and joy. A world of peace, wholeness and well-being.
- God looked at it all and it was good. But conflict has destroyed it all. That's why God hates conflict and detests conflict because it ruins nations, it destroys communities and it shatters families.
- It turns upside down the good that God had intended. So first, how conflict starts.
- It starts from an unguarded heart where the seeds of conflict begin to flow out. So second, how conflict works.
- How it works out in day-to-day life. Let's look at verse 16 to 19. Do you see the progression there in those verses?
- [13 : 34] Each of the first six images that we have all lead towards the seventh and final conclusion which is a person who stirs up conflict in the community.
- You see, conflict gets worked out in our life in many different ways. Let's go through them and maybe there's some that we might recognize in our own life.
- first, in verse 17, haughty eyes. It's that look you receive from someone when you walk in the room.
- That sense of superiority, unspoken words communicated by a look of disdain, what are you doing here? It leads to racial segregation and class division.
- who am I looking down on? Or what about our lying tongues? It's those words that flow so naturally when I'm confronted with the truth.
- [14 : 45] No, I didn't say that. I didn't do that. Or promises that we fail to deliver on. Oh, of course I'll do it.
- when we have no intention at all. It just leads to distrust and hurts and relationship breakdown. What lies am I telling?

Or third, as it says there in verse 17, hands that shed innocent blood, violent hands, a punch, a slap, grabbing hold of your wife's shoulders, a wagging finger in the face of colleagues, threatening gestures to your child.

It leads to domestic abuse, uncontrolled anger, retaliation and further violence. How have I used my hands this week?

or fourth, verse 18, a heart that devises wicked schemes, wicked hearts.

[16 : 05] It's those selfish desires that pursue what I want regardless of the effects or impacts on other people so long as the outcome always suits me.

We call it emotional manipulation. and all it does is leads to suffering and heartache for those who are closest to you as we pursue what I want.

What desires are festering in my heart? feet. Or then, feet, feet, 18 rather, feet that are quick to rush into evil.

It's that intentional decision. You know what it's like to walk across that room and tell that person what you really think. Just let it all out.

or taking that step back again to your spouse because you have to have the last word. It leads to hurts and division and long lasting communication and breakdown.

[17 : 22] Where will my feet take me today? Or verse 19. A false witness who pours out lies.

A false testimony. It's those half-truths or twisted truths that make others look bad and always seem to make me look wonderfully good.

It's the stories that we tell. Did you hear about? Wait till I tell you what they did. It leads to gossip and rumours and ruins the reputation of others.

How am I speaking about others in the church today? Haughty eyes, lying tongues, violent hearts, hands, wicked hearts, evil feet, false testimony.

They're all symptoms of something much bigger and greater. Verse 19, a person who stirs up conflict in the community.

[18 : 40] You see, the seeds of conflict are sown in our everyday words, actions, and thoughts. They may seem just so tiny and so small, innocent and harmless.

But seeds grow, and when they're fully grown, lead to conflict. You see, conflict isn't restricted to bombs and bullets on a battlefield.

It starts with the way I look at someone, the words I use, a gesture I make, an action, a thought. You see, if we don't guard our hearts, those seeds will seep out into our marriages and into our families and into our church and into the wider community.

It's deadly. God detests it. So, how conflict starts, how conflict works out in day-to-day life, and then third, how conflict can be healed.

Look at where conflict leads for end of verse 14, chapter 6. He always stirs up conflict.

[20 : 12] What's the consequence? Therefore, disaster will overtake him in an instant. They will suddenly be destroyed without remedy.

Deceitful hearts end in disaster and destruction. End of verse 15, there is no remedy.

We cannot fix our own hearts. So, where does healing come from? Where do we get healing for all the conflict in this world and in our lives?

Well, as we've seen through our studies in Proverbs, God's wisdom is ultimately worked out through his son, Jesus Christ. Go with me, please, as we look at two examples in Ephesians chapter one of how we see conflict being healed, where we go to for all our conflicts and all our fallouts.

Two big applications for us this morning. The first one is the gospel of Christ. The gospel of Christ brings healing.

- [21 : 47] In chapter one of Ephesians we see God's plan and purpose for the nations, the communities and the families of the world. Look at the end of verse 10.

His purpose in Christ, this is God's purpose in Christ, is to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

This is God's plan and purpose for the nations, to bring all people, all things, to restore them under the loving rule of God's King, Jesus Christ.

Remember how Genesis brought that conflict and separated them, put them against God? Well, his purpose is to unite all again under the rule of God's Son.

His purpose is to bring an end to all conflict, to unite people together, to restore where there's been hostility and to heal where there's been division.

- [23 : 04] So think about a conflict in your life. Think about a relationship that has maybe broken down, where hurt has been replaced with trust.

Can God bring healing? Can God bring restoration? Yes, he can. How can he do it? Well, go to chapter two of Ephesians.

The context here in chapter two is of a deeply divided community. He's writing to a church. Jews and Gentiles, people from Israel, people from Palestine.

But in a sense, it can apply to all divisions of people. And look how God will bring about unity in the conflict. Chapter two, the end of verse 15.

End of verse 15. His purpose, God's purpose, was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace.

- [24 : 26] peace. And in one body, the body of Christ, to reconcile both of them to God through the cross by which he put to death their hostility.

At the cross, as Jesus dies, he steps in as the ultimate mediator. Someone has to pay for all the conflict.

Either we die or Christ dies. So God, in his goodness and in his grace, sends his son Jesus Christ to take the consequences of our conflicts on himself.

In the context here in Ephesians 2, he takes the sin of the Jew in one hand, the sin of the Gentile in the other hand, and he dies in their place.

End of verse 15, his purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace.

- [25 : 39] Now what God has done then is wonderfully true for us today. Christ's death on the cross brings peace and ends hostility as divided parties come to Christ so healing can begin.

But of course if Christ is refused then as we saw in Proverbs disaster will overcome them, there will be no remedy outside of Christ.

Judgment will be their reward. But if we come to Christ in faith, we are restored, we are reconciled, we become part of God's family.

Verse 15, we become part of a new humanity, we receive a new identity, we become brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus. We become God's very own people, the church.

We become one big family where love and compassion are found. You see, in the church, this gathered people here today becomes a living example of a community where conflicts end and peace rules.

- [27 : 02] Look at chapter 3, verse 10. Chapter 3, verse 10. Why did God do this work of reconciliation and bringing peace?

verse 10, his intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly realms according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God's wisdom is to bring healing to his people and that healing is experienced at the cross and is now displayed in the church.

God is saying, look what wisdom has done. Look at the local church in the local community. Look how people have been restored and been forgiven and how peace now reigns.

so if we want to experience healing, let us go to the cross, see what Christ has done and experience peace in our life.

[28 : 22] So first, the way to healing is the gospel of Christ and as we're seeing, secondly, healing comes through the church of Christ.

You see, if the church is a display of God-ending hostility, then we are to live out that unity to a world that has their eyes fixed on us saying, look at them.

Look at chapter 4 verse 2. Ephesians chapter 4 verse 2. Be completely humble and gentle. Be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace. So wisdom, are we going to sow seeds of peace or are we going to sow seeds of discord?

How do we keep the unity? Well, he goes on to tell us, chapter 4 verse 25. It's all about how we live. Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood.

[29 : 34] Speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body. Verse 29. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

or verse 31. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

You see, the reality is we can all sow seeds of conflict when we don't guard our hearts. But we can, because of Christ and his spirit at work within us, sow seeds of peace.

No, the church is not perfect, but the church is God's display model to a watching world of how we resolve conflict.

[30 : 55] Do you see it there, chapter 5, verse 1? we follow God's example as dearly loved children and live a life of love just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

You see, as we gather as God's people, we are to bring each other back to the cross and see what he has done for us where we choose not to hold on to hurts or seek revenge or withhold forgiveness.

Instead, we follow the Lord's example. We sow seeds of peace. we show acts of love and compassion. We share the gospel of Christ and we welcome a hurting and broken people to come to Christ and to know peace and healing within.

The way of wisdom is the way of healing for all of our relationships. Our relationships to God and our relationships with one another.

Let's just take a moment to reflect and think of these things as we pray together. there. Amen.

[32 : 33] Amen. Lord God, would you please give us a heart and an attitude that hates conflict and detests division?

Would you give us a heart that will continually run to Christ and know forgiveness where we need it? The help of your Spirit to sow seeds of peace through our words, through our actions, and through our thoughts.

Would you help us to be a community that reflects the beauty and the wisdom of a God who ends hostility and brings peace?

Help us by your Spirit that we would be a welcoming community to those who are hurt and broken by conflict, that they may receive love and compassion.

Thank you, Father, for this church. Thank you for one another. Thank you for your grace to us in our life.

[34 : 19] And thank you for the work you are doing in our lives in mending and bringing us back to you time and time again.

Thank you, Lord. Please send us now with your Spirit to be those who sow peace and stay clear of conflict.

In Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing together how great the chasm that lay between us, how high the mountain I could not climb, how we run to Christ for all of our needs.

Let's sing this and sing it in a way that encourages us as we start into a new week to go as God's people into his world.

Let's stand together if we're able to and we'll sing.