

Proverbs 4

Part 1

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[00:00:01] Romans 4, verse 25.

Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

The eleventh chapter of Luke's Gospel. Luke, chapter 11, reading verse 33.

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither on a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. [00:01:05] The light of the body is the eye.

Therefore, when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light.

But when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body, therefore, be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle does give thee light.

And lastly, 2 Corinthians, chapter 3. [00:02:16] 2 Corinthians, chapter 3, the last verse, verse 18.

But we all, with open face or unveiled face, beholding as in a glass of the glory of the Lord, are chained into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

In these verses from the book of Proverbs, from which I have selected one verse to read to you, [00:03:06] the wise man Solomon, with wisdom given to him from God, is seeking to instruct the people of God in regard to their course through this world.

And he says, keep thy heart with all diligence.

Watch over with great vigilance as to what you place your affection upon.

Keep thy heart with all diligence.

And notice the matter of supreme importance, this call to keep one's heart with all diligence.

Truly, he adds, for out of it, out of the heart, are the issues of life.

[00:04:07] I hope that we all here tonight are concerned about the issues of life.

I don't know how you understand that phrase, but it always appeals to me as meaning the end in which life issues out of this world.

I hope that we're all interested in the matter as to how our end is to be, when we have to leave this scene.

Give all diligence, the wisdom of God says, give all diligence to keep thy heart, guard it.

Be careful what you put your affection upon, for out of it are the issues of life. And then we'll move on to the mouth. [00:05:03] Put away from me a crooked or a forward mouth, you know, that pasty mouth which is not careful what it does. Put away from me that.

There's a world of iniquity in the tongue, James says. Put away perverse lips.

Put them far from me.

And then this verse, let thine eyes look right on.

What is the object, the objective that you set your eyes upon in this life, beloved friend?

Let thine eyes look right on, says the wise man.

And let thine eyelids look straight before thee. That is, above all things, don't have a lie of twisted perversity with different objectives. Be like Paul who said, this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind you [00:06:06] and reaching forward to the things that are before. I press, he says, toward the prize, the mark of calling on higher God in Christ Jesus. Could I ask us all tonight, including myself, as to whether our objective in life is a unity, one thing only?

Or is our life, are our affections set upon a mixture of things?

Which will counterbalance one another and hinder the true progress which God loves to see.

After all, we belong to Christ, the purchase of his own precious blood. Are we not going to seek to answer to his will? [00:07:01] While we are left here in this world which rejected him, there will be many things to hinder us. We are going against the stream, not with the stream.

May the Lord help us by this little work tonight to decide what our course is going to be. Let thine eyes look right on, and thine eyes look straight before thee.

The watchfulness in this matter may produce, will produce, I believe, great blessings to our souls.

To the whole course of our life, and to the glory, our place in the glory of Christ. Lack of watchfulness in this matter can produce endless sorrows for us.

[00:08:03] You say that's rather a great statement. Would you like to prove it? Well, let us go back to the very beginning of this creation.

When God created man and woman in that paradise of Eden, he gave them the necessary instructions, that which was his will, the word of God for them. But instead of taking heed to the word of God, Eve gave credence to the voice of the heavenly households.

Instead of having one objective in front of her, her eyes looking right the way ahead, to heed the word of God, the word which she had heard. Was that to be the principle of her life, or was it to be the voice of the citizens? [00:09:05] She had a paradise in her head. All the drinks of the garden to eat, with the exception of a single one from it. All the animal creation, all in her sway. She had the love of her husband. One would have thought that she would have had adequate in that paradise to satisfy every desire, and to keep her in the path of obedience to God. But alas, alas, the one prohibited tree was the one on which she set her gaze, her eyes.

And she withdrew. And the result was catastrophe for herself, for her husband, for all her hostility, for the animal creation, the whole creation in fact, fell as the result of that worry of not letting the eyes look right forward, with a single eye. [00:10:09] And the disasters come down to us today, don't they? Sin and death.

With all the sorrows of the world today, I needn't go into those. The result of this worry is on the part of our first parents' feet.

The saints of God are not free from this, let me know. Going forward in the divine record, to the patriarchal age, when God called Abraham out of the idolatrous herd of the Chaldeans to go to a land which should be shown to him. He was accompanied by his nephew Lot, [00:11:02] and eventually they reached the land of Cana, the Promised Land. But alas, although they had worshipped God together, no doubt, I need not remind you that Lot was a true believer. Born again, righteous Lot, he is today. He must have been born again to be that. Lot was not content with the tent and the altar, Lot was not content with the tent and the altar and not Abraham.

Signs of that pilgrim life flowed straight through it. The tent just a temporary dwelling while he is on this pilgrim journey, and the altar to worship the God who had called them with that heavenly calling. Alas, Lot was not content with that. They had been out to Egypt and God had brought them out again. [00:12:04] But just as perhaps Abraham brought Ada, which was a source of trouble and of thorn in his flesh in later days, it looks as though Lot brought an affection for Cana. But when there came a strife between Abraham and Lot's herdmen, and Abraham gave Lot the choice saying, we are brethren, we have no need to strive. Look, you choose which you will and go the way that you desire, and I will be content to take the opposite course. You see, Abraham was looking for a heavenly home, a heavenly country, a heavenly city, which God was preparing for him. But alas, Lot's eye again was on things down, not on things up.

[00:13:05] He beheld the well-watered plain of Jordan, you know, and he saw that that was an ideal location for his cattle, the cattle which had wound themselves around his heart. And he chose the well-watered plain of Jordan.

He chose earthly prosperity rather than the heavenly home.

What was the result of that?

What was the result of not looking straight forward to the heavenly home, but having his eyes upon

earthly scenes and earthly venues? The result of that was that he was soon in sodom. He hadn't noticed that it led to sodom. [00:14:04] He had a miserable life. The actions in his sodom breathing his heart constantly.

He had a wretched life.

He was saved by the skin of his teeth, as you all know, dragged out of sodom before the fire of God descended upon him from heaven.

His sons-in-law never had sodom.

His daughters were dragged out with him. But he had a badly trained family, trained in that godless city of sodom. We can draw a veil over the actions of his daughters when he was away out of sodom.

[00:15:04] Their father was shameful, being inherited from sodom without a doubt.

And when Lot and his wife and his daughters were dragged forcibly by the angel out of sodom, the word of God said, don't look back, let your eyes look right on.

And in defiance of the word of God, his wife, his wife, Lot's wife, looked back.

Her heart was in sodom.

Her eye was not single.

There were other objects than the word of God.

And the defiance was met immediately with judgment of a serious, most serious kind.

[00:16:09] She became a pillar of salt on the street.

It's evident, beloved friends, that this question as to where our eyes is of all importance.

And I take the liberty of engaging your attention with this matter tonight.

In the days of Moses, a little later, Moses was up on the mountaintop with God, God communicating him his plans for the blessing of the people. And what about the people down below? They could not wait forty days while Moses reappeared with the message of God.

[00:17:08] So obsessed with things down here, with earthly things, that they issued a call for gods that they could see with the eye, rather than keeping their eye upon the man on the mountaintop in the presence of God.

The golden calf was to be then gone from that day forward.

A calf, an image of the ox that eateth grass, the scripture calls it.

And thus, idolatry in the calf of God, [00:18:01] through failure to be vigilant in keeping the heart, out of which are the issues of life, and keeping the eye upon God's objective. And then when the people were just about to get into the land, they insisted on sending spies to see the land with their eye, before they would consent to go in.

And they sent spies throughout the length of that land, from top to bottom. And the spies brought the report, with the exception of two, that it was a land which he himself had inhabited, and the people were into giants, the sons of Adam. [00:19:02] We were in their sights like grasshoppers, just a mere tiny insect.

And in fact, we were in our own eyes, just as grasshoppers. Just imagine the people of God with you, with such insignificance. And failing to keep their eyes upon God's promise to reward them, Joshua and Caleb said, if the Lord delights in us, he will bring us in as he has promised. Adam and Esau doubt about that, my dear brethren. But God will bring us in, if we belong to him at all.

There is more certainty, in our landing in glory with Christ. There is more certainty about that, than what is going to happen to us tomorrow. We know not what a day may bring forth, [00:20:02] but we do know the glory of Christ at our landing. So let us pray.

The glory of Christ at our landing. So the spies brought back this legal report, and the result was, that only their children, and the two man-faithful men of God, who had said, let us go in without searching the land. God is able to deal with the sons of Adam and with everyone else. Only those two men of the promised land, as well as the children of Israel.

And then when they got into the land, when they were possessing the land, this lack of care over the affections, [00:21:03] and this sleepless alliance, right on to the purpose of God, it affected two of the half-tribes, didn't it? Of the twelve. Gad and Reuben, the half-tribe of Manasseh, they came to the conclusion, that it was not possible to maintain their lives in the Middle East, unless they stayed on the wilderness side of the Jordan, in the well-watered lands, the pasture lands again, the cattle coming into the fields again, the earth to the fields, instead of keeping the eye upon God's mercy. I wonder how we stand, beloved brethren, tonight. This matter is a matter of all importance. As to whether our eye is single, or whether it's multiple, do you notice that the alternative to single is not double? If thy eye is single, [00:22:01] if thy eye is single, thy whole vision in your life, if you have one objective in your life, the will of God, the purpose of God, the alternative is, if thy eye is evil.

Oh, but you say, there are plenty of interesting things in life, there's no harm in my giving attention to this, and attention to that, and diverting myself a little to that, and keeping myself on the way with this. I can only refer you again to what the Lord says, if thy eye is evil.

That's the alternative to the single eye. Thy whole body shall be full of darkness. And then in the New Testament, we have Peter. When the Lord called to him on the water, called him out of the boat, [00:23:01] to protect the protection of the woman's ship, to enter a course which could only be sustained by the single eye, the eye which would most trigger him. As long as he kept his eye on the Lord, he was sustained, he was supported, and able to walk from the water. But of course, the father of faith is the vote of the enemy, the objective of the enemy, to upset that. And he raised the storm, the waves, and the wind. And Peter, he turned his eye on the Lord. He was occupied with the wind, he was occupied with the waves, he had not a single eye, he was not looking straight forward. Straight ahead. And he began to see. [00:24:02] And it was only the intervention of the Lord in

boundless love that enabled him to reach his goal, where the Lord was. Blessed Lord, he will. He will bring us to the goal. Thanks be to God. He will bring us to the goal. But what about the honor that is due to him in our pathway through this world, beloved friends? All these negatives that we are being considered, they don't encourage us very much, but they warn us about the disaster of not having a single eye. Let us look at a positive example, too, which warms our heart and encourages us. And encourages us on this path of the single eye. Elisha called [00:25:04] to follow Elijah, the heavenly man. Aware that he was going to lose his master, he was given the opportunity to make a request. And his request was that a double portion of the spirit of Elijah should fall upon him when he was left in the world from which Elijah departed. I wonder if we are concerned about a double portion of the spirit of Christ upon us in this world from which the Lord is temporarily absent.

They passed through the land and there didn't seem to be much of a voice anywhere for God. There were sons of the prophets who looked as though they were merely children of the prophets [00:26:03] who had been their fathers and they were not in the good of the thing themselves. They passed through Gilgal, through Jericho, and Jordan.

And the day came when Elijah was to be taken up to heaven by the whirlwind of the shepherds. And Elisha, being a man of single eye, he was taken up to heaven by the whirlwind of the shepherds. He was a man of single eye. Having taken note of the word from Elijah, if thou see me when I am taken up, your wish shall be granted. He didn't look around on this. He wasn't attracted to this objective. He had the objective of seeing Elijah when he was taken up, the heavenly man. He kept his eye upon him. [00:27:02] And he obtained his request and a double portion of the Spirit of Elijah was granted unto him. So that when he came back after Elijah had gone to heaven, with his mantle, he smote the waters of the Jordan and they parted. And he went back to these places that he had visited with Elijah. And in each of them, the sons of the prophets, they said, without a word being uttered, they said a double portion of the Spirit of Elijah rests upon Elijah. If we wish to be more like Lord Jesus Christ and our friends, we need to look right ahead and not turn to the right and not to the left for the poor things of this world which the devil has set up [00:28:01] to entertain us if we will allow him to pass our time away.

But God wants us to be men and women of single eye, single objectives, single objective in our lives, guarding our hearts lest the things of this poor world will get in our reflection. You do remember, don't you, what the Apostle John writes in his epistle? When he says, Love not the world, be careful about your hearts again. What you're going to do is let your affection wander upon Love not the world, this system that the devil has built up to make us insensitive with our ruin, to entertain us. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, love the things that are [00:29:02] present in it still. And there are plenty of toys in the world, for all tastes, not only the vulgar things but there are kind too. Love not the things of the world, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Here is the single eye again, and the only alternative is the love of the Father. No, the love of the Father is not there, if any man love the world. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world. And those three things, of course, were in temptation that the son of Adam and the daughter of Ephesus would rule.

[00:30:01] And the lust of the eyes, she saw that it was a pleasant tree and the pride of life, it was a tree to be desired to make one wise. Wise in disobedience to God? Yes, that's what the enemy would instill in us, that there are things that we really must have in this godless world in disobedience to the Word of God. And then think of Stephen, another man of a single eye. It was granted to him to be the last witness to the Lord Jesus Christ in his exaltation, his resurrection and exaltation. [00:31:07] And he

paid for the privilege with his life. And while the stones were battling this poor body to death, Stephen looked up, not down, not around, not at the tormentors, not for rescuers. He looked up in heaven and the heavens were open to his gaze, that single eye. And he saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of the Lord. He thought not about his tormentors. He didn't wish vengeance from God upon them. [00:32:03] He had compassion upon them, in fact.

He became like his master. And he said, Lord, lay not this sin their charge. There is great encouragement in this episode of Elisha and this of Stephen. The result of a single eye, a whole body full of light, no part dark. Here for the pleasure of God and here with the blessing of God. And just as Elisha could be seen by the sons of the prophets to bear the characteristics of the heavenly man of God, [00:33:01] so Elisha reflected the characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ, the characteristics of him who said, Father forgive them for they know of what they do. And Stephen said, Lord, lay not this sin their charge. And he fell asleep. What about the Lord Jesus Christ himself? Tempted in every way by the devil himself again, like our first parents. Tempted in every department of the human anatomy, body, soul and spirit. Tempted again with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. [00:34:03] His eye was straight forward, looking straight ahead. A single eye to whom the word of God and equal to the word of God. You know, there's great importance in this matter as to whether we're going to regulate our lives by the word of God or by our own desires. Are we keeping close to the word of God till today in this last day of the Gentile era before the coming of Christ or are we beginning to say this would be advisable, this would be nice. I fear, beloved brethren, it's the latter that's coming in and the word of God is not given a place to regulate what we do as it ought to be. The Lord Jesus Christ says it is written to the death, man shall not live by bread alone. [00:35:01] Yes, if he was hungry, he would fast at the fourth day and he would eat at the fifth day he had fasted for forty days and forty nights quite legitimate to allay his suffering. No, he says, it's no guy. It is the word of God and the word of God had not come. It was the word of the enemy that was seeking to get him to turn his eye on things here rather than on the things of God. And then, the lust the lust of the eye he was shown all the kingdoms of the world in all the times. All the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time was an attraction [00:36:02] but it was no attraction of a single eye of a son of God who came not to do his own will but the will of him who sent him. He would not accept all the kingdoms of the world as a guide to his doing of the devil required. And then the pride of life put to a proof what God says that he will give his angels charge over me lest I should dash thy foot against the stone. It was no guide to put God to the test. He believed the word of God. God has said it and God loves it. I'll be going to be guided by the word of God if all the details of this complex life [00:37:01] are we going to lose our singles of eye our singles of objective in life.

Let us examine our ways beloved brethren let us judge ourselves see whether we are in a path that is going to bring infinite blessing or in a path that is going to bring us infinite suffering and sorrows. The evil eye. We are moving on to the moment when we shall see the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

He showed me a pure river of water of life clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and the land in the midst of the storm in the midst of the streak of it on the right side of the river [00:38:01] was there the tree of life the tree of life you know had been in the garden in the very center of the garden the paradise of creation in the first instance but when the tempter came along and suggested that he should take of the tree of the knowledge of whom he knew she described that as being in the midst of the garden the center of the scheme but it was not the center of the scheme the tree of life was the center and here it is again in the midst of the streak of it on either side of the river there was a tree there was a tree of life which bare twelve manna fruits and yielded her fruit every month and the leaves of the tree were the healing of the nations and there shall be no more curse the curse

which Eve brought upon herself [00:39:01] and the creation gone now there shall be no more curse but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it God's authority to restore His throne the throne of God and the Lamb and His servants shall serve Him His servants would like to serve Him here and after that He would prevent no hindrance great opposition from the enemy as well as men but in this day His servants shall serve Him isn't that an encouragement beloved brethren His servants shall be able to serve the Lord they love in a manner that is worthy of Him which often is not their [00:40:01] privilege to do and they shall see His face the single eyes of the Lord they shall see His face and His name shall be written in their foreheads it will be seen marked upon them that they will no longer His name His character shall be written in their foreheads and there shall be no night there no darkness no evil eye over the single eye for the glory of heaven and they need no candle neither the light of the sun all natural things which have been such a delight to them in this world now for the Lord God giveth them life God is the [00:41:01] source of all their joy and they shall reign forever and ever may God help us to examine ourselves and to make the right choice during the few remaining days He leaves us here in this scene with the pleasure of God with our eyes single and looking right ahead and not attracted to any poor thing in this world would you engage our heart in competition with Him may God help us