

**BE SURE TO BRING YOUR LUNCH  
PROVERBS 20:1-30**

**By Pastor John Carlini, D. Mn.**

**M.I. WE WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD FOR EVERYTHING WE SAY, DO, AND THINK. WE WILL ALL BE JUDGED.**

I. GOD'S ABILITY TO RULE (Vs. 1-4)

**GOD GOVERNS THE UNIVERSE THROUGH NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL CONSEQUENCES.**

- A. A SURE WAY TO VIOLENCE (Vs. 1&3)
- B. A SURE WAY TO POVERTY (V. 4)
- C. A SURE WAY TO DEATH (V. 2)

II. GOD'S ABILITY TO KNOW AND JUDGE (Vs. 5-12)

**NOT ONLY IS GOD ABLE TO SEE AND HEAR EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON IN THE UNIVERSE, HE CAN ALSO SEE OUR MOTIVES AND WHAT'S GOING ON IN OUR MINDS, HEARTS AND SOULS. THEREFORE HE IS ABLE TO JUDGE.**

- A. GOD SEES OUR MOTIVES (Vs. 5-7)
- B. GOD SEES OUR ACTIONS (Vs. 8-12)

III. GOD'S ABILITY TO LEAD (Vs. 13-30)

**GOD MAKES CLEAR WHAT HE EXPECTS OF US.**

- A. GOD VALUES DILIGENCE AND WISDOM (Vs. 13-17)
- B. GOD WATCHES AND ADVISES (Vs. 18-23)
- C. GOD KNOWS THE WAY (Vs. 24-30)

**BE SURE TO BRING YOUR LUNCH**  
**PROVERBS 20:1-30**

**By Pastor John Carlini, D. Mn.**

I think that this morning's message is extremely important for us to hear because our culture has lost its sense of suffering the consequences of abnormal behavior. We want to say and do whatever we want, good or bad, but we don't want to accept the consequences of our bad behavior. Well-connected businessmen are stunned that they are being forced to stand trial after stealing billions of dollars from their companies. Famous celebrities are shocked to think they are being forced to face the consequences of their deviant sexual behaviors. People who are caught drunk-driving want special privileges to continue driving so they can get to work. And the sad thing is, in many instances, these businessmen, these celebrities, and other criminals continue to get away with these things, and more.

However, they will not continue to get away with these things, and I am not really concerned with these people this morning. God will ensure that everyone will get what is coming to him or her. My interest this morning is Christians. I'm concerned about you and me. You see, I think a lot of this attitude -- of making poor choices and expecting no consequences -- has infiltrated our theology in a very sinister way.

Here is our reasoning: We think that because we prayed this prayer of salvation that we are covered. In other words, we think we can do anything we want, and because we are saved and because we ask for forgiveness, everything is all right. We act just like unbelievers but somehow we have come to believe that we won't suffer the consequences of our sin.

Let me give you an example: When I was a young pastor, I had the privilege of working for an older pastor who was very wise. We had two brothers in the church who were just plain nasty. They fought and they caused all sorts of problems in the church and the community, but they were

members of the church. One day, one of the brothers died. When the other brother came in, and as we went over the funeral arrangements, he had one demand, which was that during the service, the pastor say, "This man was a saint." If he did, the brother would donate \$10,000 to the church. The pastor agreed, but I was a little uncomfortable. The old pastor told me to relax and learn.

During the service, at the critical moment, the pastor gave this assessment of the dead man, "The man that lies before you today was a scoundrel. He lied, he argued, he drank, and he fought. He was downright despicable. However ... compared to his brother ... this man was a saint."

-----

Isn't that the way it is though? We want to think that we are pretty good people and when we do things that are wrong we don't want to suffer the consequences. Many of us are suffering as a result of sinful thinking and sinful behavior, yet we don't want to change. In fact we are angry that we have to suffer the consequences of our behavior. I don't want us to be confused about our salvation, but I also don't want us to be confused about consequences. The main idea of this morning's text is: **WE WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD FOR EVERYTHING WE SAY, DO, AND THINK. WE WILL ALL BE JUDGED.** Today's sermon should arouse a lot of fear and anxiety in us. When I examine my own personal life, I can see where God has warned me several times. I have had to suffer minor consequences, but I think as I avoid or ignore these consequences, He will up the stakes. If God has sent you several warnings through consequences, then you too should perhaps be a little scared about pushing God to bring more severe consequences into your life as well.

I. GOD'S ABILITY TO RULE (Vs. 1-4)  
**GOD GOVERNS THE UNIVERSE THROUGH NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL CONSEQUENCES.**

God is the King. He rules over the entire universe. Verses 1-4 describe God's ability to rule. Further, these verses will describe how He rules: **GOD GOVERNS THE UNIVERSE THROUGH NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL CONSEQUENCES.** God has not only built natural and spiritual laws into the universe, He has built consequences to go along with them. Obeying the spiritual and natural laws of the universe brings positive consequences and rewards. Violating the spiritual and natural laws of the universe bring negative consequences. Think about violating the law of gravity. If you were to go to the top of the Sears Tower and jump off the building because you didn't believe in the law of gravity, it wouldn't take long for you to experience the consequences of that poor choice.

A. A SURE WAY TO VIOLENCE (Vs. 1&3)

Verses 1 and 3 inform us that alcohol and a big mouth are sure ways to violence. I have seen verse 1 taken out of context so many times that often I think I overreact to it and don't do justice to the verse. Let me explain: In the Bible, the sin is "being drunk" not drinking. In fact, one of Jesus' miracles was turning water into wine. Many well meaning Christians have taken this verse to mean that one should never drink. Whenever people want to make rules that don't exist, I often get a little cranked up and argue against them. Like these well meaning Christians who argue against drinking at all, I think that my motives in reacting against them are well meaning also. However, maybe we both need to learn from one another. No doubt my friends need to learn a little more about Christian freedom, but I certainly need to learn a little more about Christian restraint.

Now to clear the air before I get into this text; and so no one will have cause to call me a hypocrite, most of you who know me, know that on occasion I have imbibed. But you also know

that unless I am away on vacation, I never take more than one drink. I don't drink more than one drink because as your pastor, I am always on call. So I really have no problems with alcohol.

Now let's get back to verse 1: The text says that wine is a mocker and beer a brawler, and further, weak types of personalities are led astray by drinking friends and by the alcohol itself. Let me make a couple of observations about alcohol: First, if we are poor and need the money to pay our bills or feed our family, then we should not be drinking. I always tell people not to be legalistic about giving money to God. He doesn't need it. It would be better for you to pay your bills and feed your family. However, if we are spending our money on alcohol, tobacco, gambling or other things of that ilk, then that money should go to God first. Next, alcohol can be addictive. If we have a weak or addictive personality, then we should stay far away from alcohol. Being addicted to anything, alcohol, drugs, food, work, pornography, anything ... is a sin. Further, since it is a sin to be drunk, how do we know when we cross the line? Alcohol causes us to lose our reasoning process, our filters, our inhibitions, and our better judgment. Combine verse 1 with verse 3: Probably most of the fights, arguments, and accidents that we witness are alcohol related. Drunken people are rowdy, loud, obnoxious, and do all kinds of stupid stuff. Think about how many people drunk drivers kill each year. Think about how many rapes and sexual encounters are alcohol-related.

Here is what mystifies me in the United States; we have gone after the cigarette smokers as if they are criminals. For the most part, cigarette smokers are killing themselves. But drunks are dangerous to everyone they come in contact with. They are a danger to people in the restaurant and the bar. They are a danger to the people they come in contact with while walking. And they are certainly a danger to other drivers and pedestrians when they get in their cars to drive. Even in the army, they warned us as officers, "If you don't drink, don't start. If you do drink, quit." If you

have more than one alcohol-related incident in the military ... you are out. They take it very seriously. And so should we.

Here is what I want all of us to think about. Has God warned us about drinking? Perhaps we have experienced a hangover. Or perhaps God has upped the stakes; maybe we got in a fight, or did something stupid sexually or otherwise made fools out of ourselves. Perhaps we got a ticket, or perhaps we have gotten hurt physically. Now think about how serious the warning is that God has sent our way. If we ignore Him, the consequences will be worse next time. Now here is where you may be tempted to call me a hypocrite; if any of us have had any negative experiences with alcohol, we should probably consider quitting alcohol altogether. If you are under the age of 40, and you don't drink or do drugs, and don't hang around with people who drink or do drugs, you have over a 90% chance of making it to 40. Wine is a mocker. If you drink too much, we are mocking God ... and there are consequences for that type of behavior.

#### B. A SURE WAY TO POVERTY (V. 4)

Verse 4 states that laziness is a sure way to poverty. Here is where the church as an institution needs to be careful. Yes, we must have a heart for the poor; however, we must also be wise. If, for example, people choose to spend their money on alcohol, drugs, clothes, jewelry, or cell phones, and then ask the church for money to eat ... that seems to me to be working against God. If people refuse to look for work and expect the church to help ... that seems to me to be working against God.

One of the things that I am extremely grateful for, is that I was raised in an immigrant family who had a strong work ethic. Everybody in my family worked two or three jobs at a time. In fact, before I came to Devon Church, I was working two jobs, and further, my wife still works two jobs. Even though I have a doctor's degree, I would have no problem going back to doing

manual labor, digging ditches, or doing whatever job I had to do to survive. In the Army, I had to live in a tent and go to the bathroom in the woods. So when people come to me with stories to help them, I'm pretty selective about who I'm willing to help. If we are lazy or think somehow we are entitled to a certain type of lifestyle, then we are sure to find poverty. And here is a reminder to those of us who are softhearted without discernment: when we rescue people whom God is judging, we are getting in the way of God doing His work.

### C. A SURE WAY TO DEATH (V. 2)

And that is even more dangerous because as verse 2 points out, ignoring God's warnings is a sure way to death. Now I think that when we look at the poetic books in the bible, we need to consider the character of the king as being a representative of God ... or God Himself. For our purposes, I am going to cautiously equate the king with God in this chapter. In the everyday life of a common person, if we somehow got the king mad at us, we would certainly end up dead. Even if we were to look at our modern history, we can see that people who have stood up against dictators, kings, and even presidents, have turned up missing or dead under very mysterious circumstances.

Here is the point of the poet: If we continue to ignore God's laws, we will not only end up physically dead, we will end up forfeiting our eternal souls. I want us to think about this very seriously this morning. God has sent us so many warnings. He is patient but, He will not always remain so. If we continue to ignore Him, there will be a price to pay: **GOD GOVERNS THE UNIVERSE THROUGH NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL CONSEQUENCES.**

II. **GOD'S ABILITY TO KNOW AND JUDGE (Vs. 5-12)**  
**NOT ONLY IS GOD ABLE TO SEE AND HEAR EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON IN THE UNIVERSE, HE CAN ALSO SEE OUR MOTIVES AND WHAT'S GOING ON IN OUR MINDS, HEARTS AND SOULS. THEREFORE HE IS ABLE TO JUDGE.**

And God makes it known that He is fit to rule. In verses 5-12 we are enlightened as to God's ability to know and to judge: **NOT ONLY IS GOD ABLE TO SEE AND HEAR**

**EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON IN THE UNIVERSE, HE CAN ALSO SEE OUR MOTIVES AND WHAT'S GOING ON IN OUR MINDS, HEARTS AND SOULS. THEREFORE HE IS ABLE TO JUDGE.** This is the section that caused me to think of this morning's title, "Be Sure to Bring Your Lunch." I think that the Bible makes it clear that we are going to have to account for every evil word we have spoken, every evil thing we have done, and every evil thought we have entertained. We may think that nobody has seen us, heard us, or caught us. But these verses inform us that God sees, hears, and knows everything. I know that when judgment day comes and God requires me to account for all my words, deeds, and thoughts ... it's going to be a long day ... so I'd better bring my lunch. I don't know about you, but that is not a day I'm looking forward to. That is why I want to encourage you and I want you to encourage me to stop sinning. As it is, I'm bringing my lunch; I don't want to have to bring dinner as well.

A. GOD SEES OUR MOTIVES (Vs. 5-7)

Verses 5-7 should cause us to be a little frightened. Verse 5 says that our motives are hidden. Even the most wise, empathic listener, may be able to draw them out, but we can never be quite sure. But the fact is that God is able to see deep in our minds, our hearts, and our souls. There is nothing hidden from Him. We may be able to fool others, but we cannot fool God.

Verse 6 says that many people claim to love God and others. But again, how do we really know? God knows! And verse 7 reminds us that not only does God know what's going on in our hearts, He blesses us for righteous thoughts and behaviors. Here is what I want every parent to know; instead of spending a lot of time nagging and criticizing your children, consciously and intentionally start living a holy and righteous life yourself. We will bless our children a thousand times more if we spend our energy living a righteous life, rather than nagging them, lecturing them, or criticizing them. Children are blessed by the righteous behavior of their parents.

God sees our motives. He knows what's going on inside us. We may hide from others and even fool others, but God cannot be fooled, He knows what's going on inside of us.

#### B. GOD SEES OUR ACTIONS (Vs. 8-12)

In addition to seeing our motives, verses 8-12 remind us that God sees our actions as well. This section starts in verse 8 with the King, sitting on His throne, assessing the situation with His eyes. It ends in verse 12 by stating that God created both eyes and ears, inferring that since God created the senses of hearing and seeing, He is able Himself to see and hear everything and in the middle of the section in verse 10 we are told that God hates people who are deceivers.

Verse 9 reminds us that we are all sinners. None of us can say that our hearts are pure and none of us can say that we are clean and without sin. Verse 10 reminds us that we are all deceivers. We judge other people's behavior and actions as they affect us, but we rarely take a good look within ourselves to see how evil we are. In fact, Jesus tells us that the same ruler we use to measure and judge others, that He will be sure to use that same ruler on us. Again, I know I'm in for a long day on Judgment Day.

Look at verse 11. If we can tell what kind of a kid a child is by the way he acts, how much more certain is it that God knows what kind of people we are by the way we act? Again, let me emphasize this because it is very important. We are good at being hypocrites. We know how to act religiously and talk religiously, but God sees through all that garbage. We may be holding grudges, God sees that. Are we looking at pornography on the Internet? God sees that. Are we being sexually immoral? God sees that. Are we gossiping? God hears that. Not only does God, see, hear and know everything we are saying, doing and thinking ... He will require us to give an accounting of it. We may be able to fool others, but we can't fool God: **NOT ONLY IS GOD ABLE TO SEE AND HEAR EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON IN THE UNIVERSE, HE**

**CAN ALSO SEE OUR MOTIVES AND WHAT'S GOING ON IN OUR MINDS, HEARTS AND SOULS. THEREFORE HE IS ABLE TO JUDGE,** and not only is He able to judge, He is certain to judge.

III. **GOD'S ABILITY TO LEAD (Vs. 13-30)**  
**GOD MAKES CLEAR WHAT HE EXPECTS OF US.**

Which brings us to some good advice in verses 13-30 where God's ability to lead is described; you see, it would be cruel for God to judge us if we didn't know what was right, what was wrong, or if we didn't know what he expected of us. But the truth is this: **GOD MAKES CLEAR WHAT HE EXPECTS OF US.**

A. **GOD VALUES DILIGENCE AND WISDOM (Vs. 13-17)**

In verses 13-17 we learn that God values diligence and wisdom. Verses 13 and 17 frame this section and talk about hard work. God expects us to acquire all that we have through honest hard work and a job well done. It doesn't matter what type of job we do, we should do it with honesty and diligence. So, God values hard work. Keep this in mind: These verses are all in the context of God judging us for our behaviors and our thoughts. God will judge us even in our work. His evaluation is much more important than our supervisor's.

Look at verse 15. God values wisdom and wisdom isn't only related to religious talk. Wisdom is practical, specifically in this section. Look at verse 14. For those of us who have lived in countries where price haggling is part of the business practice, we have to smile as we read this verse. When we bought stuff in the marketplace, we would tell the seller things like, "These clothes are garbage, this chicken looks stale or these jewels look fake," then the seller would say things like, "These clothes are hand stitched, this chicken was killed just this morning and these are authentic, certifiable diamonds." Then we would respond by saying it was all garbage and the seller would respond by saying it was all the best quality. Ultimately we would both agree on a

price. Once the transaction was completed, the stories would reverse themselves. On the way home, we would show our friends what beautiful clothes, or what a fantastic chicken, or valuable jewels we got at such a cheap price, while the seller would tell his friends how he got so much money for substandard products. So both the seller and the buyer walk away winners if the bargaining process goes well. However, if one is shrewder than the other, there is a clear winner and a clear loser.

Verse 16 is one of those verses that balance our giving money, and help to people simply because they are in need or poor. We must be wise. If you don't know a person, be very careful about lending him money. He may be using the money to pay a prostitute for services, or in our day, using the money to buy alcohol or drugs. God wants us to be discerning and wise. So God values diligence and wisdom. We become diligent by working hard, not being lazy, and giving everything we do our best. We are living and working for God.

We become wise by being humble and willing to learn from others. Wisdom in the business world comes through experience. Wisdom in church comes the same way, by humbly listening to others and to God while gaining experience.

#### B. GOD WATCHES AND ADVISES (Vs. 18-23)

Verses 18-23 encourage us because God watches and advises. You will quickly notice that God's Name appears in verses 22 and 23. The point made is that God sees everything; He will rescue those who are righteous and punish those who are evil. Therefore verse 18 reminds us to be humble and not proud. Verse 19 commands us not only not to gossip, but to stay away from people who do. Here is the rule of thumb: If someone is gossiping about someone else when that person is not present, I can be sure they are gossiping about me when I'm not present.

Verse 20 commands us to respect our parents. God will not tolerate disrespectful behavior towards parents. Verse 21 warns parents not to make life too easy for their children. If they come into things too easily, they will not appreciate them, and if we take things for granted, we will never learn to be thankful to God.

Verse 22 presents a strong argument for why we should not be vengeful. If I am angry, hold on to grudges, and want revenge, then I am saying that I don't trust God and that God doesn't know what He is doing. God promises to deliver us and give us what we need. He will be the One to judge those who have hurt us or treated us unfairly.

That also plays into verse 23; the clear meaning of this verse is that God hates dishonesty or cheating. However, in this context, remember that when we want revenge, we are actually measuring and judging others. Jesus said He will measure us and judge us with that same measure. Can we stand up to that kind of scrutiny ... or would it be better for us to just let it go, extend grace, and move on? I think it would be better to let it go, extend grace and move on, since the day I am going to face judgment is already going to be a long day the way it is, I don't need to add any more onto it.

#### C. GOD KNOWS THE WAY (Vs. 24-30)

Verses 24-30 remind us that God is a good leader because He knows the way. If we read these carefully, we can see that Jesus teaches these qualities and lives them as an example for us. Verse 24 states that we should be humble enough to trust God to lead. God is sovereign and therefore we are simply to follow in faith. Most of us get in trouble when we want to lead and we want God to follow. But as we examine the life of Jesus, we can see that He intentionally chose to follow the Father. He lived the phrase, "Thy will be done." Humility and trust is something we need to make part of our lives.

Second, we must be sincere and think about our relationship with God. Jesus warned us about promising things to God and then not following through. Many of us have promised God many things if He would just get us out of this one jam, or another. We promised God things if He would make us well or give us what we wanted. The problem is that when we get out of the jam, get what we want, or get well, we rarely follow through on our promises to God. We are reminded that God never asked us to promise or vow anything, but if we do, then we need to follow through. All we need to do is look at the divorce rate among Christians to see that we don't take our vows before God very seriously. All we need to do is look at the immoral lives so many Christians are living to see that we don't take our baptismal vows very seriously.

And that's a problem because verse 26 commands us to be righteous. God will judge us for what we say, what we think, and what we do. Following up on that, verse 27 reminds us to have an open heart before God. It is better that we submit to Him and allow Him to judge us, correct us, and cleanse us, rather than spend our lives hiding from Him, and then having to face it all on Judgment Day.

Verse 28 reminds us that the way we are to demonstrate our love for God is to be faithful and loyal to Him. Verse 29 reminds us to be dedicated and serve with whatever gifts, talents, and abilities God has given us.

Most of all, verse 30 reminds us that God often shapes us and molds us by disciplining us. We should look at the difficult times in our lives as God's shaping us, changing us, maturing us, and helping us to grow in wisdom and in grace. God doesn't pull any surprises on us. The fact is: **GOD MAKES CLEAR WHAT HE EXPECTS OF US.**

Here is what I'm thinking this morning. God sees everything we do. He hears everything we say. He knows everything we think and feel. We will be judged for everything. I know in that

day of personal judgment ... it will be a long day for me. I don't want to make it longer than it already is going to be... so I want to do better each day. How about you? Here is the truth. **WE WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD FOR EVERYTHING WE SAY, DO, AND THINK. WE WILL ALL BE JUDGED.**

Even though this story has to do with something most of us will never do, please listen to it carefully.

**A woman in New York had her credit card stolen. She called her husband, who was ten miles away at work to tell him what happened.**

**The Associated Press reported that while they were talking on the phone, the two credit card thieves walked into his electronics store to use their newly acquired credit cards. The clerk recognized the name on the credit card and motioned to the man while he was still on the phone with his wife. Immediately, he called the police who came and arrested the men with charges of grand larceny, attempted grand larceny, and forgery.**

Listen; the moral of the story in today's text is: Don't have this attitude that since I'm saved, I'll go ahead and sin, and just ask for forgiveness. If you think this is o.k., then I would encourage you to read more carefully through your Bible. God's chosen leader, Moses, was forbidden from entering the Promised Land because he hit a rock with his stick instead of just speaking to it. The great King David's life went right down the toilet after committing adultery with Bathsheba.

Sometimes it may take a long time for our sins to find us out, and at other times it doesn't take long at all. But be sure of this ... they will find us out.