

Go To the Well

Proverbs 4:23

Happy Mother's day to all of you mother's out there.

I looked up the beginnings of Mother's Day here in America. Come to find out there is record of some kind of Mother's Day all the way back in Ancient Greek and Roman times. But, how it got recognized as a national holiday was because a woman without kids, named Ann Jarvis, felt it was important to have a day set aside to celebrate mothers (which I agree with.) Mother's sacrifice and give. The roles that many mothers play: nurse, teacher, chef, counselor, protector, care-taker, encourager, cheerleader, director, manager, cleaner, provider, chauffeur, prayer warrior, and way more than that. Mother's should be celebrated.

She worked with a florist and her church to have a celebration for mothers and many, many people came out for it. Ann Jarvis petitioned the government for a day to celebrate mothers. In 1908, President Woodrow Wilson declared the 2nd Sunday of May, Mother's Day. Within just a few years, however, it became a major holiday of earning profit for florists, card companies, and merchants. Because of this, by 1920, Ann Jarvis became disgusted of all the commercialism and denounced the national holiday of Mother's Day.

It's interesting to see how something that was meant to celebrate Mother's was used for personal gain. But, that shouldn't surprise us. When we get our eyes off original intent, what is honorable and right, and begin to focus upon the self and selfish-gain, we very quickly begin to taint what was once meant for good. This happens because we don't guard the heart, and what then begins to follow is misaligned intention and wrongful gain.

This morning, we are going to look at a verse in Proverbs I have heard quoted many times over the last few years especially. Sometimes, its been quoted in the correct context and sometimes quoted in a very liberal context that sometimes barely squeaks out a very sort-of right understanding of what is truly meant in that proverb.

But, before we look at our verse, here is the point I want to get at today. I have titled this sermon, "Go to the Well." Go to the correct well, the well of

Jesus. Be fueled and filled by who and what He is and by the things He says. He promises living water that flows.

It matters what well you go to and draw water from. Because that water fuels you, it affects your very being. Tainted, bacteria-infected water will lead to sickness. Clear, pure water will not lead to sickness, but can and does lead to a greater refreshing and stronger health the more you drink of it.

In John 4, Jesus goes to a well to rest and as He was there a Samaritan woman comes to draw water. When she draws the water, He asked her for a drink. Surprised by this, she asked Him why He was asking her for a drink. She was a Samaritan woman and He was a Jewish male. Jew's did not like Samaritan's, and for a male Jew to ask a Samaritan woman was doubly counter-cultural and taboo. Jesus ignored the questioned and instead responded, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

Jesus never claimed to be the living water, but that He would give it. We skip ahead to John 7:38 to hear who He is talking about. He said, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'" The next verse tells us who..."(When he said "living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in Him [Jesus]....)"

First, can we just stop and admit there are times we are tired. We don't have much emotionally left. Our ability to show grace, to forgive, to have a kind word, to deal with one more messy room, or one more complaint is just gone. Come to Jesus. Go to Jesus. If we are truly honest with ourselves, in that moment we want a few to the problems, but deep down inside we really want something that will do more than fix the problem, but will refresh us, encourage us, and empower us. Take a moment and dip your bucket into the well. That may a time of rest, but it will be even deeper, more clarifying, and more life-giving when that rest is filled with a moment of prayer and God's Word. Go to Jesus.

So who is the 'living water' if it isn't Jesus. The Spirit of God is the living water. When Jesus goes to sit at the right hand of the Father in the place of authority, He promised to send the Spirit of God. It is the ministry of the

Spirit of God, flowing out of a heart redeemed by God, that blesses believers and, through them, brings life and light to the world. It is the effect, the manifestation, the external influence of the Spirit of God that flows out of the heart of the one that goes to the well of Jesus and drinks of all that He is, does, and says to us.

It matters what we put in. What we put in effects our very being. And what comes out is how it effects you and even has an effect to those around you.

Solomon, in Proverbs 4, is telling his son to listen to his words and his corrections. It is wisdom that was passed down to him by his dad and that wisdom is wisdom from the Lord. Why should the son listen? “My Child listen to me and do as I say, and you will have a long, good life. I will teach you wisdom’s ways and lead you in straight paths. When you walk, you won’t be held back; when you run, you won’t stumble. Take hold of my instructions; don’t let them go. Guard them, for they are the key to life.”

Solomon wants his son to ingest and digest what it is that he is telling his son. Why? Because he knows it will give him direction filled with stability, satisfaction, and safety. In the beginning words of Proverbs, Solomon says, these wisdom sayings, “Their purpose is to teach people wisdom and discipline, to help them understand then insights of the wise. Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them to do what is right, just, and fair. These proverbs will give insight to the simple, knowledge and discernment to the young.”

Children of all ages, it is important to listen to our mothers. We honor our parents when we give weight to what it is they say. By that, I mean we honor them when we listen to what they say, seek to understand what they say, and then work to put into action those honorable principles they teach us. Proverbs 1:8 says, “My child, listen when your father corrects you. Don’t neglect your mother’s instruction.” and Proverbs 23:25 says, “Let your father and mother be glad; let her who bore you rejoice.”

For the mothers and really for us fathers too, I realize this actually puts some burden upon you. But it is a burden that is worthy of carrying, because it benefits you by benefiting your children. May I encourage you to be fervent to go to the well of Jesus. Dip your pale into all that He says.

The living water will flow out of you and effect your children. It will have an impact upon them. Go to the well often and drink of it often. Let it fill you more than any other source. Let it overflow out of you and spill onto them. It may take time, but let it seep deep down. Don't give up and by doing so, you provide God room to work.

For us all it is important to be intentional about what we put in to our hearts and minds. Jesus said, "A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart." What you put in, think about, make important is what resides in the treasury of your heart.

How do we get the right things to reside in our heart?

First, go to the right well. If you go to the well of success, you will get a heart filled with a need for performance. If you go the well of morality, you will get a heart filled with being a good person. If you go to the well of financial security, you will get a heart that chases money. If you go to the well of status, you will get a heart that chases fame and recognition. If you go to the well of relationship security, you will get a heart looking for ways to keep a relationship. In reality, these aren't bad, but when they are the focus, something will always be just not quite right. There will always be something missing; a peace that isn't quite settled; a love that is sought after instead of a love that is already there.

If you go to the well of Jesus, you will find everlasting truth, everlasting purpose, everlasting peace, and everlasting love. That will be the foundation. And when those storms of life hit and that child didn't perform quite right, their morality fell short that day, they lost their job and so they have no income, that relationship didn't work out, their world comes crashing down on them, you can help them navigate through the situation because your foundation is built upon the rock. Maybe your house has weathered some storms, the paint is cracking and maybe some shingles have blown off, maybe a board or two is missing, but your house didn't crumble because it was built upon the sand. Going to the right well matters.

The second way we get the right things to reside in our heart is to fill our lives with God's Word. We listen to God's instructions. We ingest it and

digest it. Proverbs 4:13 says, “Take hold of my instructions; don’t let them go. Guard them, for they are the key to life.” Psalms 119 mentions hiding God’s word in our heart. We “Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it” as Joshua 1:8 says. Catch what the outcome is. The rest of the verse goes on and says, “Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.” If you want to ‘train up a child in the way they should go’ and you want that way to be a godly path, fill your bucket so full with what God says that it spills onto those around you. In doing so, you will prosper and succeed at pouring the principle’s of God into your child’s life and onto others around you. You will begin to prosper and succeed at accomplishing God’s will in your life. It will become clear to them. It will be noticeable to them.

As an important side note, I want you to notice something. The success is found in your actions, not in the child’s actions. As you meditate upon God’s Word and put it into action, the Spirit will begin to flow out of you those principles. Those principles will be noticed, but may not be heeded. Children have the free will to choose to follow the heart of scripture or to deny it. Your role is simply to reflect the heart of God to them. They have to work it out with Jesus. Pray so hard and much for them that your knees become calloused from all the time you spend on them bringing your kids and situations to Jesus. God hears you, trust Him, and in the right time He will respond.

The third way we get the right things to reside in our hearts is to ‘do’ as God’s Word says. We practice God’s word. We put it into action. In listening to God’s word and seeking to do God’s word, we also ask and trust that the Spirit of God is going to work in this process. Listen to Galatians 5:

Verse 1: So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don’t get tied up again in slavery to the law.

Verse 5: But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive by faith the righteousness God has promised to us.

Verse 13: For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don’t use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

Verse 16: So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves.

Verses 22-23: But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness,

and self-control. There is no law against these things! (Who doesn't want that for themselves, and who doesn't want that for their kids to experience these things)

Verse 25: Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

Galatians 6:8b-9 says, "But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.

The Spirit of God will be in the process helping, directing, reminding, encouraging, and bringing about results. Our responsibility is to work to put God's word into action, and the Spirit's responsibility is to work it out through us.

The fourth way we get the right things to reside in our hearts is to intentionally turn from the evil things we struggle with. Galatians 6:8a tells us, "Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature." We don't want those we love to have decay and death poured out on them. Let's run from the evil things we struggle with. Maybe it's gossip. Maybe it's a wrong relationship. Maybe it's comparing. We compare our kids educational success or how clean and tidy our home is. Maybe we compare our looks. Maybe it's in how secure we feel about meaningful relationships. Things get kind of rocky so we panic, manipulate, or run from conflict. Maybe it's the past defining us instead of being defined by what Jesus did for us and how God sees us.

Proverbs 4:24-27 says, "Avoid all perverse talk; stay away from corrupt speech. Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil."

All this is the context of the verse we are going to look at this morning. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life."

I have heard this phrase in this verse 'guard your heart' in respect to love and risks. Guard your heart so you don't love too soon and get hurt. Guard your heart and don't take any risks that can emotionally hurt you.

The context of this verse is telling us to be sure to live according to God's word. It is telling us to fill our hearts with truth and then make sure to guard that truth so we do not forget it or ignore it.

As we grow in the knowledge and understanding of God's word, we will have wisdom to take appropriate risks and to love in such a way that flows out of God's love for us and others. And, when those risks crash or that vulnerability of loving another is abused in some way, we have a sure foundation that is unlike a house built on the sand, but it is like a house built on a solid foundation. There might be some damage done to the house, but the foundation and even the structure of the house is still there.

Throughout the Bible we are taught that there is a direct connection between our hearts and behavior. Guard your heart does not mean you protect yourself from getting hurt at all cost. Guard your heart means you protect your heart from sin at all cost. But in order to do that, you must go to the right well.

My encouragement to you is to think about the implications of what this verse truly means for you. Go to the well, be filled, and let living water consume you to the point where it begins to overflow onto those around you.