

Proverbs 29:18 8-13-00

This week I had planned to talk about the mercy of God but something else has been laid on my heart and Lord willing we will get to the mercy of God next week. But you realize that what ever I speak on from Scripture it will have an aspect of all God's attributes. The verse I want to discuss this morning is full of the mercy of God in that God desires to speak to us. He wants to move us from misconceptions to reality with his revelations to our hearts. That is his mercy and love that desires us to walk in truth. Those misconceptions are errors that often end in painful consequences. And so his mercy speaks truth, revelation to our hearts.

This verse is frequently quoted by many. I hear it misused more than used properly. In fact, I don't think I have ever heard it used properly. Yesterday I heard President Clinton quote it. Part of the problem is the KJV translation. It happens to match with a modern use of the word 'vision' and part is an error in translating. The NKJV has corrected the translation and clarified the word vision.

Let's look at the verse in the KJV and consider how it is often used. ¹⁸ Where *there is* no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy *is* he.

Prov 29:18 (KJV) Proverbs are somewhat unique in that we don't have to get the context. This is a saying of wisdom complete in itself. But notice you rarely hear the last half of the verse with the first. In other words when people quote the wise saying they are only quoting half of it. What does that tell you? I think the problem is their intended usage of the first half does not fit with the last half.

How have you heard this expression used and what were the implications? A group of people must have a united goal. The word vision is rarely if ever revelation. There is a "leadership" movement within the church of America today, how to be, qualities of, etc. Leadership is a gift of the spirit ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.⁷ If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach;⁸ if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is **leadership**, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. Romans 12:6-8 (NIV)

We are trying to teach men to do what God gifts certain men to do. Part of the problem in that is those who are not gifted in it try to learn it and so it becomes a fruit of the self and not the Spirit of God. I bring that up because this is a favorite verse of leaders. They will often say they are a visionary leader. In other words, they cast a vision, a goal, and everyone joins in with this goal. Then you hear the justification of it as "Without a vision..." What is really happening is a part of the problem with the organized church of today. One man assumes to hear from God for a group of people. He shares his dreams or desires with that church and if they like it they hire him. They have a vision, they wont die by the wayside. (no pun intended)

Someone complained that we don't have a vision as a group so we need to have one so we will be united. All of these understandings of the verse are far from what the Scripture actually says. Even if we never had a corrected translation we should be able to tell there is a problem with this. We have one leader – Jesus and we are all brothers. He is our vision, our goal and each of us are gifted differently. Make YOUR calling and election sure. God has called and gifted each of you uniquely and you need to walk in that calling, not what I would like you to do, or conforming to some standard a group has set for direction. But let us look now at what this word of wisdom is really saying.

¹⁸ Where *there is* no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy *is* he who keeps the law. Prov 29:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law. Prov 29:18 (NIV)

¹⁸ When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild. But whoever obeys the law is happy. Prov 29:18 (NLT)

Vision was the divine revelation of God through the Seers. Today we know our revelation from God is the Son. ¹ Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets.² But now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. Heb 1:1-2 (NLT) Do you see the contrast with a vision (goal or dream) presented by a man, and the revelation of reality, truth in the Son of God? The only way I can pass on a godly vision to you is to pass on the revelation of who Jesus is and what He has done for you. Even that must be personally received and experienced. I can only be an instrument of the Holy Spirit to whet your appetite, put a little salt on your lips to help you get thirsty. The revelation of the Son and what He did for you is a very personal relationship.

Without this vision or revelation, you will have no restraint in your life. You see the revelation of that love for you makes you want to, and the revelation of his life in you makes you able. Together with the desire and the ability you can live in God's law with blessing, all the fullness God intended for you.

Instead of 'cast off restraint' KJV says 'perish'. That is true too. If you cast off restraint your wicked heart does as it pleases and the Word declares the end result of that lifestyle is death. It is the final just payment for living in rebellion against your loving Creator. We read about or see on TV examples of people who have cast off restraint and suffered the consequences. They may get away with it for awhile but the flesh nature always demands more, and eventually it drives them to the place of being discovered. It will destroy us if we continue in it.

But the person who keeps the law, does as God commands is blessed, happy, full of joy. Why? To know Him and his power in them that pleases God by obeying his

good will for us. There is no fear of death, only a looking forward to heavenly reward, of being with the One we love forever.

Look at the verse again and allow me to elaborate as we read this concise word of wisdom from Solomon. Where there is no revelation (If you do not have the personal revelation of Christ) the people cast off restraint (you will find yourself doing things you know are wrong, you wont let truth keep you from your desires) but blessed (happy) is he who keeps the law. But if you have that revelation and walk in God's will you will find your life blessed, happy.

Powerful verse that should warn us to continually walk in Christ and seek to see him more clearly. But instead it is twisted into saying almost the exact opposite of what it means: have a man give you his vision so you can have some direction. What a sad twisting of the truth of God, but how typical of the hero worship of man. It is always easier to look to a man to get direction than to hear from God yourself. Do you have a revelation of Jesus? If you don't you can today. It starts by just asking him to reveal himself to you. Ask Him for the forgiveness of your lack of restraint – doing things you know are wrong, that a just God would condemn. We aren't held to a standard of comparison with other men. We are held to the standard of Jesus. No matter how good you think you are when you use that standard, you don't measure up. You have cast off restraint, and you need the revelation of Jesus, God's love manifest for you. Ask Him to be your restraint, to help you obey his plan for your life, his law, so you can be truly happy, blessed.

I was in Ps 73 yesterday and again it seems to so beautifully illustrate the message. He starts by saying he knows God is good, but vs 2 he almost cast off restraint. What was it he needed. Revelation – he got it when he went in to the sanctuary. Then he could keep God's will for him. Then he could endure the difficulties before him for they had eternal value. Vs23,24 Personal relationship with the living God was his revelation, his restraint. Walking hand in hand with Him, led by his counsel, and headed for glory.

Can I ask you where you are headed? The slippery end, or do you desire a revelation of the love of God that can restrain your desires and cause you to walk with Him. Please see the word for the wonderful fullness of its intended meaning. Without a revelation of God in his Son Jesus you will not be blessed, but will cast off restraint. God wants to reveal himself to you to bless you. Respond to that love right now. Not sure it's for real? Try it! It is a great claim and it says it will bring the result- Taste and see. The Lord is good.