

Proverbs Week #144 (13:21-22)

"Misfortune (calamity- ra) pursues the sinner, but prosperity (goodness- tov) is the reward of the righteous. A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous." (Proverbs 13.21-22 NIV)

What value do we place upon our lives? As young people, this kind of question may not seem to be all that important. The decisions of what I want to do when I grow up, where I will live, and how many children do I hope the Lord will give me may seem far off. For some of us these questions have already been answered. But life is more than what we do or how big our families may be. These verses speak of rewards and an inheritance that extend beyond one's own life. What does Wisdom have to teach us today?

The first thing we notice in today's verses is that we have a contrast between something that happens to sinners compared to something that happens to the righteous. Both of these types of people are living their lives and we find them being followed. Sometimes people are followed and they don't know it. If you are real sneaky, you might be able to do this. Police officers often recognize when someone appears to be doing something wrong. They follow the "bad guys" in order to catch them in their evil plans. This is a service they provide to the rest of us. They keep their eyes open and guard and protect us from the bad things that criminals try to do.

What follows the sinner according to verse 21? How should we understand the intensity of this following? The word used here translated "pursues" is in the piel form. It should be understood as intensified action. This is not just a casual following. This is a chase! Imagine someone running after a bad guy and jumping fences. In this case, the bad guy is no match for the calamity that is chasing him. The word *ra* in the Hebrew is often translated as evil and in this case we should understand it by the effects it has upon the one who is pursued. It will overtake him, overpower him, and put an end to his plans.

In contrast, the righteous are rewarded. The goodness that comes after their actions sustains their lives and enables them to provide not only for themselves but also for future generations. Verse 22 describes a multi-generational reward that will endure. The righteous and the sinner both are seen as storing up treasure but in the end it is the righteous who take possession of the treasure and pass it on to their children's children. Yeshua teaches us about treasures too. Listen to His words as He taught them to his disciples.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." (Matthew 6.19-34 NIV)