

Politics

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Date: 15 January 2023

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[0 : 00] But this morning, Paul is going to be speaking to us again from the book of Proverbs, and we have two readings this morning. You might like to turn to Deuteronomy chapter 17, and then to Proverbs chapter 8.

If you need a Bible, if you don't have one, there's some around the sides on the shelves, some church Bibles, so do grab one if you'd like to. And we're going to read together from Deuteronomy 17 at verse 14, the section about Israel's kings, rulers, and then we're going to flip over to Proverbs chapter 8 at verse 12, where the wisdom writer picks up similar themes.

So Deuteronomy chapter 17, then at verse 14, Moses says to the people of Israel, when you come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it, and then say, I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me, you may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose.

One from among your brothers you shall set as a king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you who is not your brother. Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses.

Since the Lord has said to you, you shall never return that way again. And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away.

[1 : 41] Nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold. And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law approved by the Levitical priests.

And it shall be with him. And he shall read in it all the days of his life that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping the words of this law and these statutes and doing them.

That his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers. And that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left. So that he may continue long in his kingdom.

He and his children in Israel. Let's turn over to Proverbs chapter 8. And we're going to read from verse 12 to 21.

And wisdom is speaking. The wisdom of God. I, wisdom, dwell with prudence. And I find knowledge and discretion. The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil.

[3 : 00] Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. I have counsel and sound wisdom. I have insight.

I have strength. By me, kings reign and rulers decree what is just. By me, princes rule and nobles, all who govern justly.

I love those who love me. And those who seek me diligently find me. Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness.

My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold. And my yield than choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness. In the path of justice.

Granting an inheritance to those who love me. And filling their treasuries. Amen.

- [4 : 03] And may God bless us his word. Well, good morning. And it would be very helpful if you could have the book of Proverbs open in front of you.
- And as with previous weeks, we'll be jumping around different verses. And considering this morning what Proverbs would teach us about politics.
- About rulers. About how we engage with those who govern us. So that's our topic for this morning. Now, the name Abraham Kuyper may not be a name that's familiar to you.
- But he was quite the man. He established the Reformed churches in the Netherlands. He founded a newspaper. He started a university.
- He was also the Prime Minister of the Netherlands in the early 20th century. Not to mention he had eight children. He was a busy man. But he's perhaps most well known for this quote.
- [5 : 08] He said that no single piece of our world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest. And there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence.
- Over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, mine. There is not one square inch of this entire universe over which Christ does not shout, mine.
- And that is surely right, is it not? Christ is sovereign. He is sovereign over all. Every aspect of life is under his authority.
- And his revealed will in the scriptures impacts every area of our lives. Including politics. Including our rulers and how we are governed.
- And politics is dealt with by Proverbs. Unsurprisingly, because Proverbs deals with all aspects of life as we've seen. And perhaps inconveniently.
- [6 : 12] Because the approach to politics and rulers is more complex and nuanced than we might like to think. We do need to come to terms with the fact that the Bible has more to say on our relationship with those who govern us.
- Than a narrow reading of Romans chapter 13 alone would allow. There is of course much more to be said on politics. And our Christians are to engage in politics.
- But we are focusing in on what Proverbs would teach us about politics and those who govern us. We read earlier from a section of chapter 8. But we'll be reflecting on over 20 verses from the book of Proverbs this morning.
- And what it says about rulers and kings. And how we are governed. And as always with the book of Proverbs. It's dealing with the nuances and complexities of life.
- And so there are no straightforward answers from Proverbs. The outcome of Proverbs and thinking about politics will be for us to think. To think carefully about our world.
- [7 : 16] About our governors. And how we as Christians are to interact. So this will raise questions. It will cause us to think. And think hard. About how we are to respond to those who govern over us.
- We're going to begin with a key observation this morning. And then consider two responses. When it comes to thinking about how we engage with those who govern over us. So one big observation.
- And then two main responses. So here's the key observation that we see in the book of Proverbs. When it comes to kings and rulers.
- Proverbs. As it goes with the king. So it goes with the people. As with the king. So with the people.
- Proverbs is clear. That for the flourishing of a people. Of a nation. Good righteous leaders. Are absolutely key. Let me read you some verses.

- [8 : 17] From Proverbs. No need to flick to them. I'll give you the references. But don't be flicking about. Here's the first. When it goes well with the righteous. The city rejoices.
- And when the wicked perish. There are shouts of gladness. By the blessing of the upright. A city is exalted. But by the mouth of the wicked. It is overthrown.
- Proverbs 11 verse 10. When a land transgresses. It has many rulers. But with a man of understanding. And knowledge. Its stability will long continue.
- 28 verse 2. Like a roaring lion. Or a charging bear. Is a wicked ruler. Over a poor people. A ruler who lacks understanding. Is a cruel oppressor.
- But he who hates unjust gain. Will prolong his days. 28 verses 15 and 16. A king who sits on the throne of judgment. Winnows all evil with his eyes.
- [9 : 18] 20 verse 8. Righteousness. Exalts a nation. Says Proverbs 14. Again and again.
- Proverbs makes the link. Between a ruler. And the sort of person he is. And how things go with the nation. Human flourishing.
- Depends on good leadership. And truly good leadership. The sort of leadership that leads to flourishing. And well-being of a society. Is a leadership that is fundamentally.
- A godly leadership. Says Proverbs. God is the source of good. And he is the source. For all true flourishing in this world. When it goes well with the righteous.
- The city rejoices. By the blessing of the upright. A city is exalted. And this reality. Is easily observable in our society.
- [10 : 17] When there is. Leadership and governance. Determined by the word of God. That leads to flourishing. Great Britain. Western Europe.
- The United States. They have all benefited. From a long and rich heritage. Of Christian influence. The fruit we see in our nations. Albeit a fruit that is.
- Rapidly rotting and decaying. The fruit we have seen. And enjoyed. Is because of the rich heritage. Of Bible truth. Our nations have been built upon. And that's a reality recognized.
- By major historians. Who would not describe themselves as Christians. But they observe the impact. Of Christianity. On the nations. And on society. Nile Ferguson.
- And more recently. Tom Holland. Have made these sorts of observations. Tom Holland writes. So profound. Has been the impact of Christianity. On the development of the Western civilization.
- [11 : 17] That has come to be hidden from view. It's so pervasive. We just don't see it. All we have around us. All the institutions. The benefits. The wealth.
- We've seen in our nations. At its core. Says Tom Holland. Is the Christian faith. The principles. The way of life. That Christianity.
- Demands. Leads. Leads inevitably. To the flourishing of a nation. The values. And the blessings. That we have taken for granted. In the West. Didn't just emerge.
- Out of the ether. They were the fruits. Of a Christian worldview. They were the fruit. Of Christianity. And Proverbs. Makes the straightforward statement. That in order to enjoy.
- The fruits of righteousness. You must have righteousness. In the first place. When it goes well. With the righteous. The city rejoices. By the blessing.
- [12 : 12] Of the upright. A city. Is exalted. And that righteousness. Flows. From good leaders. Chapter 28.
- Verse 2. When a land. Transgresses. It has many rulers. But. With a man. Of understanding. And knowledge. Its stability. Will continue.

Chapter 29. Verse 12. If a ruler listens. To falsetto. All his officials. Will be wicked. Chapter 16. Verse 12. It is an abomination.

To kings. To do evil. For the throne. Is established. By righteousness. Chapter 25. Verses 4 and 5. Take away.

Take away. Take away. Take away. The dross. From the silver. And the smooth. Has material. For a vessel. Take away. The wicked. From the presence. Of the king. And his throne. Will be established.

[13 : 09] In righteousness. See. Proverbs establishes. A clear link. Between the righteousness. Of the ruler. And how the nation.

Is ruled. Putting it positively. With a man of understanding. And knowledge. Its stability. Will long continue. But the opposite.

Is also true. Unrighteousness. In your leader. Will inevitably. Seep down. And infiltrate. The whole of society. Who the king is.

Really matters. The character. Of the king. The one who governs. Really matters. It's key. And that is a concept.

That has long since vanished. From our political world. The mantra. That's been long trotted out. Is that what happens. In private. Doesn't really matter.

[14 : 05] Don't you hear that. Again and again. The immorality. Present in the leader's. So-called private life. In no way. Is linked to his public. Facing role. So the thinking goes.

And I remember that. Being so clearly. The case. With Bill Clinton. And Monica Lewinsky. I was watching a documentary. About it recently. And that was so clearly.

Articulated. Again and again. When you watch interviews. With politicians. And members of the public. His approval ratings. Actually went up. With the public. After his impeachment. Proceedings.

People did not see. His unfaithfulness. To his wife. As being in any way. Detrimental. To his ability. To be president. Of the United States. Unfaithfulness.

Unfaithfulness. And untrustworthiness. In one area of life. Would have no impact. At all. On his ability. To govern the nation. So the thinking goes.

[15 : 02] But Proverbs. Takes the opposite view. It is abomination. To kings. To do evil. Says Proverbs. For the throne.

Is established. By righteousness. It is absolutely. Unacceptable. Says Proverbs. It's an abomination. For a ruler. For a king. To live.

Just as he pleases. On his own time. What a ruler. Does in private. Is. Inextricably linked. To his role. As a leader. Character.

Really does matter. Righteousness. Really does matter. Just turn with me. To the end of Proverbs. And to chapter 31. We looked at this.

A year or so ago. Chapter 31. These are the words. Of King Lemuel. An oracle.

[15 : 58] That his mother. Taught him. And just look at what. Her words. Of advice were. To the future king.

Verse 3. Do not give your strength. To women. Your ways. To those who destroy. Kings. It is not for kings.

Oh Lemuel. It is not for kings. To drink wine. Or for rulers. To take strong drink. Lest they drink. And forget. What has been decreed. And pervert the rights. Of all the afflicted. Give strong drink.

To the one who is perishing. And wine to those. In bitter distress. Let them drink. And forget their poverty. And remember their misery. No more. Open your mouth. For the mute. For the rights.

Of all who are destitute. Open your mouth. Judge righteously. Defend the rights. Of the poor. And the needy. See the two things. That she addresses there.

[16 : 55] At the start of that. Reading. Are liquor. And lust. And those are things. That happen in private. Drinking. To the point of drunkenness.

And going with the wrong women. Proverbs says. Those are no place. For those things. For a king. You cannot. Get drunk.

You cannot sleep. With whoever you like to. Because those things. Are inextricably linked. To how you perform as king. Righteousness really does matter. Chapter 20.

Verse 28. Steadfast love. And faithfulness. Preserve the king. And by steadfast love. His throne is upheld.

See character. Is key. Steadfast love. And faithfulness. Preserve the king. The kind of person they are. Really does matter. Chapter 16.

[18 : 01] Turn with me to chapter 16. Verses 10 to 15. An oracle. Is on the lips. Of a king. His mouth.

Does not sit. Does not sin in judgment. A just balance. And scales. Of the Lord's. All the weights. In the bag. Of his work. It is an abomination. To kings.

To do evil. For the throne. Is established. By righteousness. Righteous lips. Are the delight. Of a king. And he loves him. Who speaks. What is right.

A king's wrath. Is a messenger. Of death. And a wise man. Will appease it. In the light. Of a king's face. There is life. And his favor.

Is like the clouds. That bring. The spring rain. It is an abomination. For kings. To do evil.

[18 : 57] What Bill Clinton did. Was an abomination. What many leaders. That we have served under. What they do in private. Is an abomination. And that is not without consequence.

For the nation. How things are going. In our society. Is inextricably linked. To our rulers. And their character.

Their character. Really does matter. Says Proverbs. Who the king is. Matters. And those who are around the king. Also matter.

Proverbs says. Take away the wicked. From the presence of the king. And his throne. Will be established. In righteousness. A good.

And righteous king. Will have no time. For those who speak. Wickedness and lies. If you want. A righteous society. Where good is promoted.

[19 : 55] And evil is restrained. Then you must remove. Those who speak wicked lies. From around the king. Just ponder. For a moment. We can only call.

Wicked lobby groups. That infiltrate. Hollywood. And Westminster. Ponder. The endless groups. That come. And influence.

Such sway. Do they have. That seemingly. The Scottish government. Has handed over. The sexual health. And relationships curriculum. In its entirety. To Stonewall. If you don't believe me.

Then look. At the public website. Which our schools. Are using. To teach lessons. On these subjects. It is beyond shocking. If you don't believe me. Have a look. Take away.

The wicked. From the presence. Of the king. And his throne. Will be established. In righteousness. In righteousness. In righteousness. In righteousness. Such groups. Should be nowhere near. Our leaders. But they are.

- [20 : 58] They are. They are there. And until they are shown the door. And not allowed in. We can expect more. Of the same. And worse. Take away the wicked.
- From the presence. Of the king. And his throne. Will be established. In righteousness. Who's around the king. Who's around.
- Our first minister. Who's around. Our prime minister. Really matters. Those who are influencing. And advising. That really matters. But having said.
- All that. We must be careful. Not to distance ourselves. From the ruler. It can be very easy. To stand back. And lob grenades. But actually.
- We can't distance ourselves. Proverbs says. When a land. Transgresses. It has many rulers. When a land.
- [21 : 58] Transgresses. It has many rulers. There is a link. Not just between the ruler. And the people. But between the people. And the ruler. And especially so. In our democratic society.
- In a sense. All of us. Are the rulers. All of us. Have a say. In how we are governed. We're all involved. And.
- We have a say. In who governs us. And we get the governors. That we deserve. The quality. And integrity. And character. And character. Of our rulers. Is a reflection.
- On our society. As a whole. So the issue. Is not just over there. In Hollywood. Or Westminster. It's not entirely. Removed from us. We all play a part.
- We are all involved. In some way. In the governing. Of our nation. And our leaders. And our leaders. In the governing. In the governing. At least in theory. By representing. The will. Of us.
- [22 : 53] Who elect them. They're our representatives. So criticism of them. Well it must begin here. Mustn't it? With each one of us.
- Ourselves. And so we turn then. To consider two responses. Given the reality. Of the inextricable link. Between the ruler.
- And us who are governed. The character. Of the ruler. And the righteousness. Of the nation. Given the reality. Of that link. How are we. To respond.
- As God's people. What are we to do? Well two responses. And as always. With proverbs. These aren't. Straightforward.
- But they are. To cause us. To think. Because every situation. We encounter. In our society. Every issue. That comes down. The track. Is going to be unique. And we're going to have to.
- [23 : 51] Think carefully. How do we respond. To this? How do we. Interact. With our governors. In this particular instance. So two responses. Here's the first one. Do not.
- Put your trust. In princes. And. Submit. To those in authority. Do not put your trust. In princes. And submit. To those in authority.
- That's the first thing. And it's a tension. Isn't it? I'm just going to veer. Outside of proverbs. For a moment. Psalm 146. Verse 3.
- Says. Put not. Your trust. In princes. In a son of men. In whom. In whom. There is no salvation. Proverbs 24.
- Verse 21. My son. Fear the Lord. And the king. And do not join. With those. Who do otherwise.
- [24 : 51] You see. The perfect kingdom. The perfectly. Governed society. Will only come. At the return. Of Christ. So. We need to be careful.

That we don't. Yearn today. For what will. Only be reality. Then. We ultimately. Put our trust. In the true king. In the Lord.

Jesus Christ. Who will reign. For eternity. And we don't. Put our trust. In the temporary. Princes. Of today. Jesus is.

The ruler. We all need. In his kingdom. We will dwell. Secure forever. Forever. It is under. His eternal rule. That we will truly. Flourish forever. It's under his rule. That we will.

Know ultimate joy. And happiness. His throne. Will never fail. We know that. Because. Of his resurrection. That is what we hope for.

[25 : 45] Isn't it? That is the only real. And true hope. For our world. And so. We put our trust. Ultimately. In Jesus Christ. Trust. And we don't.

Put our trust. In the princes. Of this world. They will in the end. Let you down. Even the very best. Of this world's princes.

Will in the end. Let you down. And none of them. Can deal with our greatest. Deepest needs. So that's what the first half.

Of Proverbs 24. Verse 21 says. My son. Fear the Lord. But that's not all it says. My son.

Fear the Lord. And the King. And do not join with those. Who do otherwise. So we're to fear the Lord. And the King. We are to honor.

[26 : 41] And submit to those. Who are in authority over us. And that is the outworking. Of the fifth commandment. Which says. Honor your father and mother.

That your days may be long. And the land that the Lord your God. Is giving you. That's not merely restricted. To the household. Listen to the question. And answer from the Westminster. Larger Catechism.

Question 124. Which asks. Who are meant. By father and mother. In the fifth commandment. Answer.

By father and mother. And the fifth commandment. Are meant. Not only. Natural parents. But all superiors. In age and gifts. And especially.

Such as. By God's ordinance. Are over us. In place of authority. Whether in family. Church. Or commonwealth. See.

[27 : 35] As Christians. We are called. To obey. The civil government. We are to submit. To those. Who are in authority.

Over us. We are to pay taxes. And obey. The law of the land. Even if we personally. Don't agree. With some of them. You may disagree.

With a particular speed limit. On a road. But if you break. That speed limit. You'll be paying a fine. You may not particularly like. Paying a particular tax. Well who likes to pay any tax.

But. There may be a particular tax. You think that is. Ridiculous. But you. You pay it. But. This does not mean. That the government.

Can tell us. To do anything. That they please. If they tell us. We must disobey God. Then we must refuse.

[28 : 27] And tell them no. We must. Ultimately serve God. Rather than man. In those cases. Where what man. Is telling us to do. Is clearly something.

That God forbids. Or not to do something. That God clearly commands. Like gathering. For worship. However. Our protests.

When we do make them. Will carry. A great deal more weight. If. We have demonstrated. Our willingness. To obey. On other points. Even when those things.

Are inconvenient. To us. We are to obey. Those who govern us. Up to the point. At which. Obeying them. Would mean. That we would have. To disobey God.

We must obey. Those who govern us. Up to the point. Where obeying them. Would mean. We are disobeying God. God. And that friends.

[29 : 25] Is going to get. More and more difficult. There are things. Coming down the track. Where that is going to be. The choice. Basic.

Calling. Folk. To repentance. May well. Be outlawed. Read through the details. Of the conversion. Therapy. Legislation.

So. That's the first thing. Do not put your trust in princes.

And. Submit. To those in authority. Here's the second thing. Trust in the Lord. And. Play your part.

Trust in the Lord. And play your part. Chapter 28. Sorry. Chapter 20. Verse 28. Steadfast love. And faithfulness. Preserve the king.

[30 : 21] And by steadfast love. His throne is upheld. 25. Verse 6. Do not put yourself forward. In the king's presence.

Or stand in the way of. The great. Forward is better to be told. Come up here. Than to be put. In the presence. Of a noble. 22.

Verse 29. Do you see. A man. Skillful. In his work. He will stand. Before kings. He will not stand. Before obscure men.

24. 21. My son. Fear the Lord. And the king. And do not join. With those who do otherwise. 22. 11. He who loves.

Purity of heart. And his speech. Is gracious. Will have the king. As his friend. You see. We do have.

[31 : 17] A role to play. But not a role. That unnecessarily. Distracts us. From our key task. As the church. Which is to be witnessing. To the truth.

And building up. The saints. We must be involved. In how things are. Happening in our society. But not in such a way. That distracts us.

From our main task. Bruce Waltke. Says this. If God. Established the state. To restrain evil. And promote good.

Should not Christians. And especially. Their leaders. Actively influence. The government. To pass laws. That both. Restrain evil. As defined by God. And enable us.

To live peacefully. And quietly. In all godliness. And holiness. God has established. Those who. Rule over us. To do two key things.

[32 : 14] To restrain evil. And promote good. As defined. By God. In his word. And surely. As Christians. We are to. Seek to influence.

To that end. We have voices. And we ought to be prepared. To use them. Especially so. Given what our governments. Are pushing through. The moment. In the parliaments.

It was extraordinary. To see. Wasn't it? Extraordinary. The vigor. With which. The first minister. Was pushing through. The gender recognition. Bill before Christmas. Never before.

Have there been. Late night sittings. To one in the morning. We see. The promotion. Of evil. And the restraint.

Of good. That's the opposite. Of what we read. In Romans 13. And we must be alert. To what is going on. We can't just assume. That our authorities.

- [33 : 10] Are some sort of benevolent good. We must critically assess. What's going on. And think. A former Supreme Court justice. In the USA.
- Put it this way. About our need to be alert. And thinking. About what's going on. He said this. As nightfall.
- Does not come. All at once. Neither does oppression. In both instances. There is a twilight. When everything remains. Seemingly unchanged.
- And it's in such twilight. That we must all be aware. Of change in the air. However slight. Lest we become. Unwitting victims. Of the darkness.
- I think it's safe to say. That the change. In the Scottish air. Is more than slight. Our schools. Teach children. That they can change. Their gender.
- [34 : 06] Without telling. Their parents. And our parliament. Passes legislation. That enables children. To begin the process. Of legally changing. Their gender. I think the darkness.
- Is well and truly here. Don't you? Night has fallen. And we need to wake up. To that reality. And be prepared. For difficult decisions. For ourselves.
- For our children. And our grandchildren. We need to be prepared. To not only identify. Wickedness in our government. But also.
- To be prepared. To do something about it. We recently read. In the daily Bible reading notes. Of Elijah's confrontation.
- Of wicked state rule. This is following the murder. Of Naboth. And his vineyard. Remember. You read about it. In 1 Kings 21. He refused.
- [34 : 59] To give. King Ahab. His vineyard. And he was murdered. As a result. And here are James Phillips. Comments. On that passage. He writes this.
- Ahab's satisfaction. Was short lived. God had seen. What had happened. And Naboth's blood. Cried to him. For vindication. Elijah was once more.
- Called to stand. Before the guilty king. And with. Characteristic. Dramatic. Suddenness. And blazing. With the fire of God. He charged home. The terrible nature. Of his crime upon him.
- At the very moment. When he was gloating. Over his acquisition. There is a real significance. In Elijah's action here. There is a certain. Temper of mind. That would advocate.
- Silent submission. To such acts of injustice. In the belief. That this is in line. With the New Testament. Teaching not to resist evil. But this is to misunderstand. Our Lord's words. It is one thing.
- [35 : 56] Meekly to submit to evil. When it's done to you. Quite another. When it's done to innocent people. Around you. One of the God-given tasks.
- Of the church. In its prophetic ministry. Is fearlessly to rebuke. And challenge evil things. That are done in society. And expose them. And call them by their proper names.
- It is a common error. Many evil men make. To mistake meekness. For weakness. In the people of God. We in the church.
- Must not make the same mistake. And suppose. That we must acquiesce. In injustice. And oppression. There is a time. To be silent.
- But there is also a time. To speak. And for Ahab. That time would come. And for us too. There are times.
- [36 : 52] To remain silent. But. Also times. To speak. It is not wrong. In fact. It is our Christian duty. To challenge those who govern us.

When they act. In wicked. And unrighteous ways. Christians must recognize. The consequences. Of remaining neutral. Inactive. Or passive. In the face of wickedness.

The wicked will plunder. Our heritage. Because the wicked do not sleep. And they are vigilantly scheming. We cannot afford.

To be neutral. Passive. Or sit it out. To be missing in action. And there are opportunities. To speak. We can easily identify.

Those who are. Our representatives. In various parliaments. We can contact them. We can write to them. We can speak to them. We can meet with them. We can consider carefully.

[37 : 49] Who we vote for. And on what issues. We consider to be of most importance. And surely. As Christians. The primary issues. Of our day. Must be.

To basic realities. Of life and death. When life begins. And when life ends. That battle is coming. Euthanasia will be debated. This year. I imagine. The very basic realities.

Of human sexuality. Of men and women. Those issues. Surely. Must be at the very top. Of our lists. And how we consider voting. We are to use our voices.

In the ways that we can. We're not all the same. Not all of us have access. To different realms. But. In the spheres. That we have. The people we know. The opportunities we have.

We must speak. We just read from. Proverbs 31. Verse 8. Open your mouth. For the mute. For the rights.

[38 : 46] Of all who are destitute. Open your mouth. Judge righteously. Defend the rights. Of the poor and needy. And that friends. Requires courage.

That verse. Was a key verse. Wasn't it? About a year ago. My brother David. Was here. Speaking about the issue.

Of abortion. And since then. Many of us. Have been out on the streets. Seeking to call abortion. By its proper name. Seeking to expose it. For what it really is.

Or think about. Debates on euthanasia. Later this year. Or conversion therapy. Legislation. We must. Open our mouths.

We must speak. Where we can. And that requires courage. It will be difficult. Increasingly so.

[39 : 42] As Christians. I think it was Rod Dreher. He said that. Certainly in America. It is now. Almost impossible. To be considered a member.

Of middle class society. And a Christian. At the same time. Those two things. Are increasingly. Incompatible. And that's difficult. Isn't it? We're used to being. As Christians.

Acceptable. Members of middle class society. But. That is no longer. The reality. And so to speak out. Will require courage. And in addition.

In the need. To raise our voices. There's also something. Very grounded. And mundane. About the verses. We read from Proverbs. Listen again. 25 verse 6.

Do not put yourself forward. In the king's presence. Or stand in the way. Of the great. For it's better. To be told. Come up here. Than to be put. In the presence. Of a noble. 22 verse.

[40 : 43] 29. Do you see a man. Skillful in his work. He. Will stand. Before kings. He will not stand. Before obscure men. 22 verse 11.

He who loves. Purity of heart. And his speech is gracious. Will have the king. As his friend. Do you see what's being said. Give yourself. To your daily endeavors.

Do your work. Whatever that work may be. Do your work. With excellence. And you will find yourself. With more influence. Than you ever anticipated. A man.

Skillful in his work. Will stand. Before kings. And as always. With proverbs. It's not a. Cast iron guarantee. But the idea.

Is simple. Give yourself. To your daily work. Excel. In it. Pursue. Righteousness. He who loves.

[41 : 40] Purity of heart. And his speech. Is gracious. Will have the king. As his friend. You see. There are many. Who seek to be on the inside. And empower. For the sake of power's sake.

But that's not the approach. Proverbs urges. Is it? The prophet says. Play your part. Do your job. Whatever it is. That God has given you to do.

Do it well. Be righteous. Guard your tongue. Cultivate a pure heart. That sort of person. May influence.

The rulers. For good. You will stand. Before kings. You will have the king. As his friends. We're not to try and curry.

Favor for influence. The sake. Rather. What prophets are saying here. Is we are to give ourselves. To regular. Daily. Obedience. To God's words.

[42 : 37] And we start here. In the church. In our families. In our daily work. Seeking excellence. In all that God has called us to do. Carefully obeying all his commands.

Do that. And we'll have something to demonstrate. And something to say. To those who are our rulers. So we play our part.

With our voices. But also with our lives. How we live. Proverbs teaches us. That we are. Absolutely. To be engaged.

With our world. And how it's governed. It matters. The gospel. Has a bearing on all of life. Christ. Is Lord of all.

And so the answers. To the problems of our world. Cannot be. To bury our heads in the sand. To pretend them away. To hope it will all. Work out. No.

[43 : 36] We fear the Lord. And the King. We play our role. We seek the welfare. Of our rulers. And our nation. As defined by the word of God. We work.

To see the promotion of good. And the restraints. Of evil. As defined. By God's words. And friends. We need courage.

In these days. We need courage. But who governs us. Who rules. It really does matter. Let's pray shall we. And pray for those who govern us. And how we might respond.

Father we pray. For those who govern us. And we thank you. For the many blessings. That we enjoy. Living. In this country.

The many. Blessings of living. In this society. But father. We're aware too. Of many issues. Of wickedness.

[44 : 40] And unrighteousness. And so we pray to you. And so. Those who govern. And rule us. Would learn. To fear the Lord. By keeping all the words.

Of your law. And your statutes. And do them. And so help us. As your people.

To keep praying. To that end. To demonstrate. In our own lives. Our glad submission. To your word. And the flourishing. That produces. And so might we.

Be a witness. To the benefits. Of living. According to your ways. And may we see that. Increasingly. In our society. That this will be a nation.

That fears you. And serves you. And loves you. So give us courage. Courage to use our voices. Courage.

[45 : 38] To live in obedience. To you. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.