

Misfortune Cookies #2
Drink Your Own Water
Proverbs 5:15
11/13/16

- Last week was a first Sunday. During the first Sunday of the month, a group of leaders in our church has committed for the next 24 months to go through a discipleship / church growth program called 24 to Double. Part of that is watching 24 modules that guide us into examining what we are doing as a church and some things we need to do to help make disciples and grow our church.
 - Last week, the subject was on children, teens and young adults and the absolute necessity of reaching these generations or will we see the end of the church. We found that we are doing well at reaching children and even teens. We are not doing so well reaching young adults ages 18 – 29. How many are here this morning? How many pre-teens and teens are there?
 - In order to reach this age group, we need to speak to them and we need to listen to what is meaningful to them.

- This morning, I wish more were here. I'm thankful for the ones who are here. Because this morning, we are going to speak on something that the world certainly is speaking to our children, teens and young adults about.
 - It's a subject they are bombarded about all of the time, constantly, through music, through images, through fashion trends, through magazines, TV shows, movies, everywhere. It's sex.

- Now, often the modern American church shies away from subjects of a sexual nature. But, I will tell you this - the Bible is not that bashful. When I was a youth pastor, I wasn't bashful about it. You can ask some of my former students! You can ask some of the students now. We've talked about it.
 - Why should we be bashful in the church? If the Bible isn't bashful about it and I'm supposed to be a preacher of the Word – the whole Word – why should we shy away from it?
 - If this subject is affecting countless people – from young to old – why should we avoid it?
 - The world isn't bashful with its message and its twisted wisdom.

- The wisdom of the world is so twisted about sex that it doesn't even make sense.
 - On one hand, the wisdom of the world is that sex is everything. It has been so exalted that it's how you sell products, it has to be in a movie for that movie to be successful, it's what you should be thinking about all the time.
 - On the other hand, it's just an action. It's nothing more than a physical act between people and it shouldn't affect anything else. Since it's just a

- physical act, there is no sacredness in it; it's just an instinct, as if we are animals.
- So, on one hand, it's the biggest deal in life and on the other, it really isn't that big of a deal.
- People of God, we know that sex is a big deal. It was created by God to be shared in a marriage bed. It was created to be wonderful and beautiful and to create a oneness between husband and wife. That is the truth.
 - So, if we know that, why do we shy away from it? Probably because the far majority have sinned in this area. Let's just be honest, WE ALL have sinned in some area. The area of sex is one that everyone is susceptible to sin because God created it and because there is a sexual component to all of us.
 - But, the truth is not about condemning anyone. The truth about everything, especially sex, is about living in that truth so that the truth that will SET YOU FREE!
 - I want you to know that this message and subject has nothing to do with your situation and my knowledge of it. For those who know me well, know that is not how I operate. My sermons are planned out in advance. They are not reactionary according to information I know about people.
 - In fact, this year, many of my sermon series have been inspired by sermon outlines provided by the 24 to Double program. Knowing that pastors were going to be spending a lot of time visioning and making some changes in their churches through the program, they provided us with a year's worth of sermon series and outlines. I have used many of them as a jumping point and inspiration that I add to, take some things away and make it my own.
 - So, if you find that a sermon is hitting your heart, it's not because I'm targeting you. But, it may have everything to do with your situation and God's knowledge of it. I have to release this kind of disclaimer simply because on sensitive subjects, people tend to get...sensitive.
 - So, here we go – let's talk God's absolute truth about sex. Our main text this morning gives the overarching truth about sex. It's in **Proverbs 5:15**. Let's read it.
 - That's why this sermon is entitled "Drink your own water." Do you know what water is yours? The one you married! If you aren't married, you don't got any water yet! If you are married, you only have one well and one water source – your spouse.
 - The book of Proverbs in the Old Testament is one of the books that is in the Wisdom literature of the Bible. Other wisdom books include Psalms, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes and Job.
 - As we're talking about the wisdom of the world versus the wisdom of the Bible in regards to sex, it shouldn't be a surprise that much of the wisdom about sex is found in the wisdom books of the Bible. In fact, these books talk about the subject in depth. If you've read the Song of Solomon, you know that's the truth!

- But, before we get into that wisdom, I want to share a true story with you. A few years ago a group of Florida teenagers was arrested for brutally murdering three innocent citizens.
 - However, they didn't use a gun or knife. Their clothes had no blood on them. In fact, these teens were not even present when the murders happened. They had no intent to commit such a horrible crime.
 - Still, they were responsible for the crime. See, as a prank, they removed the stop signs from a busy intersection. Without the signage in place, the drivers accelerated when they should have stopped and a collision cost three of them their lives.

- You know I try to make it so that most of my sermons are about what you should do. Things like share the peace of Christ, Surrender to God, accept His forgiveness, seek Him, live as people of peace, surround yourself with godly people in the church, live according to God's principle, etc.
 - But this message is more about what you shouldn't do. Because God has placed some pretty clear "STOP" signs for us about sex, and far too many are accelerating through them and it's ending up in pain and, yes, even death.

- Interestingly, King Solomon wrote much of the wisdom in the wisdom books of the Bible. Solomon also had a lot of trouble himself paying attention to the wisdom of God's stop signs. He had a lot of personal experience with this topic on both sides – following God's wisdom and following the world's wisdom.
 - First, he was the object of gossip from the moment he was born. You might remember that his father, King David, committed adultery with his mother, Bathsheba.
 - When their first child (born out of wedlock) died, they were married and Solomon was born. So, he knew the consequences of the choice his father had made.

- Because of that personal experience and because he was given great wisdom by God himself, Solomon could write of the results of sexual sin. But, there was a period of time when he chose to ignore that wisdom.
 - The wisdom of the world seemed so easy and right and seemed like it would get him what he wanted. We talked about that last week. So, he pursued his own selfish desires with reckless abandon.
 - For Solomon, a man of great power, it was a period of one sexual conquest after another. After he returned to God, he even wrote about that time in *Ecclesiastes 2:10* when he said, *"Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure..."*
 - The consequences of Solomon's sex addiction were described in this sad epitaph in *1 Kings 11:3-4*: *"He had 700 wives of royal birth and 300*

concubines. And in fact, they did turn his heart away from the LORD. In Solomon's old age, they turned his heart to worship other gods instead of being completely faithful to the LORD his God, as his father, David, had been."

- Solomon knew first hand that ignoring God's stop signs will destroy your life. He warned his son (and all of us) of this in many verses of the book of Proverbs. We're going to look at several during this sermon.
 - o The New Testament continues to warn us about the dangers of running through God's sex stop signs. *1 Corinthians 6:18 says, Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body.*
 - o The New Testament often uses the umbrella word "immorality." The original Greek word for this is porneia. Porneia refers to any kind of sexual arousal outside of marriage. Do we get how broad that is? In a time when we want to categorize sex in one way, God's Word, the truth, says no – it's sexual arousal outside of marriage.
 - Why is looking at porn wrong – it arouses people outside of marriage. Why are strip clubs wrong – their intent is to arouse people outside of marriage.
 - o This kind of sin damages us in ways that NO other sin does. That's why God puts up such big STOP signs around it

- Now, I shared what I believe is are the main overarching two-faced lies our world says about sex. But, let's break it down even further this morning. Because the world tells us lots of different "wisdom" about this.
 - o I want us to look at 5 Lies the Wisdom of the World Tells You that even we, as people who are in church, who are at some level seeking the things of God, are susceptible to.

- LIE #1: "It could never happen to me."
 - o We've all heard the terrible details of those who have failed sexually. We can all name Christian folk, both more famous and public and those who aren't in the public eye, who have failed sexually.
 - o They let their family down. The embarrass themselves. If I started a list, unfortunately, I could list many pastors and leaders and Christian artists who have embarrassed themselves and their churches. These go beyond denominational lines. I know Church of God folk and those of many other denominations. No movement or denomination is exempt.

- And, sometimes, our first thought is to look at that person in utter disdain and disbelief. We get offended and wonder how they would let that happen. Then, we say something like this, "That will NEVER happen to me." I will admit that I have thought those very words as I have shaken my head.

- But, Proverbs 18:12 tells us, *Before his downfall a man's heart is proud.* It's verses like that where God has to remind us, "who do you think you are?"
 - See, the attitude of "it will never happen to me" is one of pride. And, when are you most susceptible to fall and fail? When you are prideful. We've got to guard our heart from pride lest we do fall.
- Because here's the fact – it can happen to you and it can happen to me. Let's look at two reasons why it can happen to you. First, you have a corrupt nature.
 - *Romans 3:10-12* tells us this when it says, "No one is righteous, not even one. No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one."
 - That's another verse that brings us down a couple of notches in order to remind us that we have nothing to be proud of in ourselves. Because the fact of the matter is, there isn't anything good in us. We have a sinful human nature. And, if we don't control our sinful, human nature by the power of God through the Holy Spirit, it will take us down.
- The second reason why it can happen to you is that you have an active opponent.
 - There are no verses in all of Scripture that remind us of this truth more than Ephesians 6.
 - *Ephesians 6:11-12* says, "Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹² For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places."
- Listen, Satan has a blueprint for the destruction of your life, your faith and your family.
 - James chapter one warns us that temptation comes from the evil one to entice us. The original Greek word used for entice was a term referring to catching fish.
 - Some of you like to fish. Well, Satan is the ultimate fisher of men and he's trying to catch you! He knows just what kind of bait to catch you. He uses different bait on you than me, but he's after us all.
- **LIE #2: "We are only friends."**
 - Most people don't just jump into bed with someone else. Most sexual sin begin as friendships that fill a missing emotional need. Most affairs do not begin in the bedroom, they begin in the heart.
 - This is why Solomon said in *Proverbs 4:23* "Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life."
 - There is a strong connection between words and your heart. I heard a relationship expert say that women fall in love first through their ears,

meaning by what they are told, the words that are spoken to them that fill them up emotionally.

- Again, King Solomon knew this. Look at how the wisdom he shares connects words with sexual sin:
 - *Proverbs 2:16 says, Wisdom will save you from the immoral woman, from the seductive words of the promiscuous woman.*
 - *Proverbs 5:3 says, For the lips of an immoral woman are as sweet as honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil.*
 - *Proverbs 7:5 says, Let them protect you from...listening to the flattery of a promiscuous woman.*
 - *And, Proverbs 22:14 tells us, "The mouth of an immoral woman is a dangerous trap."*

- I'm not abdicating that you jump up and run from every member of the opposite sex in the work place or in the church. But I do want you to realize just how subtly you can go down the wrong path.
 - It can happen before you know it and sometimes without you even realizing it.

- I want to share a personal story. When I was the youth pastor at the Avon Community Church of God in Indiana, Wil and I had been married for about a couple of years. From the time I started at the church there, I had a great team of volunteers who had a heart for teenagers. The core group was three couples. Two of the couples were young adult couples who could really connect with the kids.
 - One of the husbands was also gifted in worship and had become our worship leader at church. I was asked to be the pastor who worked with him in the worship ministry of the church. He was also still working with the youth ministry. So, we worked together a lot. He volunteered for almost all of the youth activities, especially for the overnight activities and conventions that we did because we were always in need of a male chaperone.
 - We had a great relationship. If there was something that concerned him, he came to me. It wasn't uncommon for us to spend time on the phone and at church and outside of church. His wife and I also had a great relationship. They even asked me to be one of their references when they were trying to adopt their son from Haiti.
 - But, it got to a point, where we were getting too close and spending too much time together. Here's the thing – I didn't even realize it. His wife realized it, though. After a youth event where we took the kids to volunteer at the Indianapolis Food Bank one Saturday, we returned to the church offices and his wife and son came to meet him for the family to go to lunch together. He asked her to wait just a minute so he could ask me if I wanted to come to lunch as well. She flippantly said, "Oh, of course you're going to invite your girlfriend to come along with us."

- He laughed and came in to invite me to lunch. I was about to go until he told me what his wife just said. Put on the brakes!! Now, he said she was just kidding. But, I know that women don't say that kind of stuff to kid around. I told him that I needed to get back home. I went home and had lunch with my husband and told him what had happened.
 - After that, we became much more aware of the time we were spending together, even though it was on church stuff. I made sure that his wife was always included in our conversations. His wife appreciated that and we all continued to have a great relationship that lasts to this day.
- Truly, for me, we were just friends. But, had it not been for that jarring statement from his wife, could it have taken a wrong turn? After all, during our first few years of marriage, it was tough for Wil and I. Marriage wasn't the fairy tale I thought it would be. Wil and I weren't often getting along. Could it have taken a turn with this other man? Thank God, I will never know.
 - I did learn that you've got to build high fences. To keep you in and to keep them out. And, I'm not talking about keeping other people out. I'm talking about keeping out even the appearance of anything being inappropriate.
- LIE #3: "If it feels so right, it can't be wrong." I've heard this ridiculous excuse until I'm sick of it. There are plenty of things that feel right that are absolutely wrong, dead-dog wrong.
 - Listen, I'm a woman, so I understand feelings and emotions. As a woman, I'm in tune to feelings and I know we are often more emotional and feeling driven. I experience all kinds of feelings.
 - But, I can also tell you this - if you live by your feelings, you will end up miserable!!!
- And, this I know, too. You can control your feelings. It's not easy, but you can control your feelings.
 - Let me share one way you can control your feelings. Act the way you want to feel. Feelings follow actions, not the other way around.
 - If you don't feel in love with your spouse anymore, act like you are...and the feelings will come. This works for any relationship in your life. You don't love a co-worker, act like you do and the love will come.
 - If you are a child of God, he will give you his love in your heart when you step out in faith and act in love. Try it and see if God does not fill your heart and rekindle or restore feelings of love.
- LIE #4: "I can stop anytime I want." Listen, if we could stop sin any time we want, we wouldn't need Jesus. We wouldn't need a Savior. We wouldn't need help or strength from him. We could be our own strength.

- But, the only way to find real freedom is in Christ. Yet, since the Garden of Eden, Satan has said “Freedom comes through sin. Disobey God and you’ll be like Him...free. Besides, you can stop when you want.”
 - But sin never leads to freedom; it always leads to slavery. When you are in slavery, you don’t get freedom just because you want it. You only get freedom when someone else pays the price for you. That’s what Jesus did!!!
- We need to seek the freedom of Jesus by following the stop signs that Jesus gives us rather than following our entitlement mentality. From the beginning, Satan has played on this entitlement mentality.
 - He convinced Eve that she was entitled to eat from any tree and to be like God. He convinces us that we are entitled to have a little treat, to relax, to feel good, to pursue that which makes us feel good.
 - We’ve worked hard. We’re good people. We deserve what we want and we can stop when we want.
 - The devil is a liar! The truth says in *Proverbs 5:22* “*An evil man is held captive by his own sins; they are ropes that catch and hold him.*”
 - Let me show you an illustration. I’m going to wrap this string around my arm once. It’s easy to break.
 - But, the more times it is wrapped, it becomes too strong for me and I am bound. The more you sin, the more you are enslaved. That’s how it always works.
 - LIE #5: “Nobody is getting hurt. It’s really for the best.”
 - Proverbs 6 says a person who commits adultery destroys himself. Proverbs 7 says it will cost you your life.
 - There’s a huge physical toll, a financial toll, but most people fail to see the emotional cost that will come because they’re so caught up in their emotions in the moment.
 - The argument given is, “I know it may be wrong, but I’m willing to do it to have someone who loves me and makes me feel this way.”
 - Really? Feelings will fool you. Feelings are temporary. Feelings of passion will fade. They always do.
 - Every single “after divorce” study reveals the truth of the emotional fallout of divorce. Studies reveal that 10 years after divorce: 33% are more angry, 50% divorce again, 80% have a lower quality of life, 80% of men who remarry wish they had their first wife back.
 - For those who are married, think back on your wedding day. Can you remember the feelings and the hope you had? It was such a joyous day. You were so in love, so passionate, so yearning for one another.

- But, it changes, doesn't it. You were once so hot and heavy and consumed, but those feelings don't last. In a good marriage, they evolve into something much deeper because you realize that if your marriage is going to last, your love for each other can't be about feelings, but you have to choose to love. Love is a choice.
 - You have to choose to love because your spouse can be a real jerk. Pastor Wil, he's all smiley here most of the time, but you don't live with him. He can be a real jerk at times. You don't know what all I've had to put up with!
 - I think I'm pretty great most of the time, but I can be a real jerk. You don't know what Wil has had to put up with! Everyone who knows us knows how very different we are in nearly every way!
 - We love each other much, much differently than our wedding day because we won't last based on those feelings. We only last based on the choice we made and actions of love we take in spite of whether one of us is being a jerk, which then allow for deeper feelings to grow for each other so that the love we share now is much, much deeper and secure than it was back then. Passion is replaced with respect, honor and cherishing and choosing to love even when the other doesn't deserve it in the moment.
- Church, I hope you see my heart. More importantly, I hope you see the heart of God. I'm not here to condemn anyone. I never want anyone to leave here feeling badly. Yet, if there is conviction that is to move us toward God and away from anything that might cause us to stumble.
 - There are HUGE warning signs in the bible that our culture is just blowing right past.
 - I love you too much to come in here and pretend that everything is okay, when it's not. I love God's Word and his stop signs too much to avoid talking about sex because it makes people uncomfortable. We need to get comfortable with talking about what God says because I don't want to see anyone make the worst mistake of their life.
 - And, I know that in this room there just be might someone in every possible situation.
 - There are those on the brink of sexual disaster and who are going right past God's stop signs. There are those in recovery from a bad mistake. There are those who have been injured by someone else.
 - I know this because I know the face we bring in the place usually isn't the whole picture. See, I've been doing this long enough that I know most people have secrets. They have secret thoughts and secret actions.
 - I know that I don't know what is going on in your life and in your home because I don't live with you. I know what I see isn't always, isn't usually what I get. I know how many people over the 25 years in social work and in ministry have come to me with things I had no idea were going on in their lives.

- I know that there are very few people who haven't fallen in some way in this area and who haven't experience pain in this area. So, I know this sermon is hitting some people, if not most people, and their lives.
- But I also know this - NO ONE need feel guilty or hopeless. God says in *Isaiah 43:25*, "*I—yes, I alone—will blot out your sins for my own sake and will never think of them again.*"
 - He is a God of healing and restoration. He is a God of tomorrow, not yesterday. He sees your future, not your past.