

# Proverbs

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Date: 01 July 2005

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[ 0 : 00 ] Now, through the day, my mind has gone particularly to the theme, Safety is of the Lord. I will ask your attention to the twenty-second, twenty-first chapter in the book of Proverbs, and the last verse, verse thirty-one.

The horse is prepared against the day of battle, but safety is of the Lord.

The context turns our minds to conflict, to conflict.

And my friends, we can but realise experimentally that the world is a battleground.

It is a place of conflict. There are two oppositions within those that are called by God's grace.

[ 1 : 13 ] And it is indeed a wonderful thing when we know what it is for the flesh to war against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.

It's no mark against us. If so, we, those two opposing parties join in conflict within our hearts and in our minds from time to time.

The text suggests the horse is prepared against the day of battle. There's another word that's been on my mind today, and I'll venture to make reference to it.

In the 33rd Psalm, at verse 17, we read, An horse is a vain thing for safety, neither shall it deliver any by his great strength.

Now, I suppose in the developments of world history, for many generations, and we haven't got to go very far back in our history, to appreciate that one of the main things in use in battle was the horse.

[ 2 : 51 ] And the horse is so made of God that it seems that the noise of battle doesn't instill fear into the heart of the horse.

It runs headlong into conflict. It goes straight to the enemy, so to speak, without any sense, evident sense of danger.

And my friends, when you think of the awful battles that have raged in the history of the world, right through from the Old Testament into the days of the New Testament, and coming down through the centuries, I say almost to our own day.

We have cavalry. We have horses engaged in warfare. And those that are riding these noble steeds, they're taken into the very thick of the fight, and they prove sometimes the truth of God's word in a very personal way.

The horse is a vain thing for safety. We need to look higher than things temporal, don't we?

[ 4 : 23 ] We need to consider that the conflicts that exist for the most part of a spiritual nature require something that is in excess of the abilities of all things under the sun.

God has provided the horse in a day of battle, and one doesn't question that God has used this weapon, the horse and his rider, to effect the mastery over certain of our national enemies.

But my friends of late years, the weapons that have been engaged in conflict now, as it were, make the horse to be a vain thing for safety, and we realise that we need a superior provision for our protection.

You don't need me to exaggerate the situation. When I say, although we've been mercifully spared from open conflict on the battlefield now for over 60 years, nevertheless, we're living in a day of danger.

We're living in a situation that's fraught with difficulty, fear and terror to those who in themselves appreciate somewhat of the insufficiency of temporal defence, and that we need something far superior, and it is a great mercy that it can be written, as in the text tonight.

[ 6 : 22 ]     The safety is of the Lord. The horse is prepared against the day of battle, but safety is of the Lord.

Now, looking at it just for a few moments from the temporal viewpoint, aren't there days wherein much fear exists among mankind, and womankind, and even the children of our day are exposed to dangers that have magnified, magnified by reason of the lengthening of the cords in many respects.

The restraints do not now exist as they did in former generations, and the penalties for lawlessness are not administered with such stricture as they did in days of old.

I may have said this at Jireh before, and it's something that often recurs in my thoughts. When your prisons are full, your churches are empty.

And when your churches are full, your prisons are empty. Now, that's a slight exaggeration on fact, because there's always need for the prisons to exist, and certainly there's a great need for the churches to witness a revival.

[ 8 : 31 ]     And my friends, it is under the sanctifying mercy of God that evil is restrained. And in a general sense, the evil has been restrained in past generations, so that many of the problems that confront us all today hardly existed in ancient days, but now they're very real and very fearsome, and we realize in many respects the reticence of people to do things now that were considered to be quite free from danger perhaps 60, 70 years ago.

I remember when, and I may have mentioned this before, living in Coventry, and my brother John and I were very close, 15 months apart, and we were often taken for twins when we were lads.

And we would jump on our bikes and go down to Brinklow and across the fields to the railway line where we took train numbers and we had some slight knowledge of the various trains and engines that were pulling the loads from London to Scotland, so to speak.

And it was a day's entertainment. And we could, my mother could see us go off with our bicycles and our sandwiches and cycle about six or eight miles and forget us, so to speak, through the day until we returned safely on our bicycles, having enjoyed the day when it was getting toward the evening.

Now, dare we let our children go into the local park? Their mothers, just as it were, suggest that under their own own charge, they should wander into distant places.

[ 10 : 57 ]     Well, you've got to keep your eye on them. You must make sure they're under continual care. And these social sicknesses are affecting us all.

Wasn't it a wonderful thing when honesty was such a standard as to carry this characteristic?

An Englishman's word is his bond. And if a man spoke a promise, he'd stretch every muscle to keep that promise.

Now, promises are made. No intention of keeping them. It's just, as it were, to lay some restraint on the customer lest he should turn to a competitor for doing his business.

You see, the standard is weakened. And my friends, the fear of the Lord is at the bottom, at the root, of much of the change that we all understand and we all are the subjects of.

[ 12 : 20 ] Now, it'd be a wonderful thing if the Lord heard the groanings of the people of God and returned in the power of his Spirit and revived once more his church.

This is a responsibility that I feel lays upon our shoulders very much, not only in respect to our own personal situation, but perhaps the more exposed situation of the younger generation.

With all the facilities that exist to inculcate into their very minds and outlooks things which are immoral and which are spiritually destructive.

My friends, we do need the Most High to save us from our enemies. Now, the horse is prepared against a day of battle.

Yes, certain laws are on our statute book and they, as it were, incline to communicate to certain confidence in the society generally that things will improve and things are improving, but basically, you and I know that they're not.

[ 13 : 59 ] Things are not getting better, things are getting worse. And we need the Lord to raise up again a spirit among us that is willing to embrace the principles of our Maker as He gives them to us in His Word with full knowledge of the effects and weaknesses of the fall and how we need preserving from those extremities which ripen souls for His justice pleasure in the bottomless pit.

Now, the horse is prepared against the day of battle, but, but, yes, the horse is a vain thing for safety.

We realize that the things that may commonly be appreciated as useful in defense have their weaknesses, and with those weaknesses it's a consequent exposure to danger.

Now, I want to turn to the, but safety is of the Lord. Now, my friends, I don't know hardly where to commence with this great subject of the Almighty Lord of hosts.

The Lord is safety to perfection. Safety to perfection.

[ 15 : 59 ] There's no enemy that can gain the advantage over him. It is His will from time to time to commit to permit certain of His adversaries to, as it were, be a chastening means in His hand to chasten wrongdoers, to bring, as it were, those scriptures into use that threaten punishment for those that are transgressors.

The way of transgressors is hard. And that's one of the interpretations of modern society. It's progressively hard to bring up our children.

It's progressively hard for them to go out into society and remain untainted by the awful prevailing evils of our death.

But safety is of the Lord. My friends, the Lord in the worst circumstance is a refuge.

The Lord in the most vulnerable situation can preserve His people. You'll hear me perhaps make reference to Joseph more than any other of the Old Testament characters.

[ 17 : 42 ] One doesn't want to stress one particular personality at the expense of others. But, you know, Joseph is a wonderful illustration of being in a situation of progressive difficulty and adversity and strong influence to evil.

And yet, the fear of the Lord kept him. The fear of the Lord brought him through. The fear of the Lord worked in such a way that he went step by step to the place that God had appointed for him at the right hand of Pharaoh for the deliverance of his father and of his brethren who had no right in that sense to expect favour at his hand.

Yet, such was his spirit, the spirit of Jesus Christ, that he wished them no harm and could say, it was not you that sent me hither, but God.

And look what a wonderful thing he did for his old father, Jacob, when he arranged for him to be in the best part of Egypt, while he was necessarily living there.

Now, safety is of the Lord. Safety is of the Lord. Yes, the environment in which we're called to live has a very strong influence, but my friends, the horse is prepared against the day of battle.

[ 19 : 33 ] We ought to be conscious of the situation that is prevailing, that an effort is being made by the enemy, so to speak, to gain the mastery to bring us into condemnation and identify us among those that are careless and indifferent in the will of God and for the preservation of God's holy fear within them.

But safety is of the Lord, kept. You think of Peter, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time, to be identified eternally as upon the Lord's side, preserved, forgiven their weaknesses, their sinfulness, yes, forgiven.

The Lord forgave Peter, and Peter went to heaven on the ground of Christ's merit, and that only, that Jesus died for Peter's transgressions upon the cross, and made a way where God in all the holiness and righteousness of his being could be reconciled to Peter, and receive him into his family for Jesus sake.

And that is the principle, that is the principle of salvation, that is the way of the Lord, and the way of the Lord to save his people from the consequence of their own sins and their own transgressions.

Now, if we have a hope that God has forgiven us our sins, for Jesus sake, it cannot correspond to a spirit of carelessness with regard to the way we live.

[ 22 : 00 ] Justification and sanctification are twins, so to speak, and they go hand in hand together in the heart and life of those that are brought to fear the Lord.

Now, the Lord permits his people to know what they are saved from as well as what they are saved to.

And so, in certain instances, we are made to realize the horse is prepared against the day of battle, but it's not sufficient in and of itself to keep us from the evils that confront us.

We need the Lord. Do you pray? Do I pray? Sincerely, hoping that the Lord has forgiven our sins, sins, that Jesus Christ went to Calvary's tree, that we might be pardoned, and God might be reconciled to us through the death and merit of his well-beloved son.

But nevertheless, we have certain instances permitted of God that give no violation to our absolute conviction that if we are to be saved, it is by God's grace and that alone.

[ 23 : 52 ] Now, the greatest interpretation of the text, but safety is of the Lord, is contained in that wonderful transaction of the three persons of the ever-blessed Trinity in unity when they purpose to save a people for their eternal praise.

And, my friends, the people of God are safe. Now, Satan, he so often initially drives them hard, and so often they seem to be rushing on in the wrong direction.

Oh, how many parents have almost despaired of a change in their family, but live to see the sufficiency of divine grace to save uttermost sinners to the uttermost.

Safety is of the Lord, and my friends, in that precious blood, that atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, is a sufficiency mercy to redeem, to redeem, to make those that are far off from God, turn to God in repentance and godly sorrow, that they might find forgiveness, forgiveness at his hand for Jesus' sake.

The horse is a vain thing for safety. Oh, my friends, some rush into the battle with a confidence placed on their own righteousness, supposed righteousness, their own virtues and merits that they gather together, but oh, a horse is a vain thing for safety.

[ 26 : 26 ] We need what is outside of ourselves to be freely given to us for the name and sake of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, the horse is prepared against the day of battle, but safety is of the Lord. Safety is of the Lord. And we have some wonderful illustrations in the scripture.

I can't go into many this evening, but what a wonderful testimony to the truth of this word was David, the sweet psalmist of Israel.

Look at the danger. Lord, when he was a shepherd boy, he knew that the horse was a vain thing for safety.

He couldn't look to himself or any temporal protection for his deliverance from the lion and the bear.

[ 27 : 38 ] And he was obliged when called to give his account that it was the Lord that saved him, that gave him the mastery over those two threatening, powerful enemies.

And when he came face to face with Goliath of Gath, there he stands yet again in the strength of the Lord, his God.

As it were, despising all the boast of the Philistine army. Yes, and setting aside all the fears and trepidations of family and friends that existed among the children of Israel.

And he goes down alone, and yet not alone, to the fight. because the Lord is with him, and safety is of the Lord.

The majesty, I was going to say, of Goliath, clothed in all the weaponry of Philistines, was mean and contemptible in the sight of faith, as faith trusted in the living God.

[ 29 : 09 ] He that delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, shall he not deliver me from this great Philistine? And my friends, faith prevailed.

He proved safety is of the Lord, and Goliath lay at his feet, and with his sword he could decapitate that tremendous threat to the host of Israel.

You see, the horse is prepared against the devil, but safety is of the Lord. The ultimate conclusion, the ultimate result in the conflict is that the Lord is the refuge of his people.

The Lord is the strength of his people. The Lord is like the walls of Jerusalem, round about his people, and his people, in consequence, are safe.

We read in the 91st Psalm a very blessed fact, and this, perhaps, is not appreciated by us as it ought to be. He will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

[ 30 : 39 ] They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against the stone. Angelic protection.

Angelic protection. And my friends, we don't see these heavenly beings, but the ultimate use that God makes of them in situations dangerous and harmful to his people is a fact of life.

Have you not stored in your memory one or two incidents in your personal experience when the Lord came to your rescue?

The Lord intervened in some time of conscious weakness and gave you the victory, delivered you from the power of the enemy.

And a sovereign protector I have, unseen, but forever at hand. Day and night are both alike to him.

[ 32 : 19 ] so much evil takes place in the night, doesn't it? But my friends, the Lord's protection of his people is 24 hours every day.

I was thinking of the journey and we live in dangerous days, don't we?

Here we are hurtling along the motorway at tremendous speed, mothers with us going along, creating dangers, innumerable I was going to say.

It only needs somebody to make a mistake in their assessment of a situation to create a pilot, doesn't it?

But what a wonderful thing to keep travelling about in the fulfilment of our responsibility, whether in the service of God, as I personally largely find my calling, but other people in the discharge of their secular interests.

[ 33 : 43 ] Yes, they're exposed when they leave the office or leave their home and launch out upon the roads and especially those that permit a fast movement.

I say they're so helpless in that sense with so many dangers. It doesn't need them to make an error of judgment.

All others need a restraint lest they should make an error of judgment. And you see, the Lord, safety is of the Lord.

Safety is of the Lord. This massive movement is not out of control, it's under control.

It's under control. Safety is of the Lord. I don't say that to encourage carelessness and indifference as to the possibilities and probabilities when engaged in these modern dangers.

[ 35 : 01 ] I remember a dear old lady, and I may have said this to you before because my quantities are very, very limited, but I had contact with an old lady once in Wiltshire, Australia, and her son had emigrated to Australia, and he had said that if she went out to see, to visit them, he would pay all expenses.

And she said to me, she said, he wants me to fly. He wants me to fly. You think of an old lady, and perhaps I'm talking of 40, 50 years ago.

And things were not then like they are today. And she was face to face with a tremendous concern. And she was a praying woman.

And she went on her knees about it, and the next time I was in contact with her, she said, oh, she said, yes, I'm going to Australia.

I can fly now. In heaven or earth or air or seas, he executes his firm decrees, and by his saints it stands confessed.

[ 36 : 31 ] I can't just quote the whole hymn. But it was that the Lord included in that communication by his spirit that she was as safe in the air as she was on the land or on the seas.

That, as it were, his dominion includes the whole... So there is safety in the air.

There's safety on the seas. There's safety on the roads. But remember, I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do these things for them.

My friends, we mustn't just easily live through this situation and not take it to the Lord.

Not, as it were, be concerned about this aspect of divine protection. Safety is of the Lord.

[ 37 : 51 ] And I must come to a conclusion. look, eventually all the ropes that tie us to earth are going to be loosened.

All of them, all of them, when I say that I don't exaggerate. You've got this relationship, you've got that provision, you've got some other divine providence that gives you a goodly measure of help and security.

But my friends, there'll come a day when all those influences essentially recede.

and you'll come to a moment when you have to look eternity in the face and say, my days are drawing to a close.

[ 39 : 22 ]    There's no other. There's no other. If the gospel doesn't save you, you're lost. I don't say that harshly.

And what a wonderful thing it is to be blessed with a single eye and a humble spirit, looking alone to Jesus Christ and committing your needy soul to him that he will do all for you.

To die in Christ is heaven. To die out of Christ is hell. That's the plain fact of the matter.

Safety from the law and all its condemnation for our sin. safety, having made peace between God and our soul.

A horse is prepared against the day of battle. yes we have to do certain things concerning our passage through life but my friends when we come to real safety this refuge this solid defence we're shut in to God and especially to his word and the way Christ Jesus that is brought to us in the truth of the gospel amen let us conclude by singing hymn number 136 to the tune romberg 214 hymn 136 to tune 214 dear refuge of my weary soul on thee when sorrows rise on thee when waves of trouble roll my fainting hope relies thy mercy seat is open still here let my soul retreat with humble hope attend thy will and wait beneath thy feet hymn 136

[ 44 : 28 ] I'll see you next time.

The grace of all and glory has been I hear you in the holy night The grace of all and glory  
has been I hear you in the holy night

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