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"TURN YOUR FOOT FROM EVIL"

Prov. 4:27

INTRODUCTION:

This has certainly ^{text} something to do with the matter of temptations in to which we find that we are often led. I want us to think about the subject from two chapters. Chapter 7 and chapter 4. Chapter 7 tells us something about where the foot may be led astray. And Chapter 4 gives us something in the way of admonition about it.

A mother one day knew that when Brian came into the house and quietly sat down, that he had been involved in something. She asked him what was wrong. "Nothing really, Mom. I'm being good." Well, she nodded and asked him, what did he mean by being good. Then he proceeded to tell her about the other boys who had taken some sneakers who had belonged to a neighboring girl and hidden them in the gutter. They wanted me to do it too, he confessed. But I said "no" and came into the house. "I was turning my foot from evil." He concluded, quoting the Bible verse that he had learned in Sunday School that week.

His mother trying not to laugh, seeing that he was so sincere, that he was so serious - that she began to praise him for refusing to take part in the desired deed. And that the Lord had done something in helping him to do what he wanted him to do. But it is beneficial and it is edifying. What do we fear and shrink from the most. Some of us may say sickness. Others may say, we fear poverty. Others say we fear criticism. Or we fear old age, or we fear death.

We can get lost if we are not careful. We can miss the path and the right road. If we do not make the right choice.

You need to know that through Christ you can be all things. The story we've read of the little children and the little engine climbing the hill. Struggling and saying - I think I can, I think I can. Nothing is ever accomplished by a person who says, I think I cannot. Or it is beyond me.

one with Jesus
C. F. Andrews reminds us of the old legend. What have you left behind. To carry on and to carry out your work. And Jesus answered, a little band of men and women who love me. But what if they fail when trial comes. And temptation. Will all you have done be defeated. Yes, said Jesus, if they fail, all I have done will be defeated. Is there nothing more - no, said Jesus, there is nothing more. What then? Jesus quietly replied, they will not fail.

It is with this confidence that we can face tomorrow, with triumph. As Jude said, now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His Glory, with exceeding joy. You were made for victory instead of defeat.

As I close, and we think of the places that those feet carry us -- to the tavern, to the saloon, to the church, the school, the streets, the field, the mountains, the stores, the hotels, the cabins, the palaces - all of these places where human feet go.

Don't we instead, blot out all thought of him, and try to conceal our disobedience and the wrongs we do. We hide from his light.

In Bible Study, we find that sin will even woe people. They stop preparing for their Sunday School lessons. They are careless about it. Then they will start missing the class. Then they will stop attending the group entirely. And then usually, they will not go to church anymore. And what they are doing is - they are hiding from God's convincing and convicting light.

The only way that we can combat darkness is to put our feet in the path of light. That is the way you overcome darkness in a room. You put the light switch on.

v 25 - Sixth, choose to put your feet in the right path. V. 25-27. Let your eyes look right on and let your eye lids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all of thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left, remove thy foot from evil. Turn your feet from evil.

Christ is able to save us - the only way to stop sinning is by an act of the will. To halt. To focus our attention upon him. Going only where he leads - not where we choose. But let our eyes be looking directly ahead. Our gazing fixed straight on him.

v 26 We need to control where our feet are to walk. They need to be established.

with that which is more than feelings. We need to act on the moral principles. Eve saw the tree - that it was good for food. Her appetite ~~is~~ stimulated her - it delighted her eyes, and she took and touched. And then she tasted. The same things happens to us when we let our feelings control us. So, we are to not let feelings lead our footsteps.

4:20 Fourth, listen to God. V. 20 - My son, attend to my words and ^{incline} ~~find~~ Thine ears unto my sayings. Solomon says - give attention to the words of wisdom. We heed man's wisdom rather than God's. Man's ideas sound so good - they make sense to us. And they are what we want, to do. And that is why we must ignore human desires.

The ~~Lord~~ has only one perfect way to go - and he will lead us if we will response to him in that way.

4:19 Fifth, do not cover the light. I think quite often, as in V. 19, the way of wickedness is as darkness. They know not at what they stumble.

They are like a person in darkness -shutting out God's light.

How many times when we sin, we think about the Lord, and his watching over us and reaching out to us.

step - we will not be enticed. And secondly, we are cautioned not to proceed. Which implies that even if we have started down the wrong path, today - we can turn back to God. With God, it is never too late.

Sin may woe us - but the best protection that we have is to stay away from it. And not go and take steps where we should not.

Second, never expose yourself to temptation. Always avoid and by-pass and walk away from it.

4:11 15 V. 15 -Avoid it. Pass by, turn from it, and pass away. You know, like many large cities, they have what they call by-passes. You take a highway that will take you away from the jungle of downtown traffic lights and people. And you will be able to by-pass and go around. This is divine detour that God makes for our own protection. Our own well-being. And no matter how righteous we think we are, how morally strong we are, how able to resist - we ought never expose ourselves to temptation. We do so at our own risk.

Always take a by-pass around this.

4:17 Third, respond through your senses. Acting on God's moral principles. I think that wicked men do as V. 17 says. For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence. That is, they do that which saturates their senses. But now what we need to do is to base our steps on the moral principles of God. Now we have a digestive system - but we need to saturate our system

V. 18 Come satisfy our temptations

V. 19 Man & horse gone - No one-ll-know

V. 20 Fair speech

V. 22 "Like a dumb ox that goeth to the slaughter. Or as a fool to the

correction of the stocks." He did not plan to give in. He did not make

suddenly → sit down and make a list of sins that I will commit one day. Or today.

He fell victim to an impulse.

V. 23 - He did not intend to yield to the temptation. He was where the temptation was. Because he put himself in the path and suddenly he followed and sin took him over.

Bird Trap

IV. WHY FEET GO WRONG

4:27 Now come back to our text. And we have in V. 27 - Chapter 4. Remove Thy foot, (turn your foot from evil), is what our challenge is this morning. Now simply, why did this young man get trapped. Why was he not better equipped. Why did he not recognize this at the very start. How can we escape the snare of sin. How can we get away from the woeing of evil. There are some instructions given here - Chapter 4. And I want us to look at two or three of these things in Chapter 4, that will help us to get out of this situation.

First, going where we should not. Now that is why the young man strayed. He let his feet carry him in doubtful territory. It is extremely clear that we have two paths that we can go down. Two roads that we can travel. In V. 14 - enter not into the path of the wicked. And go not into the ways of the evil.

We are warned not to enter into sins path. If we don't take that first

III. WHAT PULLS OUR FEET ASTRAY

Now we have mentioned about the (rough paths), sin, we have talked about the (first steps) that were taken that were false. Now let us come to look a few moments - what was it that really pulled his feet astray.

V. 15

In V. 15 - It says, therefore I came forth to meet Thee, diligently I seek Thy face, and I have found Thee." If we look and see how the harlot came - she comes on strong. Her attitude is bold. There is no shame or modesty. She is very aggressive. And (her proposition) to the young man - I have come out to meet you. To seek your presence earnestly.

So we find that sin appeals to us. Through an emotional attraction.

We must remember as ugly as sin is dark, and evil - it comes sometimes in (pretty packages). Sin always presents itself in ways that will create a response. We wouldn't be tempted if it was unattractive or repulsive. We'd mock a Devil that wears a red suit, and has horns, and carries a pitch fork. But we would fall before that which has a pleasant look, and flatters, and builds up our pride.

V. 16

V. 16 - She appeals through the senses. The harlot not only seizes and kisses her naive victim, but she did what felt good - and stirred the emotions. She was (dressed).

V. 17

- Decked Bed Fine linen of Egypt
Perfumed BD Myrrh aloes + Cinnamon

To make him feel desired and wanted.

V. 14 - 15

V. 14 - 15 - What was the first thing that the harlot said to her lover. With a brazen face, she said, I was due to make a peace offering today. I have paid my vows. Therefore, I come out to meet you. The first thing she tells him is that she has performed her religious duties. She assures him that she has done what is right. What was required of her - and she gave an offering.

Does that sound familiar to you. I say my prayers, I go to church once in awhile, I send in a little money, I may read the Bible.

*Glasgow Preacher said - Gospel Suite British cleric: Welshman likes something sing about
Irishman " " Fight " "
Englishman " " Talk " "
Scotchman " " That's Free!*

We need to remember Jonestown - to see that sin frequently disguises itself in the form of religious ritual. Formal religion - one of Satan's greatest weapons. If we can get people caught up in the form, without the substance of Godliness, the person of Christ - he can keep them from the truth. This is the work of rituals.

Did you know, this is why people want the Greatest Show On Earth - when they come to church. They want a form of religion - and not substance of Godliness. And the person of Christ. And Satan can keep them from the truth. And so it becomes a matter of works and rituals. Of people getting involved in where there is some great show. You wonder whether people are worshipping the person - or whether they are worshipping Jesus Christ. Now we may understand and be certain that we are worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ, if we are resisting these steps that were taken by this young man.

that by her nature she is deceitful. She has motives that are hid. Now this is the kind of cover-up that has always been present in sin.

The first thing we are told about the serpent is, he came to tempt Eve. That he was more crafty than any beast in the field in which the Lord God had made. He was clever - he distorted.

Why did the serpent do this. To chide Eve, hast God said ye shall not eat of the tree of the garden. And next he distorts the truth. He convinces her that she will not die if she eats of this fruit, and the only reason God didn't want her to eat was to keep her from learning about evil. And to cause her not to be like him. Knowing good and evil. You will be like God.

V. 12
His ploy worked. She ate the fruit and so did Adam. Now imagine what it would be like not to know anything about sin. Wouldn't it be great.

The two characteristics of sin described in this passage here is that the woman was boisterous, rebellious, and it is unruly, wild, uncontrolled, unrestrained, runs rampant, etc.

V. 13
In V. 13 - The woman came out to meet the young man. And what a greeting he received. It was warmly, passionately, welcomed into open arms. And she kissed him. It means that she grabbed hold of him and stirred an emotional response.

Now we are not unlike that boy. More often than we care to admit, we skirt the edge of respectability and tease ourselves with the impurities when we over-step the boundaries.

This first step was taken in the second place, when it was dark. Had it been in the daytime when he had been standing there - it probably would not have happened. He would not have wanted anyone to see him. But being there, there was no light - and he felt safe. He may have been thinking - no one will know if I give in. So he felt safe in the secrecy of it.

What can we learn from this? That we are more apt to sin if we think we won't be caught. If we can convince ourselves - no one else will know. Or find out. The problem with that line of reasoning is - God is light. So we can never hide from God. There is no such thing as a secret sin when God is concerned. Chapter 5:21. The ways of a man are before the Lord, the eyes of the Lord.

V 10
Another thing happens - a woman comes to meet him. V. 10. And behold there met him a woman with the tire of a harlot. And subtle of heart. The woman is a harlot. How did she know he was there. She was waiting for him. She was eager - he did not wait for her to come all the way. She did not wait. She went to meet him. And rest assure, she will do the same for us. Sin eagerly awaits us. It awaits our consent.

V 11
What is the harlot like. We are told in V. 10 that she is cunning and heart. V. 11 - she is boisterous and rebellious. That is stubborn. Cunning means

He strays off in the direction of the harlot. He is not at all wise. And he passes near her corner. And he takes the way to her house.

V, 9
V, 10
V. 9 - In the twilight, in the evening, in the middle of the night, and in the darkness - and behold the woman comes to meet him. V. 10. The fact that he was so easily enticed shows the danger of putting ourselves in the path of temptation.

And this was his first step.

Imagine, he strolls along - passing near her corner. Well, he just shrugs his shoulder and then he says, the temptation is there. But it is not yet sin. He is still neutral and he can handle it.

But he takes the first step toward the house of the harlot. Now he is on the way to giving into this temptation. But evidently, he hung around the corner quite a while. Until it was a late hour, into the middle of the night, so the Bible here indicates.

It is not difficult to see what happened. He toiled with temptation, he flirted with wrong-doings, and he talked himself into doing what he knew that he shouldn't.

As being proper and correct. And these are the people who are influenced by others. And by circumstances. Who respond without thinking or reasoning and they can fall victims of sin. We must be doubly careful of our responses to what other people chose.

Youth was also present. Although this reference in Proverbs, was about someone, who is not walking deeply with the Lord. Who does not know God's principles of conduct. And Satan makes his attack.

The particular story here describes a young man lacking sense. He is not using his head. He is not thinking about what he is doing or where he is going. If he was, he would not have been there in that dangerous place. So we see that if a naive, spiritually-immature, thought-less person - he becomes a prime target for the rough path for his feet.

And we see that without thought, or understanding - he is going to fall.
Proverbs 2:11-12.

II. FIRST FALSE STEPS

Let us follow this young man through this procedure which he is being taken. And see exactly what happens here. In V. 8 - it says he is passing through the street (near her corner). He went the way to her house.

V. 8

v.5
clear picture. In the form of an adulterous woman. A harlot who pulls people away from the paths of righteousness. To the rough paths of sin. She entreats, and she entices. Woe may be an out-dated term, but it means to court, to coax, to seek, to make love too.

Now if you have your Bibles I want you to catch the picture that he gives in Chapter 7 of the book of Proverbs. And then we come back for the instruction that he gives in Chapter 4.

This rough path - sin makes love to us. That's how we are captured, and interested. It shows us only what we want to see. Tells us only what we want to hear. Promises only what we want to happen. Literally.

v.6
Here is the whole story, told by a righteous person. An observer who is watching someone being trapped in sin. He tells where he is looking through the window. And he sees that this righteous witness has chosen to remain inside the house. In a safe place, where he is protected and sheltered from sin. He is not exposing himself. He is not going to be open to that temptation. Perhaps this is an example how the Holy Spirit shows that we must never be exposed to the works of evil. To that rough path.

v.7
In V. 7 - He describes the people who are in the path. They are naive. He discerns some young people. Some young man lacking sense. The naive, are the inexperienced, who are easily led astray. They are not thinking. In fact, they accept everything on the face value.

And why is it that we have this evil temptation - which the story in Genesis, the 3rd chapter, is repeated time and time again. The serpent says to Eve, hath God said, ye shall not eat of the fruit of the garden. Eve replies, all except one. If we eat of that one, we shall die, the serpent tells her - it will not hurt you. In fact, if you eat of that tree, you will know more and you will have so much more freedom. And a larger life. And here is a struggle.

You see temptation means a test or a trial. It is like a fork in a road-way or a path.

It follows that if we can understand what sin is, how it entraps us, and why we say "yes" to it instead of to God. We can avoid that rough road and consistently walk in the path of righteousness.

We must understand exactly what sin is. We need to define it because each of us in our own way, has our own definition. To one person here today - sin may be being disloyal. To another it may be telling lies. To another it may be cheating. To another it may be missing church, on Sunday. Sin is the breaking of religious law. Sin is rejecting God, defying who and what he is.

We need to understand how we are ensnared by sin and I think the book of Proverbs talks about sin and folly, a man's wisdom, and gives to us a very

But did you know that when Christ was talking to us about the future - he did not mention one of these things. The one thing we need to pray about for the future is the possibility of doing wrong. That should be one of our fears. In the midst of all of temptation, that we will remove our foot from the right path.

On the other hand, people today are not afraid of temptation. In fact, we are so confident of being able to command our own self that we make temptation a constant companion. The story of the old man who won a victory - but had been a victim of drink and he reformed. But drove into town and hitched his horse to the same post in front of the town saloon, eventually fell to his old ways. Now had he had a fear of temptation, he would have changed his hitching post.

Sometimes we get into dangerous situations - we enjoy doing that. We keep the wrong company.

And Jesus tells us to fear the temptation of tomorrow - more than any other thing. Our very strength is in our greatest weakness, our over-confidence. I Cor. 10:12, wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall.

I. A ROUGH PATH FOR THE FEET

Let us consider first of all, why it is that we are seduced by sin.

How little ~~approved of God~~ are many of the places where our feet trod.

Job 31:14-7

We need to make a covenant today as Job 31:1-8 - says, for my portion of God is there from above. Doth he not see my ways and count all of my steps. If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasteth to deceit, let me be weighed in an even balance that God may know my integrity.

If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if my blot - any blot hath cleaved to my hands, then let me sow and let another eat.

So this is the challenge this morning - to turn your feet from evil. If you have thus far planted your foot in the wrong place or direction - I would encourage you to change directions today.