

Temporal vs Eternal



Where to Find Security (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again. Our theme this week is one which concerns all people everywhere: Where to Find Security.

In my introductory talk yesterday I pointed out that the quest for security springs from a universal craving of the human heart, irrespective of nationality, or culture, or social or economic status.

In our contemporary culture uncounted billions of dollars are spent by various agencies or industries or organizations, all in some way or other devoted to providing security. I mentioned some of these briefly in my talk yesterday. There are insurance agencies; there are security agencies, both public and private; there's the whole system of social security; and then there are what we call security forces. And without in anyway criticizing any of these industries or agencies or organizations, I pointed out simply that none of them individually and not all of them collectively can provide total or permanent security. They can provide security in certain contingencies, in certain areas of life, and for a certain period of time, but it is outside the power of man, unaided in his own efforts, to achieve total or permanent security.

There is, however, another way. One that does not rest on man's ability or ingenuity or organization. And one, incidentally, which has another great advantage. It does not require vast expenditure of money. This alternative way is found only in the Bible. And the key to achieving this kind of security offered in the Bible, is listening to the right voice. So I'm inviting you again today to listen to the voice that offers you security. The voice is the voice of wisdom, not human wisdom, but God's wisdom speaking through the pages of Scripture. And yesterday I quoted the close of a speech made by wisdom in the first part of the book of Proverbs, Proverbs chapter one, verse 33 is the closing verse with wisdom's offer. Let me repeat it again today:

> "But whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm." (NIV)

That's the offer of wisdom. Notice the total security. Such a person will live in safety, not merely be in safety but be at ease. They won't even have fear and they will be outside the

scope of harm.

However, in the previous words spoken by wisdom, it's clear that wisdom offers both advice and rebuke. And, alas, the majority of mankind do not avail themselves of the advice and do not heed the rebuke. This is what wisdom says a little earlier in that chapter, verse 25 and 26:

> "since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you," (NIV)

The alternative to accepting wisdom's advice and heeding wisdom's rebuke is very grim: it's ultimate calamity and disaster.

In offering both advice and rebuke, wisdom shows us what is right and warns us against what is wrong. In particular there is one special thing that wisdom reveals in the Scriptures, the wisdom of God. Something that we really cannot fully understand apart from God's revelation. This is the distinction between two categories of things in the universe. Things that are temporal and things that are eternal. Without coming to see this distinction and acting upon it, we can never achieve true enduring security. Listen to the words of Paul in 2nd Corinthians chapter 4, verse 18:

> "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (NIV)

There's the distinction made very clear, two categories of things. First of all those things which we can see, the world of the senses, and those are temporary, they are not enduring. Then there's the other world, the unseen world, the world of the eternal, the world of God and His being and His truth. And that is completely distinct from the temporal world. Now Paul says, "We fix our eyes on what is not seen." That's a paradox. How can you look at what is not seen? The only way you can enter into that realm is through faith. By faith we apprehend what we cannot see with our eyes, what we cannot perceive with any of our senses. And through the perception of this eternal, invisible realm, we begin to find true security.

There's another passage in the prophet Isaiah, the 40th chapter, where the prophet brings out very vividly the distinction between the temporal and the eternal. He shows us that through the temporal God woos us to the eternal. Isaiah chapter 40, verses 6 through 8:

> "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever." (NIV)

Again, the temporal and the eternal. All human life is temporal. All of us are just like grass: we grow up, we wither, we die, we pass away. There is nothing permanent in all of that. And yet it is very beautiful. But through that beauty, God is attracting us. He's speaking to us about another realm where the beauty doesn't wither, where the flowers don't fade, which is not subject to corruption and change and instability and insecurity. It's the eternal realm that's revealed by the Word of God. So we have that contrast. The grass withers, the flowers fall, but the Word of our God stands forever. And all people are grass.

I pointed out yesterday and I reassert it today, in order to achieve true security you have to see the limits of any other kind of security. You have to see that no security that man achieves by his own efforts or his own wisdom, can be permanent. It's all like man's own nature, it's grass. It grows up, it's vivid, it's green, it's beautiful with its flowers, but it's very impermanent. Just when it reaches it climax of beauty, it begins to wither. God has permitted that. He uses it as a demonstration to turn our hearts away from the impermanent to the permanent. From that which is temporary to that which endures. And that turns us to God, to His Word, and to the wisdom of God that speaks to us out of His Word and offers us a different kind of security, a security that is total and that is permanent.

Confronted by this contrast between the temporary and the permanent, everyone of us has to make a choice about our lives. We have to decide, are we going to build on the temporary or are we going to build on the permanent? This is so vividly brought out in the familiar parable of Jesus about the two men each of whom built a house. One built on sand, the temporary. The other built on rock, the permanent. The same choice faces everyone of us. Let me read the words of Jesus in Matthew 7, verses 24 through 27:

> "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man

> who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." (NIV)

Such a clear alternative. No way to compromise. No way to be halfway in between. We have to decide on what are we going to build our lives. Are we going to satisfied with the temporary? Are we going to be restricted to the things that we ourselves can achieve by our own efforts? Are we going to look for security in that realm? If so, we're like the man who built his house on the sand without an adequate foundation. It will stand for a time, but when the tests and the calamities and the pressures come, it will collapse. And please note that Jesus is very realistic. He doesn't say "if" the tests will come, He says "when" the tests will come. Every life will be tested at some time or another by that kind of pressure. We cannot hope to escape the pressures. The only solution is to build on a foundation that will endure the pressures and not yield to them.

And that's the foundation of the Word of God. It's the wisdom of God revealed in His Word. It's the Word of God that reveals a different realm. A realm that isn't grass. A realm that doesn't grow and then wither and fade and die. A realm that's as eternal as God's own nature. For it's a realm that's based on God's own Word. God's own Word expressing His eternal nature, containing His eternal counsel, showing us the way through the shifting sands of time to the rock that's eternal, to the rock on which we can all build with absolute confidence, knowing that it will stand all the pressures that life will bring against it. That's the way to true security.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow I'll be explaining how to find total security in the eternal.

Radio Program

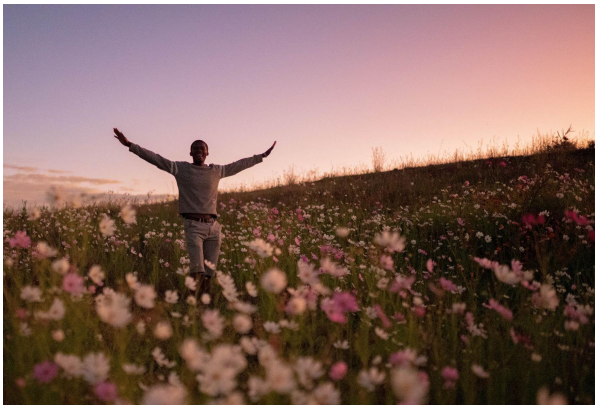
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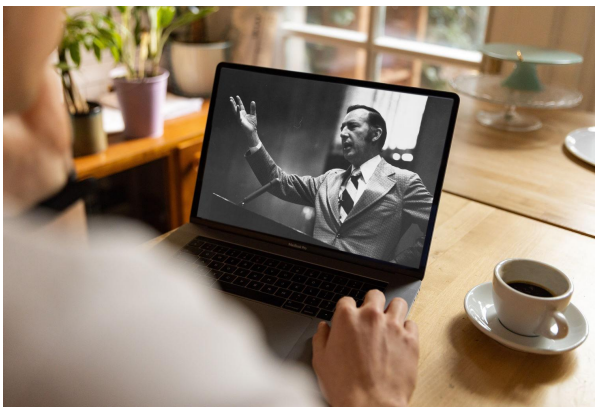
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