

Righteousness Exalts a Nation

Proverbs 14:34

Synopsis

Today's sermon marks the start of our study of the second half of Proverbs. In chapters 1-9, we encountered a series of lengthier poems setting the stage and introducing the themes of the book. In chapters 10-31 we read the actual short statements of wisdom we refer to as proverbs. Today's first message we venture into a discussion on the nature of nations and politics. Proverbs teaches us that righteousness in a nation will bring blessing, but sin that becomes normalized in a nation will eventually bring reproach.

Sermon Outline

Primary Proverb: *"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people"*

1. Exposition
 - a. Righteousness exalts a nation
 - b. Sin is a reproach to any people
2. Application
 - a. Understand that there is more happening in our news than meets the eye
 - b. Be unashamed of God's standard of righteousness
 - c. Be incredible grateful for your Christian heritage
 - d. Hate national sins

Reflection & Discussion Questions

Warning to SG Leaders: We are approaching the topic of governance and politics of a nation. Tread wisely and carefully with your group. We are trying to work at the level of 'principles' in this study, principles to guide our hearts and minds to engage faithfully.

1. **Observing the Text:** First, make sure to have your group spend time looking at the text, and observing the text without reflecting on the sermon. You want the group to get familiar with the text, and the words, and the flow of thought. Keep making observations until you feel the group has a solid grasp of the entire text.
 - a. Include the following verses in your discussion: Proverbs 29:2, Proverbs 21:1, Proverbs 16:12.
2. Consider the four applications made in the sermon (and provided in the Sermon Outline above). What are your thoughts regarding those applications? What questions arise as you

think about them? Are there any challenges in your own heart as you consider them?

3. The text teaches that righteousness exalts a nation. Before we consider how this happens at a national level, think of your own life personally. Share an example where you pursued the path of righteousness, and experienced the blessing of God as a result.
4. Now consider the second half of the verse, that sin is a reproach to any people. Again, apply this to yourself as an individual. Share a time when your sinful path led to reproach upon yourself.
5. In the sermon we discussed the need for Christians to be unashamed of God's standard of righteousness. What questions does this bring up for you? And what are areas where you are tempted to perhaps feel ashamed in some degree for your Christian ethical convictions?
6. One of the best ways Christians can influence their communities towards righteousness is by living a bold outward Christian life of love and service towards others. What might be a space or a person where God has been inviting you to step towards in bold sacrificial love?

For Family Discipleship

This is a great week to talk to your child about sin and its consequences, as well as righteousness and its consequences. Ask your child to give an example of a time where they chose sin (the wicked path), and what the consequences of that sin were. You can perhaps share your own story of a time you chose either sin or righteousness and what the consequences were.

For Men and Women

Similar question, yet men and women will have unique answers to this that can be discussed in separate groups.

For Men: The text says that "sin is a reproach to any people." What particular sins among men have become normalized in our culture today? And how can we as Christian men influence the culture around us towards righteousness.

For Women: The text says that "sin is a reproach to any people." What particular sins among women have become normalized in our culture today? And how can we as Christian women influence the culture around us towards righteousness.