

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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Would you take your Bibles and turn please to Proverbs chapter 29, and we're going to look at one verse. Sometimes when a pastor preaches from the Word of God, he will take a chapter. As a matter of fact, I believe the chapter headings were put there to keep preachers from preaching too long. And sometimes he'll take a paragraph. But today we're going to take just one verse, and we're going to look at that one verse because it is so rich, it is so strong, it is so powerful, it is so pertinent.

Question; can a man spiritually pass the point of no return? Can he so stubbornly and arrogantly sin against God? Can he be so willfully rebellious that God will give up on him? The answer to that question is yes, and that's a frightening thing. There is a deadline, and if a man, woman, boy, or girl crosses that deadline, his doom is sealed and he has no hope. You say, "But Pastor, God is a God of love, infinite love." Yes He is, but He's also a God of wrath and a God of judgment. And when you say that God is a God of love, that is truth, but it's not all of the truth, it is part of the truth. And when you try to take part of the truth and make part of the truth all of the truth, that part of the truth becomes an untruth. So we need to see all of God's Word.

I want you to look at this verse of Scripture because it is terrifying in some ways. Proverbs chapter 29 and verse 1, "*He that being often reprov'd and hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy.*" "*He that being often reprov'd and hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy.*"

"There's a time, I know not when,
There is a place, I know not where,
Which marks the destiny of men to Heaven or despair.
There is a line by us not seen which crosses every path,
The hidden boundary between God's mercy and God's wrath."

And to cross that line means that there's no hope for you. I've been told that in the Niagara River, I've never seen it, but in the Niagara River that rushes down to Niagara Falls; at first, the Niagara River is very placid and very slow, but it reaches a point where it rises and picks up speed and there is a sign there, I'm told, on the riverbank which says, "The point of no return." Now you can be in that river for a long time, but when you come to that place, you're not going to turn around and go back. That is the point of no return, and you are going over the falls if you pass that point. It is the point of no return.

Now there are four definite truths that are in this one verse, and so I want you to take Proverbs chapter 29 and verse 1 and keep it open in your hand, and if you don't have a Bible with you, listen to it again, "*He that being often reprov'd and hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy.*" Four thoughts I want to lay on your heart today, and I pray God the Holy Spirit will etch them upon your consciousness and rivet them into your mind.

The very first is **spiritual conviction**. God does convict us. We are often reproved. Now nobody goes to hell unloved, unwarned, unconvicted. Not a one. “*He that being often reproved.*” God strives with us, God knocks on our heart’s door, God reproves us, God calls us over and over and over again. The Bible says, “*He that being often reproved,*” many times reproved. It would have been glorious mercy if God had just warned us one time wouldn’t it? But over and over and over and over again and again and again and again God reproves. God speaks to us.

Now how does God speak? How does God reprove? Well, **by His Holy Spirit**. There have been times when you’ve been driving along in your automobile, or doing dishes, maybe you’ve been out on the football field, maybe you are just about to go to sleep, and you feel the Spirit of God speaking to you and you know that you’re a sinner, you know that you’re doing wrong, you know that you need to be saved, and God’s Holy Spirit is gently but strongly speaking to your heart. I know He did to mine when I was a teenage boy before I came to the Lord Jesus Christ. There’s no way to describe it except the dear, precious Holy Spirit of God was speaking, and if God’s Holy Spirit is speaking to you today, I beg you, I plead with you, listen to the Spirit of God.

But not only does He speak through His Spirit, He speaks **through sickness**. Have you been sick? Have you been in trouble, have you been to the doctor and gotten a bad report? Well God speaks through that. You know, the Bible says in Psalm 119 verse 67, “*Before I was afflicted, I went astray.*” What does sickness do? It’s a messenger from God to tell us that we are going to die! And every one of us here has some kind of a sickness. And for some it’s going to get worse and worse. You say, “I’m not sick.” Well you might be using glasses like I am. That means your eyes are sick. You might be getting gray hair or it’s falling out, that means your scalp is a little sick. Dear friend, your posture’s not what it used to be and your muscles are not what they used to be. You are dying, and God speaks to us that way and says, “You’re not going to be here upon this earth forever.” We’re winding down to the grave.

Not only does God speak through His Spirit and not only does God speak and reprove through sickness, but also **through sorrows**. I put my arms around a man and prayed for him whose precious mother has stepped over into Heaven. And I’m sure that through all of that God has spoken to his heart. This is one of the most godly men I know, however. But maybe when you went to the graveside of your mother you didn’t know the Lord and you thought to yourself, “I’ll never see my godly mother again unless I get saved.” Maybe God has spoken to you through the death of a child, maybe God has spoken to you through some financial reverse. God speaks through His Spirit, God speaks through sickness, God speaks through sorrows.

God speaks **through sweetness**. My wife and I sat and held hands, and praised God for His goodness to us. We named out loud the blessings of our God, our great God, and gave Him glory, how good God has been! And if you’re saved, thank God for His goodness, but if you’re lost thank God for His goodness. In Romans chapter 2 and

verse 4 the Bible says, "*The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.*" And God will reprove just by simply the smile of a baby, the beauty of a flower. God speaks through these things.

God speaks to you **through His servants**. God speaks through His servants. I'm not the best preacher in the world, and there're others who can preach the Gospel better than I can, but nobody can preach a better Gospel than I can, and I never preach a sermon till I've soaked it in prayer and God brought you here today to hear this message, and God speaks through His servants. God speaks through His soul-winners.

Maybe somebody has witnessed to you. Maybe somebody shared a Gospel tract with you. Maybe you took it and crumpled it up, maybe you threw it on the floor, maybe you scoffed, maybe you laughed. God sent a special messenger of love to you. A young man was getting ready to go out in a night of sin. His precious mother loved him so much that there by his cap she put out a Gospel tract. She knew he'd see it. He picked it up; he looked at it, he said, "Mother, would you stop doing this?" He said, "Today when I got off the bus, somebody gave me one of these. I wish you wouldn't do that. Where can I go where people won't give me these things?" She said with tears, "My son, you can go to hell. Nobody will give you one there."

God speaks! And there's not a mother's child in this building today that has not been spoken to by the Holy Spirit. Listen to this text, "*He that being often reproveth.*" God has spoken to you, precious friend, I don't know all of your names, but I know this much about you; over and over and over and over and over and over again, God has reproveth you. If you're not saved, He loves you too much to let you go to hell without being warned, without being reproveth. Every time I open this book to preach, God is speaking to you. That's the first thought. Spiritual conviction.

Here's the second thought; **stubborn rebellion**, stubborn rebellion. "*He that being often reproveth and hardeneth his neck.*" What we say today is bowing up the neck. Just saying, "No." Jutting out the chin, saying, "I will not do what God would have me to do."

How do you harden, how do you harden your neck? Well, you're in Proverbs 29, just go back 27 and look if you will in verse 1. Some harden their neck **by procrastination**. "*Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*" You have the idea, "Well, yes, God has spoken over and over again and one of these days I'm going to give my heart to the Lord, tomorrow." But God's Word says, "*Don't boast about tomorrow.*" Former pastor of this church, Dr. Lee, said, "Tomorrow's a time only found on the fool's clock." It never gets here.

You know, there's an interesting story. Moses leading the children of Israel out of Egypt. Now, Egypt had a king, the Pharaoh, and he was a vile, wicked, lascivious, an arrogant man. And so God, in order to touch Pharaoh and allow God's people to go, God began to send plagues into the land of Egypt.

And one of the plagues that God sent to the land of Egypt to get Pharaoh to let God's chosen people go, that they might go to the Promised Land, one of the plagues that God sent was the plague of frogs. I don't mean one frog, I don't mean two frogs, I don't mean thousands of frogs. I mean millions of frogs covered, came up out of the Nile River and covered the land of Egypt. There were frogs everywhere. The din must've been thunderous as these frogs were croaking all over. You'd put on your shoe, there would be a frog. A woman would open her kettle to cook, and there'd be a frog in the kettle. You would get down between the sheets, there would be frogs under the sheets. Little boys would be squishing frogs between their toes when they went to school. There were frogs everywhere. They covered the land. I mean, you might think it's funny and it sounds funny, but if you were living in Egypt, I'll guarantee you it would not be funny. They're killing frogs, dead piles of frogs, smelly frogs, everywhere, the stench unbearable, the noise cacophonous. It was horrible and terrible! Pharaoh had had enough! He said, "Moses, ask God to take away the frogs," and I'm going to read from Exodus chapter 8 verses 9 and 10, "*And Moses said to Pharaoh, 'Accept the honor of saying when I shall intercede for you, for your servants and for your people to destroy the frogs from you and your houses that they may remain in the river only.'*" Now Moses said, "Okay, Pharaoh, you just ask me and I'll ask God to stop the frogs. When do you want me to do it?" Now here's something, you won't believe this. "*And he said,*" that is, Pharaoh said, "*'Tomorrow. Tomorrow!'*"

Now there are frogs everywhere! He's up to his ears in frogs. "Now, Pharaoh, would you like me to take away the frogs?" "Yes I would." "All right, Pharaoh, when?" "Tomorrow. Just give me one more night with the frogs." Isn't that an amazing thing? Isn't that an amazing thing? And there are some of you, sickness, sorrow, pain, discomfort, all of these things, and I say, "Do you want to come to Jesus?" "Oh yes, I do, Pastor." "When?" "Tomorrow. Just give me one more night with the frogs. I don't want to be saved today."

There's an old story about a convocation of demons that got together to try to damn mankind and they were trying to cook up some schemes and plans and one demon said, "Let's tell them there's no God." The other demon said, "Aw, the fact of God is so obvious, only a few would believe that." "Well, then let's tell them that God is not a God of love." "Oh, no, no, no, no, no God's handiwork, God's love is shown everywhere." "Well, let's just tell them there's no hope." "Oh, no! The Gospel has been preached around the world!" Then one demon, malevolent, known for his craftiness and cunningness and wickedness, according to this fable, stood up and said, "Why, I know what to do. Let's tell them there is a God, that He's a God of love, that He has made provision for people, that they need to be saved, they ought to be saved. But tell them just simply to postpone it." And applause broke out in that convocation of demons and they said, "Yes, that's the plan. We'll get more people by procrastination than any other way." People who intend to be saved but they, when they're reproved they harden their neck by procrastination.

I'll tell you another way that people harden their neck. Not only by procrastination, but they harden their neck **by pride**. You know, I'll give an invitation. At the close of this service I'll say, "Come, accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and make it public." And the devil will come and sit right next to you in that seat and he'll say to you, "Hey, don't go down there. You're going to make a fool of yourself. Everybody will be watching you. Don't humiliate yourself. Don't admit your need." And pride will escort you to hell in chains forged on the anvil of a hard heart. So many of the people in America are egomaniacs, strutting to hell, and when the Gospel is preached, that pride comes up in them and the Bible says, only by pride, pride goes before destruction. Proverbs 16:18, "*He that being often reprov'd and hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed.*"

Tell you another way that people harden their neck; some through pride, some through procrastination, but in others, just the **pleasures** of this world. I mean they're having a big time. And the Bible speaks of these in Second Timothy chapter 3 verse 4 as, "*Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.*" And there are those sitting in this building, and God has spoken to you time and time and time again. But you think of your sin. You think of the pleasures of this world. It may be vile sin, it may be homosexuality, it may be adultery, it may be fornication, it may be drunkenness, it may be thievery, it may be violence. Or it may not be those things, it just may be your lifestyle. And you get the idea, "You know, if I come to Jesus, look what I will give up." And so the Holy Spirit of God is speaking to you over and over and over again, but you harden your neck through the pleasures of this world. The Bible speaks of those who are, "*Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.*"

Now let me say this; I would not for a moment tell you there's no pleasure in sin. The Bible speaks of, in Hebrews 11 verse 25, the pleasures of sin, but the Bible says they're for a season. In Psalm 16:11, the Bible also speaks of the pleasures of righteousness and the Bible speaks of our God and says, "*At Thy right hand are pleasures forevermore.*" Don't get the idea that when you come to Jesus you give up something. The Bible says in Psalm 84 verse 11, "*The Lord thy God is a sun and a shield, no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.*" If it will make you happy, if it will make you holy, if it will make you healthy, God says, "Help yourself." God is a good God. God is a good God. The Bible, in First Timothy chapter 6 verse 17 says, "*God gives us richly all things to enjoy.*" And every time God says, "Thou shalt not," God is just simply saying, "Don't hurt yourself." And every time God says, "Thou shalt," God is saying, "Help yourself to happiness." Remember that. But friend, I know people who are so wrapped up with the pleasures of this world. I've met people I believe who would give up coming to church before they'd give up getting a new television or a new refrigerator.

There are people, when I give the invitation, the devil will whisper to them, "Now wait a minute, don't turn your back on this, don't turn your back on that, don't you go down there and make a commitment to be one of those old Christians." And so you may harden your neck by procrastination. You say, "Well, I'll do it, but later."

Or you may harden your neck by pride in saying, "I'm not going to go down there and make a fool of myself." Or you may harden your neck through the pleasures of this world and say, "I'm a, 'Lover of pleasure more than lovers of God.'"

But now there's a third thing I want you to see in this text. Now look at it, "*He that being often reproved,*" that's spiritual conviction, "*and hardeneth his neck,*" that's stubborn rebellion. Then there comes **sudden destruction**, sudden destruction. Look at it, "*He that being often reproved,*" spiritual conviction, "*and hardeneth his neck,*" stubborn rebellion, "*shall suddenly be destroyed.*" Sudden destruction. That's what God's Word says. There comes a time when you cross the deadline. Now, God will bring judgment. God is a God of love, but He's also a God of wrath.

Now how may that sudden destruction may, come to you? Well, first, it may come to **your mind**. Not merely to your body; it may come to your mind. Not merely to your soul, the destruction may be in your head. God will destroy your ability to think right. You say, "Pastor, where is that found in the Bible?" Well, I want to give you a passage of Scripture, and if you want to turn to it you can turn to it, or if you just want to listen to it, it's found in Second Thessalonians chapter 2 verses 11 and 12. The Bible says, "*For this cause God shall send them strong delusion.*" God sending delusion? "Well, Pastor, I thought God was here to teach us the truth. Do you mean God would delude a person?" Do you know what delude means? It means to be deceived. "*For this cause God will send them strong delusion.*" "Well, why would God send people strong delusion?" Well, he goes on to say, "*That they should believe the lie.*" "You mean God wants people to believe the lie?" That's what it says. Well, you say, "I don't understand that." Well, it gets worse, "*That they all might be condemned,*" damned. "Now wait a minute, Pastor. Are you telling me that God sends delusion, that people would believe lies that they might be damned?" That's what it says, black print on white paper. "Well, why would God do that?" He goes on to say, "*These are the ones who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*" God spoke to them; God gave them truth over and over and over again.

Now in this passage, and listen very carefully, the opposite of truth is not error, it is sin. You see, you're faced with the truth, and you know that if you receive that truth, that you'll have to turn from your sin. So here's a man over here he has truth, over here he has sin. And so when he's faced with the truth, he refuses the truth, he embraces his sin. The opposite of truth here is unrighteousness in this passage of Scripture. And when that man turns from his truth, he being often reproved, he hardens his neck, he turns toward his sin, then the baggage that he has is strong delusion. You see, that is the baggage; that is the just judgment.

When a man says, "I had rather have my sin than God's truth," God says, "All right, with your sin you will be given strong delusion." And that's the reason that so many people are in false cults today. A man may come to this church and hear the Gospel preached and get all bent out of shape and say, "I didn't go Sunday morning to hear that kind of garbage." He doesn't ask whether it's true or not. Three weeks

later he's at home, his kids are in Sunday school, his wife is out shopping, he's sitting there reading the papers with his whiskers grown out, got a six-pack of embalming fluid by his side. Somebody knocks at the door; he goes to the door. "Who is it?" They said, "We're here to tell you there's no hell." He says, "Come on in," and he believes a lie. You say, "Well he may be sincere." He's sincerely wrong, but when he knew the truth, when he knew the truth he loved not the truth, but he had pleasure in unrighteousness. And, *"For this reason God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they might be damned, who believe not the truth but have pleasure in unrighteousness. He that being often reprov'd and hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed."* There may be the destruction of the mind through delusion.

There may be **the destruction of the spirit through desertion**. Don't get the idea that one day you'll just whistle and say, "God, come save me." Jesus said in John 6 verse 44, *"No man can come unto Me except the Father which sent Me draw him."* Did you know that? Did you know that unless the Holy Spirit of God brings you under conviction, you'll never be saved? It's not my preaching that puts you under conviction. I'm just the Western Union boy. The message is His, and He is the one that has to put you under conviction. But the Bible teaches that you can so insult God, you can say, "No," to the Holy Spirit of God so many times, that God's Holy Spirit of God will cease to work in your heart.

Three times in the first chapter of Romans in verses 24 through 28, God speaks of giving up on people; *"And God gave them up, and God gave them up, and God gave them over."* The old-time preachers used to call that, "When the lights go out on the road to hell." The Holy Spirit of God no longer speaks to a man. Genesis chapter 6 and verse 3; God said before the flood, *"My Spirit will not always strive with man."* Don't get the idea that Holy Spirit conviction is going to stay in your heart and in your life. You may come to a place of sudden destruction in your spirit as well as in your mind, where the Holy Spirit of God no longer speaks to you and, and, and God no longer draws you.

There was a pastor, used to pastor in Arkansas, Joe Henry Hankins. He was a Jeremiah-type of guy, would weep when he preached. Joe Henry Hankins told this story. I shall never forget it. He said he was preaching in his church, and God was there that morning. He gave the invitation. He said he saw a young man in the balcony. And he said during the invitation that young man in the balcony was under conviction, was obvious he was under conviction. He said, "Come and give your heart to Jesus." He said, "I saw that man as he closed his hymnal and started out. And then he stepped back and opened it and started to sing again. Sang another stanza. He stepped out and then he stepped back. Finally, he closed the book and put it down and started out and Dr. Hankins says, "Thank God, he's coming to Jesus!" But he said he turned and walked out and went out of the church and never came back. Dr. Hankins said a few weeks after that, he said this boy was stricken with a disease and the doctors said he would not survive. Hankins found his name, went to visit the boy at his bedside. He said, "Son, I want to ask you a question." He said, "Were you in

church on thus and such a time?" "Yes sir." "Son, I was watching you in the balcony. It seemed to me that you were under conviction and that you wanted to be saved; was that right?" "Yes sir, that was right." "Well, son, I saw you step out and step back several times. Why was that?" He said, "Preacher, when you gave that invitation, I wanted to get down there where you were so bad I felt I could jump over the balcony to get down there." "Well, son, why didn't you come?" He said, "I remembered my sin, my favorite sin." His sin, I believe, was the sin of immorality. And he said, "I knew if I went down there I'd have to give up my sin." He said, "I was in a battle," and he said, "I made up my mind. I would keep my sin and I left the church!"

Dr. Hankins said, "Son, have they told you how sick you are?" He said, "Yes sir, I know I'm going to die; you don't have to beat around the bush." He said, "Well, son, if you're going to die, you can't have that sin anyway. Why don't you give your heart to Jesus?" And Dr. Hankins said that boy said something that sent a chill over him. He said, "Preacher, there's something you don't understand." He said, "When I closed that book and stepped out of that church, something died within me. I can't give my heart to Jesus." Hankins said he wept and pled for that boy's soul. But he died without saying, "Yes," to the Lord Jesus Christ because in his spirit there was something that was destroyed. God says in Genesis 6 verse 3, "*My Spirit will not always strive with a man. He that being often reprov'd and hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed.*"

There may be the destruction of the mind; strong delusion. There may be the desertion of the spirit, where the Holy Spirit of God no longer speaks to your spirit. There may be the **sudden death of the body**. You say, "Well, Pastor, I've got plenty of days to live." How do you know? "*He that being often reprov'd and hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed.*" It just takes one bad incident at an intersection for you to be out in eternity. Don't get the idea, friend, that eternity is way out yonder. It's only a heartbeat away. It's the only thing between some people here and hell, is that heartbeat, that little heartbeat, that's all there is between you and hell. The Bible says in First Samuel chapter 20 verse 3, "*There is but a step between me and death.*"

Now look, notice what he says, "*He that being often reprov'd,*" that's spiritual conviction, "*and hardeneth his neck,*" that's stubborn rebellion, "*shall suddenly be destroyed,*" that's sudden destruction. Now listen to the next part and I'm finished, "*and that without remedy.*" that is **settled destiny**, settled destiny. Don't get the idea that you're going to die and stand before God and ask God for a second chance. There'll be no second chance. The Bible says in Hebrews 9:27, "*It's appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment.*" Doesn't say there's a second chance.

In Luke chapter 16 verses 19 through 31, the Bible tells of a rich man who died, and the Bible says, "*In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and he said, 'Father Abraham, send Lazarus, that he might dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.'*" And he looked for some alleviation, looked for some alleviation of the pain, the suffering in hell. Whatever hell is, I don't want you to go there.

God took the lexicon of Heaven and He described a place called hell as Hellfire. Talked about a man there in hell wanting a drop of water to cool his tongue. And then Abraham, or God, spoke to him and said, "Son, just remember in your lifetime all of the things that happened, how good I was to you and you didn't repent, and now there's a great gulf fixed. Lazarus can't come where you are. Lazarus was in Heaven, and you can't go to where he is." God didn't say there's a second chance. Think about it. Hell is a bottomless pit. How could you use a bottomless pit as a stepping stone? How could you ever get out of a bottomless pit?

God brought me here to tell you today that He loves you with an infinite love, and that He has spoken to you over and over again, and He's speaking to you today. But God says, "If you continue to harden your neck, you'll be destroyed." And when you are, there'll be no second chance. It will be without remedy, without hope. I looked this up in a number of different translations, but they all mean the same thing; no hope, without a second chance, without a remedy, without a cure. "*He that being often reprov'd and hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy.*"

But why would God reprove you? Because He loves you so much and He wants to save you today. "Pastor Rogers, would Jesus save me today?" Yes. "Pastor Rogers, are you sure?" Yes, I'm sure if you'll call upon Him. You say, "What if I've crossed the deadline?" If you'll call upon Him, you haven't.

Let me give you good news. Anybody who wants to be saved can. The man who crosses the deadline, he has no desire to be saved but if you have a desire to be saved, that's because the Holy Spirit of God is working in you. And if you want to be saved, you can be saved. And I thank God that the Bible says in Romans 10 verse 13, "*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" And if you were to show me one time, one place where anybody, anybody were to ask Jesus to save them and He didn't save them, I'd close my Bible and never preach again. I promise you on the authority of the Word of God, He'll save you today if you trust Him. Would you like to do that?

Let's bow heads in prayer. Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. No one stirring, no one looking around. If you'd like to be saved, I want you to pray a prayer like this out of your heart. Just forget that anybody else is here. And just pray this prayer out of your heart, "Dear God," that's right, just speak to Him. "I know that You love me. I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me. You promised to save me if I would only trust You. I do trust You, Jesus." Would you tell Him that? "I trust You now, Jesus. I believe You're the Son of God. I believe You paid for my sin with Your blood. I believe that God raised You from the dead. I receive You now, I trust You now as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin, cleanse me, save me, Jesus." Pray that from your heart. "Save me, Jesus."

Did you ask Him? Then by faith pray this way, "Thank You for saving me, Jesus." Would you pray that? "Thank You for saving me. I receive it by faith. You are my Lord

and Master. I will follow You and live for You the rest of my life and I will never be ashamed of You. You are my Savior, my God, and my Friend. Thank You for saving me. In Your name I pray, Amen.”