

Proverbs and Wealth
Proverbs 10:15, et al
January 24, 2016

Introduction

Ever since man has fallen into sin, there always have been the rich and the poor. There has never been a time where all people have shared the wealth equally with each other. There have been attempts to breach the divide between the rich and the poor (especially Communism), but there have been no success. The divide between the rich and the poor are very real. The poor resent the rich and the rich despise the poor. What we need to realize is that being rich or poor is not necessarily an evil thing since God has made them both.

Proverbs 22:2 *The rich and the poor have this in common, the Lord is the maker of them all.*

The problem with wealth has always been and is with the heart. The heart of man is deceitful and wicked (**Jeremiah 17:9**). Because of the sinful heart, man has abused wealth, both the rich and the poor. Wealth can be a blessing or a curse, depending on the man's actions and heart.

Proverbs 10:15 *The rich man's wealth is his strong city; the destruction of the poor is their poverty.*

When we come to **Proverbs 10:15**, on the surface, it seems that Solomon is saying that being rich is a blessing; and being poor is a curse. This is a great example of taking a verse on its own without looking at the whole of Scripture. What does Solomon say about wealth?

I. Under the Sun Reality

- Natural observation
 - In this proverb, Solomon is not saying that having wealth is good or bad
 - He is simply stating what he sees "under the sun" (from Ecclesiastes)
 - Rich = security
 - Poor = destruction
- For the rich
 - Being rich is not always a bad thing in Scripture
 - It can be a blessing
 - For the hard worker

Proverbs 13:4 *The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.*

Proverbs 14:23 *In all labor there is profit, but idle chatter leads only to poverty.*

- For those who honor the Lord

Proverbs 3:9-10 *Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase; 10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.*

- Advantages
 - Friends

Proverbs 14:20 *The poor man is hated even by his own neighbor, but the rich has many friends.*

Proverbs 19:4, 6 *Wealth makes many friends, but the poor is separated from his friend. 6 Many entreat the favor of the nobility, and every man is a friend to one who gives gifts.*

- Position of power

Proverbs 22:7 *The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.*

- For the poor
 - Scripture never glamorizes the position of the poor
 - It can be a curse

Proverbs 13:4, 11 *The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich. 11 Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, but he who gathers by labor will increase.*

Proverbs 13:18 *Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, but he who regards a rebuke will be honored.*

- Disadvantages
 - Live in constant state of fear, worry, starvation, death, forced labor, injustice, stealing to survive
 - Friendless

Proverbs 14:20 *The poor man is hated even by his own neighbor, but the rich has many friends.*

Proverbs 19:4, 7 *Wealth makes many friends, but the poor is separated from his friend. 7 All the brothers of the poor hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him! He may pursue them with words, yet they abandon him.*

- Powerless

Proverbs 22:7 *The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.*

II. Dangers of Wealth

- Deception for the rich
 - False security

Proverbs 18:10-12 *The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe. 11 The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his own esteem. 12 Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, and before honor is humility.*

Proverbs 11:4, 28 *Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death. 28 He who trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like foliage.*

- Danger of trusting in their riches
- Get anything they want for their pleasure
- Complacency => destruction
- Pride
 - The reason for their false security—pride

- They think they are the reason for their own fortunes

Proverbs 26:12 *Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*

Proverbs 28:11 *The rich man is wise in his own eyes, but the poor who has understanding searches him out.*

Proverbs 28:6 *Better is the poor who walks in his integrity than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich.*

- Example

Luke 12:16-21 *And He told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. 17 He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' 18 Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." ' 20 But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' 21 This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."*

- Power-hungry

Proverbs 22:16 *He who oppresses the poor to increase his riches, and he who gives to the rich, will surely come to poverty.*

Proverbs 22:22-23 *Do not rob the poor because he is poor, nor oppress the afflicted at the gate; 23 For the Lord will plead their cause, and plunder the soul of those who plunder them.*

- The dangers

- It is a heart issue

1 Timothy 6:9-10 *People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.*

10 *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

- Abuse of position and power to get what they want
- Self-satisfaction and self-gratification
- Self-deception

Matthew 19:23-24 *Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."*

- Destruction of the poor

- God does listen to the sufferings of the poor

Proverbs 22:22-23 *Do not rob the poor because he is poor, nor oppress the afflicted at the gate; 23 For the Lord will plead their cause, and plunder the soul of those who plunder them.*

- He does care for them
- He orders us to take care of them when they have a need
- However
 - Some people are in this position because of their own sinful behavior
 - Laziness (see also **Proverbs 20:13; 23:21; 24:33-34**)

Proverbs 20:4 *The lazy man will not plow because of winter; he will beg during harvest and have nothing.*

- Seeking pleasures

Proverbs 21:17 *He who loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich.*

Proverbs 23:21 *For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.*

Proverbs 28:19 *He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows frivolity will have poverty enough!*

Proverbs 29:3 *Whoever loves wisdom makes his father rejoice, but a companion of harlots wastes his wealth.*

- Lack of planning

Proverbs 21:5 *The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.*

III. The Solution

- Be rich or poor
 - It doesn't matter—the end is the same
 - Without God, all will be separated from God for eternity
- Solomon says
 - Trusting the Lord is the only security we can have

Proverbs 18:10 *The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.*

- Fear of God

Proverbs 15:16 *Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure with trouble.*

- Paul says

Philippians 4:11-12 *I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.*

1 Timothy 6:6-8 *But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.*