

An Abomination Unto the LORD

The Book of Proverbs

By Ken Wimer

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Bible Text: Proverbs 15:8-11
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Shreveport Grace Church
2970 Baird Road
Shreveport, LA 71118

Website: www.shrevegrace.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/shreveportgracech

All right, let's take our Bibles and look together at Proverbs 15. Our text is four verses, 8, 9, 10 and 11. I'm going to talk with you about what is 'An Abomination Unto the LORD.' Proverbs 15:8 through 11 here we read,

8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight. 9 The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness. 10 Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die. 11 Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?

Let's have a word of prayer.

Gracious Father, I thank You for this privilege that You have given us to meet together at this place, at this hour. We wouldn't be here desirous of hearing a Word from You were it not for Your Spirit of Grace drawing us. So I thank You for that work of Grace that You have begun and continue in the hearts of Your children as we consider this very sobering subject of what it is to be an abomination before You, and that's what we are by nature and yet there is that One, Your Son, the LORD Jesus Christ, Whose prayer and intercession is Your delight. You could not even consider our voice or our prayers, were it not for Him that intercedes on behalf of such wretches as we are. So, I pray that as we study Your Word this morning, we would see those two aspects of Your glory, just how wretched we are and how glorious Your Son, the LORD Jesus Christ. We pray that You would in Your Grace and Mercy grant us eyes to look to Him once again and for that we give You the honor, praise and glory in the name of Your Dear Son, Jesus, Amen.

So here the LORD directed Solomon to reflect upon really the state of all men and here he says two different things about an abomination to the LORD. He doesn't necessarily start where men start because men consider that their religion or their religious duties or activities are actually a good thing, but not necessarily, so because the very first thing he says here in verse 8 is, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD."

We have to understand what is it that God considers right and just and what is it that He hates and is the object of His disgust and his anger and His wrath and His justice, because that's what an abomination is, it's what God loathes or hates and the very first thing that we see here is the way that men worship, and when you stop and think about it, that's what it was from the beginning. When you consider the disobedience of Adam there in the garden, it wasn't just that he disobeyed but he chose another way to come to God, and ever since that, all fallen creatures, which we all are, brought into this world will never worship God aright unless He, by His Grace, is pleased to teach us that Way of Righteousness, that we considered for a time to be right was nothing but an abomination unto the LORD, and who among us has not grown up before the LORD taught us the Gospel, to believe that somehow our will or our way or our works contributed in some way to either gaining or maintaining God's favor. Even in places where people say they believe in the Grace of God, and yet it's Grace with a mixture because they say, "Well, yes, it's the Grace of God," it's as if the Grace of God is an offer. Here's this pile of grace here somewhere and if you can just keep partaking of that pile, you'll get better and better, and yet the clear declaration of Scripture here right from the get-go is that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD.

Now remember, Solomon, toward his later years, was drawn away into idolatry by those strange women that he took to himself, and you say, "Well, how could a man write this and live in that sort of abomination and idolatry?" I don't believe that these Scriptures here were written before that time, I believe they're a testimony of the Grace of God having taught him and having been through this himself and drawn aside himself to where now it's for our learning. And let's not be presumptuous in thinking that God can't take his hand off of any one of us for a time. It's like Solomon, he was blessed of God, he never was at any time cast away, but it wasn't for anything in him, it was because of what God purposed to do in him and for him in the death of the LORD Jesus Christ Who would come many years later to pay his sin debt. That's the only way that any of us have any hope.

In fact, these two parts of verse 8 go together, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD." If you stop and think about it, anything that we offer up to the LORD is going to be out of a heart that is fallen and sinful, and in and of itself would be an abomination unto the LORD. Even as we gather here to worship and we ask the LORD's blessing, how is it that God can hear any of our prayers because everything about our being and who we are in our nature is an abomination to the LORD.

You say, "Well, how can God, then, answer prayer?" Well, look at the second part of verse 8, "the prayer of the upright one is his delight." Now don't think of yourself and think, "Well, I'm upright so I'm His delight." No, this is Solomon by the Spirit of God considering who man is in his nature and himself included, but where was his hope? His hope is in that Upright One, only One is upright and that is the LORD Jesus Christ, without sin, perfect, and when He came into this world to identify with those sinners that God purposed to save, it required of Him an intercession that was absolutely just and right.

Over there in James, a lot of people like to read where James said that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much, and people automatically try to put that suit on and think, "Well, what do I need to do to get right or be right so I can have my prayers answered?" That's not talking about you or me. There's only one prayer of a Righteous Man that availeth much and that is the LORD Jesus Christ. Paul said, "If righteousness could come in any other way whether by the law or personal obedience, Christ is dead in vain. You make the death of Christ of none effect." What you are in essence saying is, "Christ didn't need to come. I've got this handled." That in and of itself is an abomination unto the LORD.

Whenever I address the Father, even as I did to begin this time of worship, I'm not thinking in any way that it's these words that somehow are going to catch His ear. I have people say that sometimes when they ask me to pray for them for a particular situation, they say, "I think you've got God's ear." Even that is a blasphemy, an abomination, to think that somehow I have God's ear. No, if any are heard of God the Father, it's because of this One Upright One that is His Delight, has always been His Delight; from eternity when He purposed to save sinners, this Upright One, Christ, was His Delight. Yes, there are those that He chose in Christ but Christ is the First Elect, and I know we're talking in human terms here because from eternity, I'm talking from eternity, there never was a time that Christ was not His Delight and that those that Christ should represent were because of Him, His Delight, and that's why He sent Him into this world, to fulfill and accomplish all that was necessary to God's law and justice that God might be just to justify, declare righteous those for whom Christ paid the debt. Three times God the Father during Christ's earthly ministry, a Voice was heard from Heaven that said, "This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased. Hear Him." In Whom I am well pleased. So, for any to be God's delight, it can only be in and through and by the LORD Jesus Christ. He sees those that He has saved through His Son, the LORD Jesus Christ, and not anything in them.

So, when you go through the Scriptures, you find that to come to God in any other way than in and by and through the LORD Jesus Christ, is an abomination. Now it might look good to men the way they worship and it's like someone said, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." People may have good intentions of worshiping God but it is an abomination. In fact, in some places of Scripture it is equated to occultism. You know what occultism is, that means devil worship. You want to get some people stirred up, just tell them how they are worshiping God coming in their own will, exalting free will is devil worship. It's the lie of the devil. It's the lie of Satan to come with their works, as if somehow those works are going to be pleasing to God, is occultism, it's devil worship. To come in their own way is considered to be devil worship, and when it says an abomination, he's detestable to God.

That's why when Adam and Eve fell, it was of such great consequence. God chased them out of that garden and put the angels there with flaming swords to keep them from ever being able to go back in that fallen state and lay their hand again on that Tree of Life. And you stop and think about all the way through history it was to stay that way, man in his sin and depravity expelled from God, and that Sword stood in the way, the Sword of God's justice, the Sword of His wrath, until that Sword was plunged into the LORD Jesus

Christ Himself. That's where Zechariah wrote about that, "Awake, O Sword, against My Shepherd." That was forward looking to the death of the LORD Jesus Christ and it was only in that death that God's wrath was satisfied on behalf of that people that God the Father had given Him to save from all eternity. Other than that, apart from Christ having satisfied that work and Christ's intercession, that wrath abides upon every creature outside of Him.

We also go back and look in Genesis 4:4 how serious a matter, this is right from the beginning all the way back there in the garden. You remember Adam and Eve clothed themselves with fig leaves, the works of their own hands, thinking that somehow that would cover their nakedness, but our LORD took off of them, those fig leaves, and slew an innocent victim and took the coats of those animals and clothed them. You find that back in Genesis 2:21. Right there God was laying the foundation of how it was that sinners would be accepted before him and that that abomination, that wrath, that detestable, God hates anything less than holiness and righteousness, that that matter should be taken away. It was in the sacrifice, the blood sacrifice which represented the death of the LORD Jesus Christ, there is no other way.

And it is proven as you read in Genesis 4, as Adam knew his wife, Eve, and she conceived and she bore a son named Cain and she said, "I have gotten a man from the LORD." Some say that she was thinking that this one, Cain, was that Promised Seed back there in Genesis 3:15 where the LORD had said that there would be a Seed of the woman that would bruise the head of the serpent. So some think that perhaps this is what she's thinking, this is that Seed, this is that One. Well, she was to be greatly disappointed immediately because that Seed that God promised there in Genesis 3:15 did not pertain to Cain or even to Abel, it pertained to none other than the LORD Jesus Christ Who would come thousands of years later.

But if you don't think it's important as to how sinners approach unto God, here it says in verse 2, "she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep." I love that. Of all of the work that Abel was raised to do, it was to be a keeper of sheep. Even in that he is a type of the LORD Jesus Christ. The writer to the Hebrews talks about blood that was better than Abel's and sacrifice better than Abel's, speaking of Christ there, but Cain was a tiller of the ground, even there you see the difference. Cain represents a works religionist, one who is proud of the works of his hands, a tiller of the ground. Abel as a keeper of sheep represents those that the LORD Jesus Christ came to save by His Grace. Sheep were raised for one reason and that was to be slain and so in the process of time it says, verse 3, "it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD." So, we're here in Proverbs 15, he would be one coming with the sacrifice. It wasn't that Cain was any more wicked than Abel. There's none of us, there's no difference. We're all an abomination before the LORD but on what basis can any hope to find favor with God? Well, Cain brought the fruit of the ground, in other words, the fruit of his labor. That's the key here.

It takes effort, in fact, the LORD said that by the sweat of your brow, he told Adam that he would labor the ground, till the ground, and so quite an effort, and even in how these

two were raised, they were raised to acknowledge God for Who He was. You might say like some of us, we're raised in a home where we were taught worship is important but the key is not just any worship. People today think, "Well, if you just go to an assembly on Sunday, then you're doing what you need to do and God will bless you." Not necessarily so. It's not just what we do but why we do it and how we do it that's vital.

All across the world today, Sunday is set apart for a day of worship. In fact, some call it the LORD's day as if Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, aren't the LORD's day. I grew up that way. I was taught there is a line of demarcation and come Sunday now, that's the LORD's day. Come Monday, all right, you can get back to normal activity, but Sunday... Think of the millions of people that are raised that way.

"And Abel," it says, verse 4, "he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof." Now where did Abel learn that? Same place Cain knew it. It wasn't that somehow Abel had been taught one way and Cain another. Adam and Eve had been so marked by what took place there in that garden where the LORD stripped them of their fig leaves, and you think about it, killed an innocent animal to clothe them in that place, them seeing that blood shed, that was the first time they had ever seen death with their eyes even though as soon they fell, there was that spiritual death, but now they observed blood flowing out of the bodies of these animals, and thinking that should have been them. And the fact that Abel here brought of the firstlings of his flock, even here they had been taught it's just not any sacrifice that will do because it represented the sacrifice of the LORD Jesus Christ, and the fact thereof. It all was brought as a burnt offering, it was to be offered before the LORD, none kept for themselves.

And notice here the difference between verse 3 and verse 4. It silenced in verse 3 as far as what the LORD considered of Cain and his sacrifice, it just simply says, "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD." But in verse 4 we see, "And the LORD had respect unto Abel." Now don't separate Abel and the rest, "Abel and to his offering." It wasn't that Abel was any better than Cain but the LORD had respect unto Abel because of his offering. That would be another way of reading that, because he came in the way that God had ordained that he should come. Here's where we see that in God's thoughts concerning Cain, "But unto Cain," notice, "and to his offering."

So, what's the key here? A lot of people like to preach up that Cain's attitude wasn't right. If he had had just the right attitude, that God would have had respect to him. No, it very clearly is stating here, "Wrong offer. That's not how you come." "But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect." Had not respect means to consider it as worthless. That's what the LORD told the Pharisees as they came in their supposed self-righteousness. He said, "Keeping the traditions of men, you do worship God in vain."

You think about how many today worship God in vain, not under the favor of God but as an abomination before the LORD, and for that reason it says there in verse 5, "And Cain was very wrath." It's like many today when you tell them that their supposed self-willed religion, giving honor to free will they call it, that it depends on me doing what I do, that's what God expects, and that you tell people today that that's nothing but an

abomination unto the LORD, that is that sacrifice of the wicked that is an abomination to the LORD as we read there in Proverbs 15:8, you'll find people getting upset too. Very angry.

Here it says, "and his countenance fell." I love the words of Scripture. You can tell when people are angry, just look at them. Everything changes, their countenance changes. Here the LORD addresses the matter. It's not that the Scriptures aren't clear. There's nobody reading this Bible can claim ignorance, the problem is they read it how they want to read it. They read it blindly. Unless the Spirit of God opens the eyes and the heart, that would be us.

I remember being taught this story for years as a little child all the way up, a little flannel graph, moving Cain around and here comes Abel and all of this, and I thought it was a cute little story, but the only thing that I was taught out of it was you'd better be careful about your attitude. No one ever taught me that the difference was the sacrifice and it wasn't until years later when it pleased God to open my eyes to Christ, coming back and reading it again I saw myself as being that abominable one, as Cain, and yet the LORD was pleased to spare me, and it wasn't until by His Spirit of Grace He comforted my heart to show me that, no, in Christ, I'm just as Abel. I'm like Abel now that it's to Abel and his offering. I'm nothing apart from the Sacrifice of the LORD Jesus Christ.

But there are those that the LORD leaves in their ignorance and rebellion. Even Paul said that, that he confessed that he had been a persecutor, a blasphemer. Those other terms that he uses, one worthy of abomination, and yet he obtained mercy not for his sake but for Christ's sake, the Mercy Seat, the blood shed on his behalf.

So, the LORD said unto Cain here in verse 6, "Why art thou wroth?" God's just in being angry. God's just in being wrathful toward sinners but no sinner could ever be wrathful against the LORD and somehow think that the LORD is being unjust. You see, that's how everything is on its head. No, we're the unjust ones and yet this sin nature would have us blame God.

So, the LORD meets him in his point of rebellion, "Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen?" Now in verse 7, He points Cain to the one matter that's vital. He says, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" When the LORD said that to Cain, He was not telling Cain, "Now go and get some better fruit." I am confident that Cain, just like anybody, you look at people that come to the farmers market, they're not putting sloppy fruit out there and vegetables, they are proud of what they've brought, and especially lined up with everybody else along there, they want people to come and get their veggies, their fruit. Everything about it, they are proud of.

So, He's not telling Cain, "Go get some better fruit." It's like one preacher said one time, the problem with fruit is you can't get blood out of it. You can't get blood out of a turnip. That's the issue here, without the shedding of blood there is no remission. This Truth was laid down all the way back there at the fall but people today in their ignorance still don't get it. I'm talking about people that read the same Bible as we're reading right now. They

don't get it. They think in the flesh and that just shows how fallen this flesh is, that somehow I've got to provide better than. And I'll tell you, there are plenty of works preachers out there that are willing to crack that 10-pronged whip, go out there and be better, do better, get better. That's not the issue. When He says, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted," the only thing well for acceptance before God was in that blood sacrifice. What He was telling Cain is, "You need to come back with a sacrifice just like Abel brought." Unto Abel and his offering did the LORD have respect.

So, when He says here, "if thou doest not well," I'll tell you what, people regardless of what the Scriptures say, still maintain their position of rebellion. It's like telling people it's not by your will that God's going to hear you but they continue to think it is, they continue to persist in that way of supposed free will, which it's not, it's depraved, and this proves that there is no free will because the LORD is putting this right before Cain, is putting it right in front of his eyes and he doesn't see it. You know how it is when you go looking for something and you can't find it and then someone else comes along and says, "Well, it's right there, right under your nose." What do they say? If it had been a snake, it would have bitten you. You didn't see it. It was there but you didn't see it. I'll tell you, you and I do not want God leaving us to our own supposed free will because here's the LORD laying it in front of him. If all God did was just put this out there and it was up to man to choose, there would be no salvation. We'd all be like Cain.

"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" Do well in the sense of bring that blood sacrifice. Bring of the firstlings of the flock without blemish and without spot is a picture of the LORD Jesus Christ. That "If thou doest not well," I'll tell you, people do not well that continue in that path of will worship or of works, any works of their hands thinking that's going to bring them acceptance before God, or somehow their personal obedience. That's what people preach out of this tax and it shows they're blind because if Cain had just had a different attitude. Nope.

When He says, "if thou doest not well," in other words apart from a blood sacrifice such as Abel has given, what does He say, "sin lieth at the door." In other words, sin has never been removed. From the beginning since the fall, all the way to the cross, sin has never been removed except for in that blood Sacrifice which here represented the death of the LORD Jesus Christ.

So, any that continue to approach or come in any other way and that is the abomination unto the LORD, coming in another way. That's why the Scriptures call that way strange doctrines. It's to pervert the Truth and it's to think that somehow I can skirt around this One Standard that God has given for righteousness. It doesn't matter, sin lieth at the door. It's still there.

It's like we used to tell our kids to go and clean up your room. Well, they would clean it up in such a way that they thought would be hidden, they'd take it and toss it under the bed or they'd open the closet and throw it in there because they think you're only going to walk through, look that the area is clear, appear in the door and say, "Oh, okay, it looks pretty good." But you get in and start doing some deep cleaning, open some doors and

see what's hidden, it's still dirty. It's never been taken away. And with regard to our sin, nothing we do to cover it or to improve it or to hide it, you see, that's what people do in places of worship, they hide what they know to be an abomination before the LORD. They pretend. They put on an outward act. That's what the word "hypocrite" means when the LORD said unto the Pharisees, "You hypocrites," it means to act. It's like an actor coming out, they played the part and then when they played the part, they go back and they become whoever they were. That might work with men, impress men, but not God.

He said, "sin lieth at the door." I'll tell you this, unless Christ has paid your sin debt and mine, unless this matter was settled in His death because the blood of bulls and goats couldn't put away sin, but it's what it represented, in the death of the LORD Jesus Christ, His shed blood, His intercession, which is described there in Proverbs 15:8, the prayer of the Upright, the intercession of the Upright, of the Upright One is God's Delight. That's the only way that any of us can have any hope that we're accepted before a Holy God.

Notice it says in verse 7 too, "And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." In other words, by going and getting that blood sacrifice. Sin would always desire to rule over us. Unto him, if you look at that in the context, unto thee shall be his desire, sin's desire. All that this sinful nature can do is bring us condemnation and make us feel comfortable all the while condemning us. But thou shalt rule over him. How do you rule over the sin? How is it that sin is answered before a Holy God? It's only in and by and through the blood Sacrifice, the LORD Jesus Christ.

But we know the end of the story with regard to Cain and Abel. He turned that anger even toward Abel, that God should be favored with Abel and not him. It's like people today, they hate this Message of Grace and they hate the objects of Grace. They don't like to be told that the way they worship is vain worship and can only bring death and destruction by God Himself. It's an abomination unto Him.

So that's what we see in Proverbs 15:8, but then when you go on to verse 9, even outside of how sinners worship and come in their own will and their own way, notice in verse 9 it says, "The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD," whatever way it is. So again, apart from the Sacrifice of the LORD Jesus Christ, there is none righteous, no, not one. Every way about the sinner is an abomination unto the LORD. It's not that God looks down and sees some that He likes better than others and these are doing better. When it says, "The way of the wicked," that's anything pertaining to us no matter how we may look on the outward, it is all an abomination unto the LORD.

Now look at the second part of verse 9, "but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness." Isn't that what our LORD Jesus Christ taught there on the mount when He said, "Blessed are those, happy are those that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled"? What Righteousness here in verse 9 is He talking about? Well, the same as in verse 8, the prayer of the Upright is His Delight. There is One in Whom God has His Delight and that's in His Son. There's only One Righteousness in verse 9 which God loves and that is the righteousness of His Son.

So, if we want to know if we're loved of God because it says that He loveth Him that followeth after righteousness," first of all, He loved His Son Who followed after righteousness. You see, it's singular here. He came and earned and established that righteousness and God accepted that and once for all imputed that righteousness to those for whom He worked it out. You see, therein is the Hope. Apart from Him, apart from that Way of Righteousness, which IS the LORD Jesus Christ, there is no sinner that can be considered by God as anything but an abomination, a stench in His nostrils. Someone said one time you get it wrong on the fall, you're wrong on it all. This is the problem; people don't see themselves as they are but for a Holy God. People say, "Well, what kind of God could send sinners to hell?" A Righteous God, that unless that righteousness has been answered, there's no hope even for what they call the best of men. There is no best.

So, the way of the wicked, everything about us is nothing but sin, detestable unto Him. That's what Paul wrote about there in Romans 3, read that entire chapter, and he spoke it even to the Jews that had all those years the Oracles of God. He reminds them, "That's not what gives you acceptance before God." Someone might say, "Well, I'm sure thankful I was raised in a Christian home." Really? You think that that's going to give you acceptance before a Holy God? I'll tell you, there's only One Acceptance as we're seeing here.

Again, Solomon is writing this having seen the depravity of his own heart and to acknowledge that had it not been for God's Grace, had it not been for God seeing him in that One Upright One, which is God's Delight, he's not talking about himself, or that One Righteousness which is God's Life, that is His Son, the LORD Jesus Christ, he would have been just like anybody else. So even in verse 10 he's expressing thankfulness for the LORD's correction because our heart is prone to wander. Prone to wander, LORD I feel it. Prone to leave the One I love.

But thank God for His corrections, for the wicked, that is those left to themselves it says in verse 10, "Correction is grievous unto him," notice, "that forsaketh the way." It's not talking about people that stumble and fall every once in a while that have forsaken the Way. These are the Cains, who, left to themselves, will never repent, never seek Christ. They think themselves better. But it says, "he that hateth reproof shall die."

And Who's is it to give Grace or condemnation? It says in verse 11, "Hell and destruction are before the LORD." I know people, again, like Cain, find fault with God. They say, "Well, why didn't the LORD give Cain the Grace to turn?" Well, He purposed not to. He purposed to give an example in Abel how He saved sinners and He gave an example in Cain how He condemned sinners. Blessed be the name of the LORD. "Hell and destruction," notice, "are before the LORD." He has the key of Heaven and hell and if any of us are saved, it's by God's Grace. If any are condemned in utter destruction, it's because God is just in giving men over to their own reprobate minds. Such is the God we worship.

But we're going to stop there for now. There's a lot more we could look at but we'll come back to this, LORD willing, next time.