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Lord's Day Morning
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'Things God Hates' Series
#6

"Feet that Run Rapidly to Evil" Psalm 121

Introduction

August 29, 2005. The storm surge had passed through New Orleans, Louisiana. Slowly people began to emerge from their hiding places to find the streets flooded and by and large abandoned. It's hard to say how it started, but the idea quickly sped. With all of the stores abandon and with the city in a state of chaos, why not help yourself to the products on the shelves of the defenseless stores. And so it was that hundreds of people began to fill trash cans and garbage bags with food, clothing, medicine – and before long jewelry, TVs, and more. It was a little bit like a spreading disease. The more people did it, and the more restraints were removed, the more people ran rapidly to evil.

They say that circumstances don't make a man, but rather reveal a man. On that day the world got a glimpse of what is in the heart of men who are not restrained by anything but their own nature.

Today we are going to consider what it means to have feet that run rapidly to evil. And we will see that we too can have feet that are prone to wander onto the paths of wickedness. But God calls us to set our feet on the pathway of life. And we are to run for the prize of heaven. Psalm 121 shows us that only God can keep our feet from slipping.

[Psalm 121]

There is an interesting pattern that has emerged from our study of Proverbs 6:16-19. Listen again to our theme passage:

There are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers.

Eyes, tongues, hands, hearts and feet. The first five things God hates all use the metaphor of a body part to communicate the message. God knows that we understand something about how our bodies work. He is giving us a picture that we immediately can identify with. We know firsthand what our eyes and tongues and feet are capable of – both good and evil. As I was thinking about these physical connection to these spiritual truths, my mind went to Romans 6:12-13 where God says *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting **the members of your body** to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and **your members** as instruments of righteousness to God.*

Today we are going to talk about our feet. Not the most glamorous part of our body for sure - but Biblically speaking a very prominent instrument. There is such a wide range of spiritual ideas connected to the feet and they're not all applicable in our discussion today. Feet can teach us something as grand as the Lordship, supremacy, and victory of Christ (God has put all things under His feet), to the lowliest idea of humility as when Christ washed the dirty, grungy feet of His disciples to demonstrate His humility and commitment to serve us. Or God telling

Moses to take the sandals off his feet because he was standing on holy ground.

But for our purposes in this study today, we are going to see that in our context feet represent two primary things. They represent where you standing and they represent where you are going.

1. Where you stand.

Throughout the Bible, God looks at our feet to see our orientation to life. And he warns us about where we plant ourselves. So we sang in Psalm 1 this morning that we are blessed if we don't stand in the path of sinners. Psalm 25 talks about those whose feet are caught in net and Psalm 40 reminds us that God plucked our feet out of the miry clay. So our feet can tell us something about our condition in life.

But we also find that our feet can be in the right place. Psalm 24 talks about those who ascend the hill of the Lord and stand in His holy place. And in Psalm 122 the people of God are filled with joy because their feet are standing in Jerusalem within the gates of the Lord.

Where your feet stand is important then because it gives an indication of your orientation to life. What are your convictions and belief and commitments? If I asked you, *where are you standing right now in life; where are you planted*, what would you say? We admire Martin Luther's famous speech when he defended his reformation teachings at the Diet of Worms because his words so clearly revealed his commitments. "*Unless I am convinced by proofs from Scriptures or by plain and clear reasons and arguments, I can and will not retract, for it is neither safe nor wise to do anything against conscience. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen.*"

If we are going to understand what it means to not have feet that run rapidly to evil, we need to understand that everyone who runs has a starting point. Where are you standing right now? What are your commitments to God? That's the first fundamental question.

2. Where are you going?

In Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus said *Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

There are just two paths in life. There is the path of life and the path of death. And they lead places. And you are walking on one of them.

The path of life is where we walk with God. David said that on the path of life we find fullness of joy in His presence. How do you know if you are really on the path of life? There are clear characteristic and road markers on this path.

- Righteousness – time and again the Bible uses the phrase *paths of righteousness* or *walking in righteousness*. You will recognize the path of life, because you will be living in a way that pleases God. Your life will be filled with the peaceful fruit of righteousness.
- Good works – Eph. 2:10 tells us that we are the workmanship of God created in Christ for good works so that we might walk in them. Look at the product of your labor. Is there eternal fruit? Is there good fruit. Are you doing good for God and for others?
- Wisdom. – Eph. 5:15 – *Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise . . .* Where do you get your wisdom? From your friends or from the Word? Do your actions

and words and decisions hold up to the scrutiny of the Bible?

- Faith – *Walk by faith and not by sight.* Do you make decisions based on the character and promises of God? Or do you live a life of pragmatism – whatever works?
- Spirit – *Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.* There is a power on the path of life.
- Light – I John 1 says that we either walk in the darkness and live in our sins or we walk in the light and find forgiveness for our sins. On this path you will find humility and confession and repentance.
- Godly companions – Phil 3:17 says *Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.* You will find role models, you'll find examples, you'll find discipling, you'll find mentoring

Where are you going? Do you see these road signs in your life and along the way you are traveling? The path you are walking will determine the outcome of your faith.

Just as there are road signs along the path of life, so too are their markers for those on the path of destruction.

- Deeds of the flesh – It's not hard to hold your life up to the Word of God. Galatians 5 tells you exactly what the deeds of the flesh look like. You can take a quick look around your life right now and see if your feet are running to any of these things. For Paul says clearly *the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of*

which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

- Negative influence of others – Paul points out in Ephesians 2 that some of you are walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. The path of destruction is not a lonely path. On the path of destruction there is herd mentality. You've probably seen some documentary along the way that shows herds of lemming following one another blindly off a cliff where they plunge to their death. And while there is some question as to the psychological behavior of that wild beast, it does give an impressive image of what many people do in life. They will follow the lead of the group, even if the behavior is sinful and destructive and will lead them into grave spiritual danger. Feet that run rapidly to evil are often feet that are enticed by the promise of others that there is great joy or benefit in indulging in sin.
- Adulterating the Word of God – Look around. This is a warning to professing Christian. *Why do you call Me Lord, Lord and do not do what I say?* II Corinthians 4:2 tells us to *renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God,* Too often as Christians we find ways around the Word of God – we take it out of context, we misquote it, we place exceptions upon it – thus adulterating it – so that we can

feel good about doing something that God says is clearly wrong.

These are all ways that we as believers in Christ can be guilty of having feet that run rapidly to evil

So, what can we do? How can we survive? How can we control our feet?

1. Keep your feet planted in Jesus Christ. Or as Colossians 2:6 says *As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.* Here's the promise. As you abide in Christ, He will keep you. This is the great message of Psalm 121. When all is said and done, your security is not in your own ability to walk the right path. You are to look to Christ because He is your help. *He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber . . . The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun will not smite you by day, Nor the moon by night. The Lord will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul. The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in From this time forth and forever.* Psalm 23 affirms that message – as our good shepherd, Jesus leads us beside the quiet waters and guides us onto the paths of righteousness. If you want to walk and then run without becoming weary on the right path, you must be planted in Him, you must abide in Christ. He is the One who gave you life. It is through the power of His cross that you walk at all.

2. *Train you feet*

- a. Restrain your feet from evil

Psalm 119:101 says *I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word.*

Galatians 5:1 - *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*

Galatians 5:24-25 - *Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.*

You can train your feet by restraining from evil and committing yourself to the Word. Train your feet by disciplining yourself. (I Cor. 9:24-27)

b. Doing surgery on your feet.

Jesus said, *If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell,*

You may come to realize today that you are walking on the path of destruction. If you honestly look at the landscape of your life you may see the deeds of the flesh, you may realize that you have come under the ungodly influence of others that are on the wrong path; you may even be using some excuse or twisted interpretation of the Bible to justify your sin. If that is so, you need surgery on your feet. You need to repent of your sin and run as fast as you can back to Jesus before it is too late. (Heb 12)

c. Covering your feet.

With what? Ephesians 6:15 tells you to *shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.* Romans 10:15 says that people won't believe in Jesus unless somebody tells them the good news. And then it says *How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things.*

You can keep from running to evil if you are filling your time running to Jesus. Take a look around you today. What do you see? What is on the road where you are walking and running? I pray that you see Christ. I leave you with this promise from Isaiah 40. The Lord *gives strength to the weary,*

*And to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, **They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.***