

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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How Did I Get Here?
Proverbs 7

All right, well hey, my name's Scott Kedersha, I get to serve on staff here at Harris Creek with our marriage and family team. I am grateful to get to be here with you today.

Question for you as we start. I want you to play along with me whether you are at home or in this room. I want you to raise your hand really high if you have been to Branson, Missouri.

Wow, these guys really like it. So, I have been six times in my life; that is not a not a flex or a humble brag or anything there. That is just a fact. Six times. Four times with my family were great, like amazing memories, loved it, highlight book. One of the times was the worst family vacation we have ever had in our lives, and so there is that. I put it at best it was terrible.

And then the sixth one I am about to tell you about. If you have not been there, just to get your head around Branson what it is like, I think it is helpful to understand a little bit about this unique town. So, I want you to picture your favorite place in Waco. If you are at home, your favorite place in your hometown, where do you love to go, what is your favorite place, best memories? Alright, now I want you to think of the exact opposite of that place, and that is what Branson is like, and so it is like the worst parts of Vegas meet the worst parts of Nashville. It is the Vegas of the Midwest.

Not my favorite place on the planet. Four times, we loved it. One time terrible, and then rock bottom was the six time. That is what I am going to tell you about today, and so it was about two years ago, it was April of 2019. My marriage was in a good spot. We are celebrating 20 years this year; that has always been a plus. Four kids. Our relationship with our kids was good. Community was good. Two areas of my life that were not so great: one was at work and just some conflict with my boss, and my boss's boss (that was not here, that was in the old church I worked at in Dallas). And we have worked through all that now, but this is a really hard season. Very stressful, overworked, saying yes to everything, more and more dumped on my plate, and I was not in a good spot in April of 2019.

The bigger issue was not work, it was it was my health or a lack of health. I was about 30 pounds more than I am right now. I was in the worst shape I have ever been in my life. Blood pressure was high. Cholesterol was high. Stress levels were high. I hated the way I looked. I hated the way I felt. It was a miserable, miserable season.

And I am in Branson all by myself. The family is back at home. Kids are at home. Typically, I like to do these conferences with my wife, but she could not come. So, I am in Branson, staying in a really weird hotel, on the Branson strip all by myself with a bunch of people I do not know. Out of shape, conflict at work, at a low point in my life, and I just had a doctor's appointment

like two days before the conference started. And so, at the conference, when I am there in Branson, I look at my email, and I have got two emails. One is from my doctor; one is from Walgreen's pharmacy. The one for my doctor informed me that I have just been given a new diagnosis, I was diagnosed with type two diabetes. Now there are a few types of diabetes. Type one is the one that the kids often get. It is a juvenile or youth. It comes on at a young age. Not their fault, but diabetes type two is not always people's fault. There is genetics at play. Other factors for me, it almost exclusively came from my sin. From bad decisions about eating and stress and health, so I get this diagnosis, the one from my pharmacy is telling me that I am on a new medication, and I just lost it. I am sitting in this hotel room all by myself, far apart from my family, new diagnosis, just rock bottom for me in so many ways.

And I will not tell you everything that ran through my head, but a few thoughts that I just started to believe is that I am the biggest loser to walk the face of this planet, I am a failure, I cannot lead myself well, I cannot do what I am supposed to do. I hated myself, and I just sat there and thought in this bedroom in Branson, Missouri, how did I get here?

Right, I have everything I could ever want: a family I love, a church family, a strong relationship with the Lord, I have got people who care for me, I have got a great doctor, I have got everything I need, but how did I get here? Like what did I do that led to this place where I am literally moving at lightspeed towards death.

Now I do not know your story; you probably do not have the same story as me of being married with kids and a Diabetes diagnosis. I do not know what yours is, but I think we all can relate to this idea of how did I get here? Like what did I do in my life to end up at this place where I am struggling, where I am broken, where I feel alone, where I feel like I have hit rock bottom, and so it might not be the same for you, but for you, it might be something like you are so in debt you do not know what to do. You cannot stop buying, and you think the next purchase is going to make you happy. It might be another pair of shoes, another dress, another shirt. I need more and more to fill me up, and it never does.

It might be that you are in school, and you keep failing classes. And you are like, how did I get to this place where I am failing? Could be that you keep drinking over and over and over and if you are tired of waking up in the morning hung over sitting in vomit saying, how did I get here?

You could be looking at your computer saying, how did I get to this website, how did I get into the bed of somebody who is not my spouse, either before you get married crossing boundaries, or you are married, and you are with somebody who you are not married to.

It could be that you are so busy because you say yes to everything. You do not want to let anyone down and see you are a people pleaser and keep saying yes and your life has spiraled out of control.

So, how did we get here, how did I get there, how did you get there, and if you are not there now you have been, you will be at some point, you will know somebody who is.

So, the question is, how do we get to this place where we are so broken where our sin and our struggles move us closer and closer towards literal and figurative death?

So, this morning we are going to look at a passage in the Bible that largely explains how we end up in a place we do not want to go. It is a great text. I literally spent four months every day from January to April of 2019 in this one chapter in the Bible. Memorized it. Learned it like the back of my hand, and I am so excited and grateful that God preserved, chose to preserve this text, that we get to learn from 3,000 years ago with this chapter was penned.

And here we are in Waco, Texas or streaming online and we get to learn from some of the greatest wisdom ever put together in God's word. And so, if you have got your Bibles, open up to Proverbs chapter seven. Open it up on your phone. It is the Old Testament. Just past the Psalms, just past the midway point in your Bible. We are going to look at a whole chapter in the Bible this morning.

It is written by this guy named Solomon who maybe you have heard of. King David is a man after God's own heart. He has a child with Bathsheba, one of those children is King Solomon. He is, by all accounts, the richest human being to ever walk the face of the planet, also, by all accounts, the wisest person to ever walk the earth, apart from Jesus, right, of course, and so Solomon did not write all of the Proverbs, but he wrote a big chunk of them. He definitely wrote this passage, as far as we know, and so this chapter gives us a really good picture, what we see happen throughout the book of Proverbs. Often in the Proverbs you see two individuals who are played out.

One of them is the wise person, the other one is the fool. And wisdom is often personified as the wise, or foolishness is personified as the fool. And then this chapter, we get to see both. We get to see the wise way and the foolish way. And it is like a map, it is like a GPS, it tells us which way to go when we get off course. It pulls us back on course, and so in this chapter we are going to see the wise way and the foolish way. And I we do not know the full set of circumstances of how this is written. It could be King Solomon talking to his own son. It could be Solomon knowing that this is inspired by the Lord, that people are going to read it, thousands of years later. It could be him describing the story of David and Bathsheba, his mom and dad. We do not know, but we do get to learn from the incredibly wise words in this chapter, and so let us start right at verse one.

Solomon says: **My son, keep my words
and store up my commands within you.**

**² Keep my commands and you will live;
guard my teachings as the apple of your eye.**

**³ Bind them on your fingers;
write them on the tablet of your heart.**

**⁴ Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"
and to insight, "You are my relative."**

**⁵ They will keep you from the adulterous woman,
from the wayward woman with her seductive words.**

Four times in the first two verses we see, “keep my words, keep my commands, keep my commands, guard my teachings”. When God's word repeats something four times in two verses, I pay attention. And I would instruct the same for you. He says guard my teachings like you would the apple of your eye, so we may have heard that phrase before you are like the apple of my eye, which really means your very precious to me.

And so, the idea of the apple, it is talking about our pupil, that we protect our pupil. We guard it because our eyesight is precious, and Solomon says, I want you to take keep and guard wisdom like you are protecting your own eyesight, which is very valuable to us.

Yeah, I have four sons, who are 17, 17, 14, and 12. That's a lot of years of boys, a lot of testosterone, a lot of loud wrestling, and fun in our home. The worst part of parenting these four boys happened over the last couple of years when two of them had to learn how to drive.

And so, I do not know why, I do not live-in fear, I am not like one of these people who is afraid of storms or afraid of getting on an airplane. I was terrified of teaching my kids to drive. And so, like any weak husband does, I delegated. I asked my wife to do it, and so she did most of it, which is terrible leadership and not bravery on my part, but I just could not do it. And so, I just was so afraid of them not getting it. My wife's smarter than me, a much better teacher than me anyway, so she did that, but when it rains down, I really become teacher.

Am I telling them the same thing over again: keep my word, store my commands, guard it like the apple of your eye, when it rains drive slowly, pump your brakes, do not slam them, go slower on the turns, watch out for others, make sure your windshield wipers are working in the front and in the back? And you do everything you can to be careful. I am like Solomon telling them pay attention to what I say, I am begging them because I really do believe this is the difference between life and death, so point number one.

1. We Want to Walk in the Way.

Solomon is telling us to guard that teaching, to keep the commands. I am telling my kids to choose this to move towards life, walk in the way, follow the wise one, follow the Lord. Early Christians back when the church started in Acts 2, Christians were known as people of the way, and we want thousands of years later to be people who walk in the way. The reason that came to be is Jesus said in John 14 “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” So, we are to be people of the way, to walk in the way. To bind in on our fingers. To hold it so tightly that it does not slip through. We write it on the tablets of our hearts.

A friend of mine literally wrote a Hebrew word, he did not do it but had someone tattoo a Hebrew word on the inside of his right wrist. He wanted to remember a story from the Bible, the Old Testament. He wrote it on the tablet of his wrist. This is not a prescription to go get a tattoo. I am just telling you do what you need to do to remember God's word.

One of my fears, is that we would be a group of people who hear amazing teaching every week from up here. JP and Nate, and the rest of our team, you get great teaching. We consistently point you to the Bible reading plan. We tell you that, to learn and study in your life group. We

encourage you to listen to good messages, to read good books, to listen to podcasts. We are consistently pushing you to walk in the way because we care. But sometimes I am afraid, all we do is become smarter sinners; that we just keep learning and learning, and we let it run through our fingers, we do nothing about.

And so, it is my challenge that we would be people who keep those words guarded, who apply it to our lives, who would treat it like Solomon says you treat it like you would your sister, a close relative. You protect it. She is precious, and so you hold tightly to it, you walk in the way.

And so, what do you do to remember what you learn? Do you talk about it? Discuss it in the car on the way home? Do you talk about it with life group? Let us just not be people who are smart sinners. Let us make changes to our lives and apply what we get to learn.

Solomon continues in verse six. He says,

**⁶At the window of my house
I looked down through the lattice.
⁷I saw among the simple,
I noticed among the young men,
a youth who had no sense.
⁸He was going down the street near her corner,
walking along in the direction of her house
⁹at twilight, as the day was fading,
as the dark of night set in.
¹⁰Then out came a woman to meet him,
dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.**

Point number two is,

2. Do Not Be Led Astray.

So let me describe the scene to you and then we will come back to the text. So, King Solomon is at his house. He is looking down through the window. He sees a group of boys hanging out together they are playing basketball, doing Tik Toks; whatever kids do together. And he is watching them hang out with each other, and then one of them decides he is going to go walk down the street. Now all these guys know who lives down the street. They have seen this woman, and she is smoking hot. She does not wear much in terms of clothing, and they watch; they know what happens at her house. They see guys come in, and guys go out, and guys come in, and guys go out. And this fool, it describes him, he is simple, he has got no sense, he has got no wisdom, no discernment. And he walks down the street. He decides that he wants some of that action that everyone else's getting. And his friends just sit there and watch him.

My guess is they are not like sitting together saying, “Hey, who gets to go share the Gospel with that woman?” I wonder if she has a faith. If she died tonight, on a scale of 1 to 10, would she go

to heaven. There is like no rock, paper, scissor who gets the privilege of sharing the Gospel with this woman.

No instead our friend, this fool, has been led astray. He is not following the way. He is not walking in the way. He is following his own direction, his own desires, and this woman comes out to meet him, and she is dressed to kill.

**11 (She is unruly and defiant,
her feet never stay at home;
12 now in the street, now in the squares,
at every corner she lurks.)**

And this idea of lurking it is like our enemy, the devil who prowls around like a roaring lion seeking to devour us. That is what it means when it says that she lurks. She is ready. She also is out there, and she sees these kids. She is hoping somebody come to her way. And so sure enough, the boy comes her way.

**13 She took hold of him and kissed him
and with a brazen face she said:
14 "Today I fulfilled my vows,
and I have food from my fellowship offering at home.
15 So I came out to meet you;
I looked for you and have found you!**

It is Sunday, May 30th. I went to church today. I took my vows. I went to a potluck afterwards. I brought the food home, and now I am ready to do whatever I want to do.

**16 I have covered my bed
with colored linens from Egypt.**

I do not know exactly what that means, but that sounds really fancy, right? That is like 800 thread sheets. It is the best sheets in the world. They are on my bed.

**17 I have perfumed my bed
with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.**

And so, appealing to all of the senses.

**18 Come, let us drink deeply of love till morning;
let us enjoy ourselves with love!**

We all know, that is not love.

**19 My husband is not at home;
he has gone on a long journey.**

**20 He took his purse filled with money
and will not be home till full moon.”**

I do not know why he carries a purse, but he does. It is filled with money. He is not going to be home for a long time. Nobody will know what is going on it is just me, and in the Hebrew text it does not even call it her husband, it says the man. She says that guy is gone, and he is not going to be home for a long time.

**21 With persuasive words she led him astray;
she seduced him with her smooth talk.**

The magnolia candle is out, the oysters, the chocolate covered strawberries. Nobody is there. She is death personified, and he is following her. He has been led astray.

And I do not know if that is your struggle or not, wanting to be the fool like this guy, but I think we all know what it is like to be pulled in the wrong direction.

For me it is a donut, or it is a cookie. Crumbl Cookies just opened in town; I highly recommend it, so good! And there is nothing wrong with eating a cookie. You can eat a cookie to the glory of God. But it is when you keep eating it, and you think it is going to give you something that it is never going to deliver. Right? It might be that you think if I looked skinny enough that some guy is going to like me. If I buy enough, I am happy. If I just have that substance, it is going to fill me up. Sin leads us astray every time if we are not careful. And this guy bought it, hook, line, and sinker. He followed her, and she pulls him in.

Louie Giglio says “Sin promises something good. Sin offers a solution. Sin guarantees relief. If you are down, sin brings you up. If you are stuck, sin shows the way out. If you are miserable, sin promises comfort. If you are outraged, sin offers the perfect justice. If you are lonely, sin becomes your best friend.”

The reality is that all of those promises are meaningless. Sin always overpromises and underdelivers. It seems fun for a little while, but in the end, it leads to death. In Proverbs 14, the writer says “There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end, it leads to death. Even in laughter the heart may ache, and rejoicing may end in grief.”

Sin promises you that you are going to laugh, that you are going to rejoice, but in the end, it leads you to ache and brokenness and grief every single time.

The only difference, right now, between me and you are that I have got a microphone on my face, and I am standing three feet above you. I am in no way any different from you when it comes to temptation. January of this year, so just four months ago, five months ago, my family was hit by Covid. So many of us know what it is like when your family get struck with it. And one of my boys, had it in November. I did not get it then. Nobody else did. My wife got it in January. My other three sons got it in January. Somehow Iron Man here avoided it and so. So, I am home with my family; the four upstairs, the fifth one that had it in November is free to roam around the cabin. He was free to do whatever he wanted. He was out with friends, at school,

living his best life. The other four are stuck upstairs to varying degrees of illness and sickness. I am downstairs, cannot go to work, cannot see my friends, serving my family, which you know I generally, I love to do, but it was just miserable and empty. Not getting to be a part of the work here at Harris Creek, having to work in front of a computer. Not being with people. I am a people person. I love people. I like, thrive on relationships, and I cannot see my wife, I cannot see anyone else, so no excuse whatsoever, but I bought the lie.

One of the nights I pulled my phone out, and I thought, “I need some company”. And so, I did a search on a browser for something I should not have looked at, and I bought the lie, I was led astray. And in the process, you know, break relationship with my wife, with my kids, with the team here, because I thought that this was going to bring me life. I was seduced down the road, and I gave it to the temptation. I was led astray and did not walk in the way. And I hated it, and it left me empty and miserable.

But God used it, and I am restored fully to my wife, to my kids, to my community, to my team, but I was led astray. Sin will lead us astray, and it always over promises and under delivers every single time.

That woman is the problem as well, some of you are like her. You are seducing. You are calling others in. I have met with married guys before who say, “I’m married, but I like to flirt with people who aren’t my spouse.” Just stop it, please. It is hard enough for all of us, but when you play that role, and you think it is going to give you something that is going to make you happy, do not buy the lie. You are giving in, and you are feeding into the problems of others, so quit.

And then for every single one of us, we probably all have got something that we are just not being completely open with. So, I want to challenge you, tell your life group, tell your spouse, tell your family, tell your roommate. Do not fight the battle on your own. We are also led astray when we think I could fight this battle, without the help of others. God created us with this beautiful need for other people, and so walking away, do not be led astray, invite others in.

Solomon continues in verse 22:

**22 All at once he followed her
like an ox going to the slaughter,
like a deer stepping into a noose
23 till an arrow pierces his liver,
like a bird darting into a snare,
little knowing it will cost him his life.**

So, the ox the deer the bird all leads to death. Number three is:

3. We Need to Know What is at Stake.

Know what is at stake. Think at times we belittle our sin. We treat it like it is a small little problem. It is just a hashtag. I just got drunk one time. I only got high once. It is no big deal. Just gossiped a couple times. I just cheated on my taxes. It is so much worse for others. I only looked

at porn a couple times. At least I am not sleeping with somebody else. We minimize our sin. And sin leads to death, we have got to fight it. So, I play a little game sometimes. It is not a fun game, but it is called know the consequences, rehearse the consequences, play out the consequences, because I want to know what is at stake.

So, let us go back, just because I like to eat, I am going to talk about food again. I think about food all the time, what is for dinner, what is for lunch, Memorial Day weekend. That is a longer weekend, so what can I have today, what can I have tonight, what am I going to have in the morning. Like this is the battle that I face. And were given this need to eat, like we need to eat to live. It is not a problem to eat, and I can eat to the glory of God. I could have a cookie or donut, and I could eat some barbecue today, and I could eat a burger, but it is not, it is not a big deal. The problem is when I play out the consequences that I keep giving into that temptation. When I have one donut today, and then tomorrow, I have another donut. And then Wednesday, I have another donut, but this time it is not just a donut, it is an apple fritter. And they are bigger and better. And so, then it becomes a couple days after that, an apple fritter, and a donut. Actually, let us just play it out, right?

I keep giving in because I think it is going to make me happy, and this is morbid, but okay my diabetes gets worse, my sugar levels go up, my blood pressure goes up, my cholesterol goes up. I die and leave behind my wife and kids. Okay, I do not want to play that game.

Another might be anger. So, you might leave here on a Sunday, and you driving on 84 and somebody cuts you off. And you are not happy about it. So, you give them a salute, but you have got a Harris Creek sticker on the back of your car. And so, you get angry with the driver, and then it happens again and again. You have got to drive 35 every day, and you get angry, and you get angry, and you get angry, and you bring that anger home sometimes. Play it out, what is at stake? Now I am not just letting my anger go in my car and yelling at another driver. Now it comes home with me, and I snap at my kids. Maybe I yell at my wife. Maybe things keep escalating, this is not my story by the way, but maybe it does. And it keeps escalating. And then you throw something, and then violence in the home. And then your home is broken. Play it out. It is not some cute little problem; it leads to death.

And God thankfully preserves this text for us so that we know we are like an ox being led to slaughter; we are going to get shot, we are going to walk right into a snare. Our sin leads to death. Know the consequences.

Walk in the way. Do not be led astray. Know what is at stake. The last four verses, Solomon summarizes this passage so well for us.

24 Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say. Number one, walk in the way. Listen to me, pay attention. Walk this way. Follow wisdom.

Verse 25 **Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths.** Do not be led astray.

²⁶ Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. ²⁷ Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death. Know what is at stake.

Couple of practical suggestions. Are you got to know how you are tempted? I have shared very openly about all my problems with you this morning. You know how I struggle. I am very aware; sometimes all too aware. But I know what they are, and so I know what to do and what not to do. I know where I need to avoid. It is not good, but real practically, it is not good for me to go grocery shopping. That is not an excuse to get out of shopping. That is because I can go through a store, and I am tempted by everything there, so I have got to be careful.

I choose carefully where I eat, where I do not eat. If you struggle with lust, you are careful about what you watch on TV, what movies you go to, what TV shows you like. If you struggle with shopping and materialism, you want to be careful not to have a bunch of credit cards with no limit. Know how you are tempted. Martin Luther has famously said, I love this quote, “We can’t stop the birds from flying over our heads, but we can prevent them from nesting in our hair”, or nesting in our bald spot, however that works.

Again, we cannot stop temptation. Temptation is not going away on this planet, but we need to be aware, and take the steps that we need to take so that we are not so easily led astray. You want to invite others in, letting your community know, you want to be open about where you struggle. Like I said, do not fight it by yourself.

You want to be smart. We have boundaries in our marriage that have served us really well. We know each other's passwords. We know how to get anything on each other's phones. I do not drive alone with a woman who is not my wife unless it is my mom. Yeah, I am really careful. So be smart. Figure out what you need to do to be smart. And then, more than anything, I want to encourage you to be like Jesus Christ. I have learned in my 48 years of life, when I become more like Jesus, that stuff just tends to fade away. It does not go away. It's always going to be there, but when I know that walking with Jesus is the way, it is the greatest thing that no donut, no porn, no other relationship, no purchase, no praise of man will ever take the place of intimacy with Jesus, and so, if you just hear one thing this morning, it's become more like Jesus Christ so that you can walk in the way, so that you are not led astray.

A friend of mine who I love dearly was led astray. Is married. Leading a ministry. Was on a mission trip, and he is leading a bunch of single adults on this trip. And so, my friend, is on the roof of the dorm, and he looks down and sees a really attractive single girl on this trip. And he sees her and thinks she is cute; I want to get to know her. He was led astray. There was not anything that she did. He was led astray thinking that was going to bring him life. And so, he engages with her. Builds a relationship. They start a friendship. They come back to the States after the trip is done. He writes her a note. Puts a little gift card in it. Gives it to her. He did not do that for other people. He did that for her. Then he takes her out to lunch, one on one. Remind you, that he is married; she is not. Then they start hanging out together a little bit more. They go to a ministry event. They both leave early, conveniently. Go walk around the park. They hold hands. They kiss. She invites him over. The rest is history. Leaves his wife. Leaves his kids. A wake of broken relationships behind him. He knew the way.

Here is what scares me about my friend, is that he read the Bible every single day. He went to church. He did his vows. He brought home food from the fellowship offering. He did everything he was supposed to do. He even taught on stages like this. But he was led astray. Tried to fight the battle on his own. He chose to follow death and is moving towards death.

God gives us way out. Sin never delivers on what it promises.

And I am so grateful that God has preserved this text with us, so that we do not have to follow the way that my friend went. We can walk in the way. We do not have to be led astray. We know what is at stake. This is life and death, and in his kindness, the God of the universe who loves you, has given you his word to follow. He is given followers of Jesus Christ his spirit who guides us and leads us. He gives us the gift of community, who is not like that group of boys who watched their friend go astray. They are like the group of friends that says come back, life's here, not there. God loves you. And I pray that we would be people who walk in the way.

Let me pray that we would.

God, thank you for your word. Thank you, that you chose and saw fit to preserve a text written by a king thousands of years ago, that you chose to preserve that so that we could learn from it today on May 30, 2021. That we get to learn from this text, that you so badly, out of your love for us, desire for us to walk in the way, that you desire that we would not be led astray by the temptations of the world by sin. And you let us know in your kindness, that it is not just a small thing, it is a big deal. That this is life and death, God, so I pray that you would help us through your word, through you spirit, through your people, to trust you, to walk in the way.

Thank you for the truth that there was an incredibly high, priceless payment for our sin. Thank you for your son Jesus. Thank you that you paid the price, so that we can walk in the way. Thank you for the ways that you deeply love us through Christ. In your name, we pray. Amen

Harris Creek Baptist Church
Jonathan Pokluda
Series: Philippians
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