**Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.**

 The year 2020 is almost upon us. It’s hard to believe that 2019 is almost over. Many things have happened in 2019. Children have been born and spouses have passed on. Jobs have been lost and jobs have been gained. Sickness has come and sickness has gone. Some have been diagnosed and it came to nothing. Some have been diagnosed and it came to a lot. There have been health scares and family scares. And there have been blessings… so many blessings… some that we don’t even know about, may never know about until we meet our Savior. No matter what came and no matter what went, we trusted in the Lord.

 Proverbs 3 is an awesome chapter in God’s word. Verse 1 says My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands. This morning, we talked about keeping the commandment to love. Jesus commanded us to love God and keep His commandments and to love our neighbor as ourselves. When we love, we abide in Jesus. When we strive, hate, argue, fuss, fight, worry, we’re outside of Jesus. Jesus does not abide where hate lives or envy or strife. Let’s be sensible… if I were to tell you to go to find Jesus, you wouldn’t seek Him among those in a fist fight or in a room full of terrorists or sitting beside a person plotting murder. You’d seek Him where love abounds… where the commandment to love is being kept.

Verse 2 tells the benefit of seeking to live in an atmosphere of love and not of anxiety and hate. 2 For length of days and long life And peace they will add to you. Stress is a killer. Ask any doctor, he or she will tell you that stress kills. Stress drives up blood pressure, aggravates heart issues, brings on depression, and has even been linked to cancer. Stress does not lead to length of days and long life… it certainly doesn’t add peace. Yet, we know that peace is possible in all situations. When we find our Peace in Jesus, we can love even in the midst of turbulent times.

Verse 3 says - 3 Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart. God is saying to us – be sure to always be merciful and truthful. Love even when the person doesn’t deserve it. In Matthew 5, Jesus tells us – turn the other cheek, they take your tunic, give them your cloak, they make you walk a mile, walk two, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute you… He’s saying – never let the actions of another change who you are in Him.

Verse 4 gives us the result of binding mercy and truth around our hearts and writing them on the tablets of our hearts - 4 And so find favor and high esteem In the sight of God and man. God says – put pride aside… cause pride causes us to lose our mercy and lie to puff ourselves up… and you will find that you are highly esteemed in My eyes.

How is this even possible God? How can I do these things? I’m weak. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. It’s so tempting to lean to our own understanding, to follow the recipe that we’ve always followed. Follow My direction – Trust in Me. Even when it doesn’t make much sense, even when it feels like jumping off a cliff, even when the path is obscured and the way is dark – My living Word will be the lamp unto your feet and the light unto your path.

Anyone who watches TV shows about crime is familiar with a chemical called Luminol. It reacts to blood. The investigator sprays it all over the place, but nothing shows until a special light is cut on. Then, the blood lights up like a Christmas tree! Even places that look clean will glow under that ultraviolet light. The path to God only shows up under His special light. We won’t see the path until we shine His light on it. We won’t see where to place our feet until the Living Lamp of God casts His beam upon the Blood of Jesus.

We must trust in the Lord and lean not to our own understanding… even when the answer seems obvious. Over in 2 Samuel 5, we find a story that screams the importance of inquiring of God every morning and in all circumstances. Verses 18-20 The Philistines also went and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. So David inquired of the Lord, saying, “Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?” And the Lord said to David, “Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand.” So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there. Then in verse 22-25 we read Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. Therefore, David inquired of the Lord, and He said, “You shall not go up; circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the Lord will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines.” And David did so, as the Lord commanded him; and he drove back the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.” Had David just done like he’d always done and followed the recipe he knew… had he leaned unto his own understanding… it could have been a disaster. The situation looked the same, but God had a different plan.

As 2020 approaches, will we face angry people? Yes. Will we encounter health issues? Undoubtably. Will we have crisis crop up and see unfair situations? Assuredly. How do we know what to do? We don’t, but Jesus does. Trust in Him this year as you have never trusted before. If He is leading you to start a ministry – start it, don’t wait on the preacher. If He is leading you to make amends with a loved one, do it. Trust in Him and lean not to your understanding. 2020 will be a breakout year when we break out of our old habits of trusting in ourselves and leaning on our own understanding. When we stay in what we’ve always done, we need not be shocked when things turn out the way they always do. This year, commit yourself to use the lamp of God’s Word, following the path of Jesus blood, and see your life shine as a beacon to others as never before. 2020 can be a year like never before, but only when we trust God like never before.