

## Wisdom for Life

### Proverbs 2

Crossroads, May 30, 2010

#### - Summer of Wisdom

- Sunday Nights – *Worship from Psalms, Talk from Proverbs*
- Thursday Nights – June: *Song of Songs*, July-Aug: *Ecclesiastes*

#### READ Proverbs 2

#### - Pray

#### 1) Intro to Proverbs / Books of Wisdom

##### - Books of Wisdom

- Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs
- **Each unique:** suffering, praises, life principles, futility of life, love ...
- Some story, but mostly **poetry**, observation, snippets
  - Thus interpretation will involve understanding poetry
- Very few commands, mostly **images & literary devices**
- Designed to invoke **emotion**
- Very **practical, down to earth**, real struggles & joys of life
- Also very **big picture, grand, sweeping**, generalizations

##### - Inter-related Wisdom

- Instead of balance/ neutral ground, each present **extreme view**, and thus designed by God to be taken together
- **Proverbs** – practical life lessons, but also broad generalizations – good prosper, evil do not
- **Job** – shows one who is good who does not prosper, and counselors that use proverbs against him and against God's clearly stated perspective, ending with encounter with God
- **Ecclesiastes** – living life as wise or fool both meaningless – unless seen in light of eternity, fear of God
- **Psalms** – eternal seen in daily life, hope of God beyond this life – all about seeking and worshipping God
- **Song of Songs** – ideal picture of Love – in life, and with Christ

##### - Proverbs

- **Intro** to Book in Proverbs **1:1-9**
  - **Call to** simple, young, wise and understanding ... all of us
  - **To gain** knowledge, insight, justice, equity, increase learning understand riddles
  - Call of a **father to a son** to hear his teaching, choose the right path for his life
- **Personification of Wisdom and Folly** in **Prov. 1-9** frame entire book (we will look at wisdom and folly on June 27)
- Rest of book mostly **individual bits of wisdom** from Solomon and others – ending in picture of noble woman at the end
- Most outside of chapter 1-9 in **2 or 4 line phrases**
  - Same principle stated positively and negatively
  - Principle with elaboration or example of principle
- **Are Proverbs “promises”?**
  - **Yes and No**
  - Purpose is more **observations of and truisms about life** more that commands or promises
  - In this life they are **generally true**, but **not for every case** – in general the person who gets ill-gotten wealth ends up suffering for it, and the lazy do not eat, and the righteous flourish ... but there are certainly cases of the opposite
  - In the larger, **eternal scale they are true** – none of the gain of the wicked is worth anything in eternity, the righteous do dwell secure for eternity
  - **Purpose to encourage godly life, wise choices**
    - Note on **job** – counselors use proverbs to beat on Job, claiming that if we see suffering that means unrighteous – we can not make such statements
    - While in general lazy people go hungry, not every lazy person is hungry – and we certainly have **no grounds to say the inverse**, that every hungry person must be lazy
    - Goal is for us to be **encouraged to choose the path of wisdom** instead of the path of folly
- **Are Proverbs just Profound or Pious statement / same as proverbs in other religions and cultures?**
  - **NO** – **Chapter 1:7**, and several other places: **“Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”**
  - Knowledge and Wisdom proceed from, are founded in, and lead to God

- **Proverbs 1-9** personify **2 voices calling** – wisdom and folly
  - both seeking to **turn young men** to their path
  - both on “**highest mountain**” – place of the Gods
  - one leading to **life** and the other to **death**
- **Thus Proverbs more than pithy sayings or principles for a happy life or even wise observations – what we do with these voices is a matter of life and death, and is ultimately about who we worship!**

- **Summer Theme Verse**

○ **Proverbs 9:9-10**

<sup>9</sup> *Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still;  
teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.*

<sup>10</sup> *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,  
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

**2) Proverbs 2**

- **Wisdom Takes Work (v.1-4):**

- Wisdom likened to treasure, even **hidden treasure**
  - **TV show** – teams of two on treasure hunt
  - **Movies** – journey to island, battle inland, go through danger ... to find next piece of map ... then sail to place of treasure, more danger, find X, risk life to enter cave ... reward of vast amounts of gold, jewels...
- Receive, treasure up, make ear attentive, incline heart, call out, raise your voice, seek, search ... all **active, ongoing**
- **Apply: Are you willing to work to find wisdom?**

- **Wisdom's Treasure is Knowing God (v.5):**

- Our search is for a treasure worth far more than gold or jewels
- **Proverbs 3:13-18**
  - <sup>13</sup> *Blessed is the man who finds wisdom,  
the man who gains understanding,*
  - <sup>14</sup> *for she is more profitable than silver  
and yields better returns than gold.*
  - <sup>15</sup> *She is more precious than rubies;  
nothing you desire can compare with her.*
  - <sup>16</sup> *Long life is in her right hand;  
in her left hand are riches and honor.*
  - <sup>17</sup> *Her ways are pleasant ways,  
and all her paths are peace.*
  - <sup>18</sup> *She is a tree of life to those who embrace her;  
those who lay hold of her will be blessed.*
- **And that treasure is God – Prov. 2:5**
  - **APPLY:**
  - Do you want to understand **fear of God**
  - Do you want to find **knowledge of God**
  - Then search for this wisdom from God

- **Wisdom's Source is God (v.6):**

- **Who gives out wisdom** – God does (so don't look elsewhere)
- **Where is knowledge and understanding** – Words of God
- **Proverbs 3:19-20**
  - <sup>19</sup> *By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations,  
by understanding he set the heavens in place;*
  - <sup>20</sup> *by his knowledge the deeps were divided,  
and the clouds let drop the dew.*

- **Apply: where do you go to search for wisdom?**

- **Wisdom's Offers Great Rewards (v.7-11):**

- **Victory**, shield, guard course, protect, understand right and just and fair, wisdom will enter heart, knowledge will be pleasant to soul, protect and guard you ...
- But notice who gets these – the upright, those who **walk is blameless**, the faithful ...
- **Wisdom is not static knowledge, it is applied knowledge** – just as you need to seek it out, you also need to act on it!

- **Wisdom Saves (v.12-20):**

- Save you
  - from **wicked men**, perverse ways
  - from **adulteress**
  - note: more on **contrast of good and evil, wisdom and folly on June 27** for 1str Crossroads in the Park
- You will walk in ways of good men, keep to paths of righteous
- **Proverbs 3:21-26**
  - <sup>21</sup> *My son, preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight;*
  - <sup>22</sup> *they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck.*
  - <sup>23</sup> *Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble;*
  - <sup>24</sup> *when you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.*
  - <sup>25</sup> *Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked,*
  - <sup>26</sup> *for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared.*
- **Apply:** What would you do for a good night's sleep, free of all fear or anxiety, protected from evil? That's what wisdom brings.

- **Wisdom has Eternal Consequences (v.21-22):**

- Upright – live and remain in land
- Wicked, unfaithful – cut off, torn from land
- Land = Israel, Zion, Heaven
- **Apply:**
  - Your choice whether or not to seek God's wisdom is actually a life and death decision!
  - **Proverbs 1**
    - Picture of wisdom calling – but the simple loved being simple, and the fools hated knowledge and reproof
    - So when disaster struck, wisdom laughed at them and refused to help
    - Why? – **Proverbs 1:29**  
*Because they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD*

▪ **And chapter 1 concludes very similar to chapter 2, showing the eternal rewards, but with a scary twist:**

• **Proverbs 1:32-33**

*For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm."*

- Instead of just the wicked and unfaithful dying, we now get the **wayward** and **complacent** also being **destroyed**
- **Where are we wayward** (wondering from the path) or **complacent** (not actively seeking God's Wisdom)? Do you realize **you too risk being destroyed** right along with the wicked?
- Yet here too is **encouragement** at the end, **whoever listens will live in safety, at ease, with no fear of harm.**

**3) Summer of Wisdom**

- **Decide now to pro-actively seek wisdom THIS SUMMER:**

- Read a **chapter of Proverbs a day** for June, July, August
- Pick a section of Scripture – maybe a book of wisdom – to **study in depth**
- Commit to **meeting with others** to discuss Scripture – Thursday night here or with others
- Pick a **good book** or two to read for the summer to aid in your walk with God
- Work to take **every thought captive** (and remove places where you typically get fed the world's perspective)
- Observe and learn from **God's creation around you** – maybe even **sing some psalms** in the process!

- **Ask God to grow you in the knowledge and fear of the Lord**

- And to **know Christ, Wisdom incarnate**, the very power and wisdom of God himself
- We can do this through the power of the **Holy Spirit**, who opens our eyes to **understand the word of God** and brings to mind the words and teachings of Christ
- Both the beginning and the goal of growing in wisdom is to better **know, love and fear God alone!**