

Learning Wisdom from Nature

Observing God in What He Has Made

Crossroad – August 8, 2010

Proverbs 6:6 (NIV)

*Go to the ant, you sluggard;
consider its ways and be wise!*

Proverbs 30:24 (NIV)

*"Four things on earth are small,
yet they are extremely wise:*

1) Lessons in God's Creation

• At least 3 Uses of Nature in Wisdom Literature

- See creation, worship the creator
 - Psalms – God of Mountains, Wind, thunder...
 - Job – who has made, controls all this?
- Learn about God or Man by comparison to Nature
 - Psalms - God is roaring lion, rock ...
 - Song of Songs – lover describe from nature
- Live wisely by observing and applying lessons in nature
 - Ecclesiastes – observe people, life, death...
 - Proverbs – observe people and nature

** Over these last weeks of summer we want to work on seeing some of these for ourselves. Tonight, we will look briefly at some examples of the third in Proverbs, and then walk around the park to learn some wisdom on our own. In the next few weeks we will ask what we can learn about God and how that can lead us to worship.

2) Examples in Proverbs

• Proverbs 14:4 (English Standard Version)

*Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean,
but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox*

• Proverbs 6:6-11 (NIV)

*Go to the ant, you sluggard;
consider its ways and be wise!
It has no commander,
no overseer or ruler,
yet it stores its provisions in summer
and gathers its food at harvest.
How long will you lie there, you sluggard?
When will you get up from your sleep?
A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest-
and poverty will come on you like a bandit
and scarcity like an armed man.*

• Proverbs 30:18-33 (NIV)

*18 "There are three things that are too amazing for me, four
that I do not understand:
19 the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a
rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a
man with a maiden.
20 "This is the way of an adulteress: She eats and wipes her
mouth and says, 'I've done nothing wrong.'*

*21 "Under three things the earth trembles, under four it
cannot bear up:
22 a servant who becomes king, a fool who is full of food,
23 an unloved woman who is married, and a maidservant
who displaces her mistress.*

*24 "Four things on earth are small, yet they are extremely
wise:
25 Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up
their food in the summer;
26 coney are creatures of little power, yet they make their
home in the crags;
27 locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks;
28 a lizard can be caught with the hand, yet it is found in
kings' palaces.*

*29 "There are three things that are stately in their stride,
four that move with stately bearing:*

*30 a lion, mighty among beasts, who retreats before
nothing;*

*31 a strutting rooster, a he-goat, and a king with his army
around him.*

*32 "If you have played the fool and exalted yourself, or if you
have planned evil, clap your hand over your mouth!*

*33 For as churning the milk produces butter, and as twisting
the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces
strife."*

- Proverbs 26 (NIV)

*1 Like snow in summer or rain in harvest,
honor is not fitting for a fool.*

*2 Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow,
an undeserved curse does not come to rest.*

*3 A whip for the horse, a halter for the donkey,
and a rod for the backs of fools!*

*4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly,
or you will be like him yourself.*

*5 Answer a fool according to his folly,
or he will be wise in his own eyes.*

*6 Like cutting off one's feet or drinking violence
is the sending of a message by the hand of a fool.*

*7 Like a lame man's legs that hang limp
is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.*

*8 Like tying a stone in a sling
is the giving of honor to a fool.*

*9 Like a thornbush in a drunkard's hand
is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.*

*10 Like an archer who wounds at random
is he who hires a fool or any passer-by.*

*11 As a dog returns to its vomit,
so a fool repeats his folly.*

*12 Do you see a man wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.*

*13 The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road,
a fierce lion roaming the streets!"*

*14 As a door turns on its hinges,
so a sluggard turns on his bed.*

*15 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish;
he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth.*

*16 The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes
than seven men who answer discreetly.*

*17 Like one who seizes a dog by the ears
is a passer-by who meddles in a quarrel not his own.*

*18 Like a madman shooting
firebrands or deadly arrows*

*19 is a man who deceives his neighbor
and says, "I was only joking!"*

*20 Without wood a fire goes out;
without gossip a quarrel dies down.*

*21 As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire,
so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.*

*22 The words of a gossip are like choice morsels;
they go down to a man's inmost parts.*

*23 Like a coating of glaze over earthenware
are fervent lips with an evil heart.*

*24 A malicious man disguises himself with his lips,
but in his heart he harbors deceit.*

*25 Though his speech is charming, do not believe him,
for seven abominations fill his heart.*

*26 His malice may be concealed by deception,
but his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.*

*27 If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it;
if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.*

*28 A lying tongue hates those it hurts,
and a flattering mouth works ruin.*

3) Observing and Applying Lessons of Nature

**** Let's walk around the park and write some of our own Proverbs! ****

- Start with my examples from Zoo (orangutan mom)
- Go to a tree, see what we come up with as a group
- Everyone go on own for 15 min and then share!

Wisdom from the Trees:

- Proverbs 3:18 (NIV)
*She {Wisdom} is a tree of life to those who embrace her;
those who lay hold of her will be blessed.*
- Proverbs 11:28-30 (NIV)
*28 Whoever trusts in his riches will fall,
but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.
29 He who brings trouble on his family will inherit only wind,
and the fool will be servant to the wise.
30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
and he who wins souls is wise.*
- Proverbs 13:12 (NIV)
*12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.*
- Proverbs 15:4 (NIV)
*4 The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life,
but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.*
- Psalms 1 (NIV)
*1 Blessed is the man
who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
or stand in the way of sinners
or sit in the seat of mockers.
2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.
4 Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff that the wind blows away.
5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.*
- Jeremiah 17:5-8 (NIV)
*5 This is what the LORD says:
"Cursed is the one who trusts in man,
who depends on flesh for his strength
and whose heart turns away from the LORD.
6 He will be like a bush in the wastelands;
he will not see prosperity when it comes.
He will dwell in the parched places of the desert,
in a salt land where no one lives.
7 "But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD,
whose confidence is in him.
8 He will be like a tree planted by the water
that sends out its roots by the stream.
It does not fear when heat comes;
its leaves are always green.
It has no worries in a year of drought
and never fails to bear fruit."*
- Luke 6:43-45 (NIV)
*43 "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear
good fruit. 44 Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People
do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars.
45 The good man brings good things out of the good stored
up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the
evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart
his mouth speaks.*
- Luke 13:18-19 (NIV)
*18 Then Jesus asked, "What is the kingdom of God like? What
shall I compare it to? 19 It is like a mustard seed, which a man
took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree,
and the birds of the air perched in its branches."*
- Matt 24:32-33 (NIV)
*32 "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its
twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that
summer is near. 33 Even so, when you see all these things,
you know that it is near, right at the door.*

Wisdom from the Clouds / Rain:

Proverbs 16:15 When a king's face brightens, it means life;
his favor is like a rain cloud in spring

Proverbs 25:14 Like clouds and wind without rain is a man
who boasts of gifts he does not give.

Proverbs 25:23 As a north wind brings rain, so a sly tongue
brings angry looks

Proverbs 26:1 Like snow in summer or rain in harvest, honor
is not fitting for a fool.

Proverbs 27:15 A quarrelsome wife is like a constant
dripping on a rainy day

Proverbs 28:3 A ruler who oppresses the poor is like a driving
rain that leaves no crops

Wisdom from the Grass:

Proverbs 19:12 A king's rage is like the roar of a lion, but his
favor is like dew on the grass

See also Isaiah 40

- **Isaiah 40:6-8** (NIV)

6 A voice says, "Cry out."

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

"All men are like grass,

and all their glory is like the flowers of the field.

7 The grass withers and the flowers fall,

because the breath of the LORD blows on them.

Surely the people are grass.

8 The grass withers and the flowers fall,

but the word of our God stands forever."

Isaiah 40 - excerpts (NIV)

10 See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power,
and his arm rules for him.

See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense accompanies him.

11 He tends his flock like a shepherd:

He gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;
he gently leads those that have young.

15 Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket;

they are regarded as dust on the scales;
he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.

17 Before him all the nations are as nothing;

they are regarded by him as worthless
and less than nothing.

22 He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth,
and its people are like grasshoppers.

He stretches out the heavens like a canopy,
and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

23 He brings princes to naught

and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.

24 No sooner are they planted,

no sooner are they sown,
no sooner do they take root in the ground,
than he blows on them and they wither,
and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

29 He gives strength to the weary

and increases the power of the weak.

30 Even youths grow tired and weary,

and young men stumble and fall;

31 but those who hope in the LORD

will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;

they will run and not grow weary,

they will walk and not be faint.