

Sunday School Lesson June 14, 2020

Good morning, I hope you are well and blessed.

Lesson for June 14, 2020 "The Value of Wisdom" Scripture passage is from Proverbs 2:1-11.

I would enjoy for us to read these Proverbs verses aloud in person as a group and talk about the meaning. The reason that wisdom is based upon the fear of God is that if we have a fear of God, we will strive to obey Him and live a life that is pleasing to Him. Fearing God is not a paralyzing, disabling fear of hell but a fear of disobeying God and falling out of fellowship with Him. When we know we've sinned, we'll desire to come immediately to the throne of grace to ask for forgiveness (1st John 1:9). Our fear of God is not like the unbelievers falsely say it is, rather it's a willingness to walk with Christ in a manner worthy of our calling (Ephesians 4:1).

It is difficult for some people to distinguish price from value. Price is determined by the "seller," and value is determined by the "buyer." The question would be, "How much am I willing to give up in order to get that which is offered?" As we read scripture, we find that the personal determination must be made between what is "necessary" and what is "important." The answer to this situation is decided by the one making the decision.

2 Chronicles 1:7-12 says, "That night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, 'Ask what I should give you.' Solomon said to God, 'You have shown great and steadfast love to my father David, and have made me succeed him as king. O LORD God, let your promise to my father David now be fulfilled, for you have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth. Give me now wisdom and knowledge to go out and come in before this people, for who can rule this great people of yours?' God answered Solomon, 'Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked for possessions, wealth, honor, or the life of those who hate you, and have not even asked for long life, but have asked for wisdom and knowledge for yourself that you may rule my people over whom I have made you king, wisdom and knowledge are granted to you. I will also give you riches, possessions, and honor, such as none of the kings had who were before you, and none after you shall have the like.'

Proverbs 2:1 My son, if you will receive my words
And treasure my commandments within you,

- 2 Make your ear attentive to wisdom,
 Incline your heart to understanding;
- 3 For if you cry for discernment,
 Lift your voice for understanding;
- 4 If you seek her as silver
 And search for her as for hidden treasures;
- 5 Then you will discern the fear of the LORD
 And discover the knowledge of God.

In this passage there is a responsibility put upon man to choose the fear of God and to seek after wisdom. God doesn't force us to do His will or to obey, but we must choose this day, whom we will serve. We must receive God's words and treasure His commandments in our hearts as our delights. We must be listening attentively to Scripture and to discerning wisdom in Christ. Our hearts must be humble enough to be inclined to truth and righteousness rather than biased toward sin and evil. We should want wisdom and the right path in life so badly that we cry out to God for discernment to know right from wrong and truth from error. We should call out to God with deep urgency and desperation for understanding so that we are wise stewards of our time on earth. Those who have Christ in their hearts will find the Spirit constantly working in their hearts to move them to repentance and to further sanctification.

"Wisdom" speaks to one of the "next generation." "My son, if (note the condition) you will (1) receive (take what is given) my words, and (2) treasure (conceal in order to protect) my commandments with you; (a) Make your ear attentive (prick up the ear; dispose the mind) to wisdom, and (b) apply (turn aside) thine heart (fountain of life) to understanding; For, if you (3) cry (to call out) after knowledge, and (4) lift up your voice for understanding; If you (5) seek (go in search for) her as silver, and (6) search (inquire) for her as for hid treasures; Then (the result) you (1) understand (discern) the fear (reverence) of the Lord, and (2) find (arrive at) the knowledge of God." Proverbs 2:1- 5.

It can be fairly easy for one to get "knowledge." The gathering of "facts" can give one a "good foundation" for knowing much of the physical world. This information can be helpful in many situations. However, "just facts" can produce a false sense importance. These "facts" need to be viewed in the light of the "big picture" — what is life is all about. "Wisdom" continued to speak to all who will listen. "For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." Proverbs 2:6.

God wants people to long for wisdom more than silver, money, and treasures. With the same eagerness that people pursue hidden treasure, we

must seek after God because He is the treasure that we all should seek. As we come to know the fear of God, we will grow in understanding and wisdom. But even before the fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom, the point of salvation, there is a seeking that takes place when God calls a person to Himself. Those who seek the truth will find it, and Christ will manifest Himself to them. Even after salvation, we must never cease longing to grow in truth and understanding, and our urgency and desperation for wisdom must not diminish but grow even stronger.

2:6 For the LORD gives wisdom;

From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.

7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;

He is a shield to those who walk in integrity,

8 Guarding the paths of justice,

And He preserves the way of His godly ones.

There is no alternative route to getting wisdom, only the Lord gives wisdom. Only those who turn from sin to faith in Christ can access His wisdom. Only from His mouth to the pages of Scripture come knowledge and understanding. He gives wisdom to the upright who are made righteous in Christ, and He protects those who walk in integrity. Wisdom is a protecting force, keeping us from foolish things that could destroy us. It helps us love justice and be just with others, thereby offering protection to the innocent. There is a protection that walking in wisdom brings as God keeps us from falling for evil and from the destructive forces that accompany it (Proverbs 2:11-12). This doesn't mean that the righteous won't have trials in this life (John 16:33), but it does mean that God will only allow into our lives what He will cause to work for our good (Romans 8:28) such that a legacy of His goodness and mercy will be clearly seen (Psalm 23:6). He is faithful to sanctify His own (Philippians 2:12-13) and to not allow them to be tempted beyond what they are able to resist by faith (1 Corinthians 10:13). The Lord is a shield to the righteous, preserving their souls, faithfully gracious in times of trial, and constantly working in them transformation of the heart and mind unto His likeness (Romans 12:1-2).

2:9 Then you will discern righteousness and justice

And equity and every good course.

10 For wisdom will enter your heart

And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;

11 Discretion will guard you,

Understanding will watch over you,

12 To deliver you from the way of evil,

From the man who speaks perverse things;

13 From those who leave the paths of uprightness

To walk in the ways of darkness;
14 Who delight in doing evil
And rejoice in the perversity of evil;
15 Whose paths are crooked,
And who are devious in their ways;

Solomon explains just how God preserves the way of His godly ones. He enables them to know righteousness, justice, how to be fair, and how to know what to do in a given situation. Wisdom from God means that we will know what course to chart when we need to know. The heart that follows after God is filled with wisdom, and it delights in the understanding that God provides. The sinner finds pleasure in sin, while the saved find pleasure in the pleasantness of wisdom. Many delight in darkness, perversity, and evil because the perversity of their own hearts enjoys doing perverse things. The righteous hate evil but love what is good. The evil hate what is good and love evil. Only the born again heart can love God and what is good (1 John 4:7-8, John 13:34-35).

2:16 To deliver you from the strange woman,
From the adulteress who flatters with her words;
17 That leaves the companion of her youth
And forgets the covenant of her God;
18 For her house sinks down to death
And her tracks lead to the dead;
19 None who go to her return again,
Nor do they reach the paths of life.

One example is the adulteress. She does not seek out the welfare of her prey, but she enjoys the destruction of the life of the fool who chooses her embrace. She enjoys tearing families apart because the passing, empty thrill of sin. She offers flattering speech which is made to manipulate rather than edify. She not only desires to see another leave his companion in marriage, but she herself is unfaithful to her companion. She has no fear of God when it comes to the marriage bond and covenant, and thus its relevance to her decision-making is not considered. Her life is one leading to death and destruction, and those who choose to follow her path will find only pain and sorrow. Adultery is a severe wrong with devastating results. God's grace is bigger than any sin, and forgiveness is possible for believers. But wounds go deep, and the destruction is not worth finding out.

2:20 So you will walk in the way of good men
And keep to the paths of the righteous.
21 For the upright will live in the land
And the blameless will remain in it;

22 But the wicked will be cut off from the land
And the treacherous will be uprooted from it.

The righteous recognize the danger of evil, and they avoid it at all costs. They choose not to desire the ways of the wicked, but they rather keep to the paths of the righteous, choosing good company so that bad company doesn't corrupt good morals. God had a covenant with Israel that if they obeyed Him, they would be blessed and live long in the land that God had given them (Deuteronomy 11:26-28, 30:19-20). If they worshipped other gods and lived foolishly, then they would be cut off from the land. The story ended with them being cut off because of their wickedness. They enjoyed the ways of the wicked nations around them and adopted their practices. They forgot the ways of God and His faithfulness to them because they loved evil more than good. Eternally, the wicked will be cut off from God forever, but the righteous will dwell in the presence of God forever.

Psalm 111:10 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever."

Everything has a beginning and the beginning of wisdom is in the fear of the Lord. To have a fear of God means we are to "Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time" (Col 4:5) so we should pray to God to "teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12). Having two ears and one mouth we might discern that no wisdom was ever received by talking so we must "Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future" (Proverbs 19:20).

What was the latest godly wisdom you received from someone or from the Bible?

James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." James contrasts earthly and heavenly wisdom by writing that "the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere" (James 3:17) "But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice" (James 3:14-16). Earthly wisdom results in earthly decisions but godly wisdom leads to heavenly choices. If we are not sure about making an important decision then James tells us to "ask God" because He "gives generously" and does so "without reproach" suggesting that when we seek human advice, we might be criticized by others for even asking.

1st Corinthians 1:23-25 "but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

Paul ensures the church at Corinth that "your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1st Corinthians 2:5) as he says, "we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory" (1st Corinthians 2:7) but "we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual" (1st Corinthians 2:13). To those false teachers who appear to be wise, "These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh" (Colossians 2:23) and worth nothing in the end.

From the section stepping into the world – Proverbs 2, reminds us that insight is not the same thing as intuition, a knowing we cannot explain or something we just get. The text exhorts the reader to cry out for insight and raise your voice for understanding. It takes intentional effort to gain understanding and develop the careful good judgment we call prudence. Wisdom is not just about avoiding risk or developing our one-on-one relationship with God. Wisdom requires awareness of the way we relate to others and move in the world. While we may never fully understand God, when all people understand themselves, and then each other, the whole world will be in a condition of knowledge and prudence that is pleasing to our souls.

Closing: For the love that casts out fear, the faith that sustains and the hope that never perishes, be with us now and forever more. Amen. God watch over us and take care of us.

Next week's lesson June 21, 2020 "The Gifts of Wisdom" from Job Chapter 1, Chapter 42 and Proverbs 8. June 21, 2020 is also Father's Day this year.

Sources for this lesson: The Bible, Halley's Bible Handbook, Study of Proverbs, by Pastor Paul LeBoutillier of Calvary Chapel Ontario, Oregon, Rev. James C. Temple, Sunday School Lesson from Early County, and The Present Word Adult Bible Lessons.