

Prov. 1:1-7; 3:5-12; The Way of Wisdom I. Wisdom is found in the LORD II. Wisdom resists the Self III. Wisdom leads to Blessings

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, today we begin our series on the book of Proverbs. Proverbs is part of the wisdom literature in the OT- revealing the good and ordered way to live. This Wisdom book displays that a good life is one lived after God's plan which leads to blessings and peace. But the fact is, humans tend to overstate their own wisdom and knowledge. We are each experts in our own eyes. But as we will see today- true wisdom is not found in the self! These Wisdom letters also include instruction - training future kings and leaders for their office. These words were preparing them to be wise counselors in Israel. They spoke to various stations and situations. You do not know rightly until you live rightly- you are not wise until you act properly! How should kings behave- how should we act in the city and in the country- in the castle and in the home? How should men and woman- parents and children- employee and employer relate? These teachings are to help all people find their way in this world. A good education- reared in godly discipline- is the focus. Proverbs answers the question- what does wisdom look like and where do I find it? Pursue it- look for it! We consider this theme: Jesus Christ reveals true wisdom to those who look to Him.

I. Wisdom is found in the LORD

We begin by looking at where wisdom is to be found. As 1:7 says- the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Here the fear of God is the desire to know, please and honor God. It is a loving submission- a piety and reverence known as a godly fear. This fear is similar to the attitude of a child towards their father- a respect and reliance on; along with a desire to obey because of their intimate relationship! To know God- to trust and depend on Him- along with a delight in Him and His word. That is the fear of the Lord! Knowing that His wrath is so bitter- and His love is so sweet; that we are filled with an affectionate reverence! This fear is the beginning of knowledge. The word- "beginning"- means the best, chief- the

most important part of knowledge. Fearing God is the fountain from which all knowledge flows- wisdom is only found after you have secured this source! The most important aspect to a wise ordered life is your relationship with the Lord. The word knowledge- “Da-ath” is the opposite of being foolish and ignorant. Knowledge is knowing the right- living in the good and ordered way of truth. Wisdom sees things as they are- and how they ought to be! Psalm 111:10 says- the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, all those who practice it have a good understanding! To say this another way, there is no true knowledge without true godliness! Only those in relationship with the LORD are exposed to the fountain of truth! When a person is regenerated by the Spirit, their mind is not only changed- but their source of information- the fountain from which they draw wisdom and truth changes as well! As Psalm 34:11 says, come and listen to me children, and I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Wisdom is to be perused- and it will only be found at the source of truth! To live the life of a wise man, you will know God, know His way and understand His Will. God can be known- and the life of pleasing Him can be found because He has revealed it. Throughout the book of Proverbs, wisdom is both impersonal and personal. At times wisdom is spoken of a friend, a lovely maiden and a close companion. At other times it is a possession- better than gold and silver- a tree which gives blessings. But all true wisdom is rooted in the only true God who is completely wise. AS 2:6 says- for the LORD gives wisdom and out of His mouth come knowledge and understanding. The closer you are to the LORD- the nearer you are to wisdom. As we come to the NT we find that the wisdom of God has taken on flesh. Any wisdom revealed is done by way of Jesus- and as you know Him you are opened up to truth. He is as Mt. 12 says, greater than Solomon in all his wisdom- Jesus is the wisdom and power of God and I Cor. 1:30 says. So for us, as we will see in our 3rd point- the way to blessing and life is found with Him and in Him alone! The fear of the Lord is that which ties this book to a godly life! True religion cannot be wise apart from the pursuit of the Lord! Job said this in Job 28:28; The fear of the Lord- that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.

II. Wisdom resists the Self

So the wise also seek to be taught by wise teachers. Getting guidance from those who know the path of truth! But not all come to the fountain of truth- as v. 7 continues- the fool despises wisdom and instruction. The word for fool is “eivel”. One who mocks what is good and rejoices in what is vain and fool-hearted. One who is silly- without any seriousness- who laughs at life and religion. These hold wisdom in contempt and trample the truth under their feet. A fool is a person who despises wisdom- one who is always joking about God and His word. He takes nothing serious- He is a mocker of truth and piety- sitting in the seat of a mocker Ps. 1 says! A fool does not care what God says- and thinks little about how things really are and how they ought to be! This is what sets a Christian education at odds with a worldly education- a perspective that changes how we approach learning! The secular education says- the fear of the Lord gets in the way of knowledge. We need to keep God out of the school and His Word from our children. But this will lead only to foolishness! Wisdom cannot be gained on one’s own- truth cannot be discovered by following man’s way! Knowledge does not flow from the self! Some people simply cannot be taught- because they think they have all the answers! The fact is, you are never so smart that you need not be taught! The refusal to listen to instruction- or to heed the rebuke of reproof- is what the fool does. The vain mocker has no appetite for truth and knowledge- it is like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to their eyes. You are not sufficient in yourself- you need to be taught in the right way! No one has all the answers! As we read in Prov. 3:5- do not trust in your own understanding. Or again in 3:7- do not be wise in your own eyes. Do not despise the Lord’s discipline. The truth is not found in looking to man- trusting your own fallen logic and reasoning. If you want to be truly wise, you need to learn to reject your own dictionary- resisting the self- and go to the source of truth! Wisdom is to be sought- searched for and cultivated. Man’s wisdom leads only to death- human logic to hell. As we will see in the weeks to come, wisdom is caught by following good examples, surrounding yourself with wise advisors, and by opening your heart and mind to the implanted seed of

truth. For wisdom is rooted in God's person and revealed in His Word. Godly humility resists the temptation to do what is right in your own eyes.

III. Wisdom leads to Blessings

It is the blessed man of Psalm 1 that does not walk in the way of the wicked, but rather delights in the Law of the LORD! This life of wisdom leads to blessings in this life and the life to come. Wisdom lead to a good ordered life- when things are put in their proper place. As we have seen- a right view of the present and a proper understanding of the future. The first area of blessings found in Proverbs is the restoration of the created order. Not only was every made by wisdom- as 3:19 says- those who seek wisdom will bring a restoration to this created order. A good ordered and wise life is one the avoids many of the resource draining and enslaving sins. There is a rich and practical truth for this life to be found here! Everything from who you should marry, how you should work, what you should do with your money and how you should relate to your family. If you follow wisdom's ways, it will go well for you in this life! God's smile will be upon you. This world was created for man's use and enjoyment- not to be man's god nor man's idol. It has a purpose for its use- to move man to serve and rejoice in his God! This world reveals its makers order, power and beauty! With this truth in mind- we see our place as stewards and guardians. Filling and subduing- protecting and preserving becomes our calling. The second area of blessings centers around the moral order. When everyone does what is right in their own eyes, chaos follows. But if we would submit our lives to the Law of the Lord good order, structure and equality follow. Actions have consequences. If you steal, lust and kill; you will be punished in this life. If you sow to the wind, you will reap the whirlwind. If you play with fire, you will be burned. God has your good in mind- His words of wisdom are for your benefit. He wants it to go well with you- in the home, in the school, at church and at work. So listen to wisdom and you will be blessed. As 4:4 says- keep my commandments and live! Or 3:8- my words will be healing to your flesh and refreshments for your bones. The worldview of Proverbs is clear. Choose wisdom and you will walk the path of life and

blessings. And the third area of blessings to be found is the blessing of coming order and restoration. This creation is also moving towards a good end- a restoration and renewal when the Son of God returns to end its groaning. In other words, Proverbs is leading us somewhere! We see the need for restoration- that sin and its effects need to be addressed. Things are not as they should be- nor are they as they will be one day! Listen to 3:18- wisdom is a tree of life- those who lay hold of her will be blessed. More precious than jewels- nothing you desire can compare to her. The Tree of life- the living water- the pearl of great price and the riches beyond measure are Christological themes: they are taken up by Christ to prove His greatness! As 3:16 says- long life and riches and honor! The only way to receive blessings and life are to be found in Christ and in conversing with His word. Sometimes things do not go well in this life- but there is hope for the future! True and lasting blessing are not found in the self- but in embracing Christ and His Word! From Him comes life and all true riches. When you are joined to Him in faith, He gives you a new heart and implants His truth within you by His Spirit.

To conclude, this morning we have just begun our journey through the themes of Proverbs and already we see the benefit and blessings of wisdom's ways. If we would be truly wise, we must reject what we think is right and good and submit to God's standards and truth! Matthew Henry said that the "conceitedness of our own wisdom is the greatest enemy to true religion." When we think we know better than God does, things will only get worse. To reject the fountain of living water and to hewn out our own cisterns which are broken is to reject Jesus Christ and rely on my own works for salvation. As James 3:17 says, the wisdom from above is pure, peaceable, gentle, full of mercy and good fruit. It is sown in peace by those who make peace. Jesus Christ reveals true wisdom to those who look to Him. So trust in the LORD and His anointed One, for in this dependence on Christ you will have an abundance of wisdom!