

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 10.9.2022

HOW TO READ PROVERBS

I. INTRODUCTION

- We have defined wisdom as the skill of living rightly.
- And wisdom has as its foundation the fear of the Lord, for one cannot know wisdom apart from a relationship with the All-Wise and Sovereign God and Jesus Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
- The first nine chapters contained Solomon's lessons to his son instructing him to stay on the way of wisdom—the right path.
- Along the path, there are many rivals to wisdom, the forbidden woman and the wicked who will want to entice the son to join in their folly.
- Those two paths are always before the son as they are for us, and we must make a commitment to wisdom, to remain on the path that leads to life.

- Chapters 10 - 31 contain the short, individual wisdom sayings.
- At the beginning of our series we said that proverbs are a verbal representation, a model, of some aspect of life.
- They are given as a way to look at real life situations and experiences and know in advance how to act and what to expect before we take action.
- These wisdom sayings give us a glimpse of real life so that we can order our life according to God's way.
- Solomon and the other Hebrew sages, wrote down these Proverbs that are the fruit of experience, observation, reflection, discernment, and meditation, in order to train God's people how to apply knowledge and God's Word to all of the affairs of life according to revealed wisdom.

II. PRINCIPLES FOR READING PROVERBS

1. KEEP THE TWO PATHS IN MIND

- At the heart of the structure of Proverbs is the imagery concerning the two paths and the two women (chs1-9).
- Wisdom/folly, the wise/the fool, righteous/wicked, life/death
- These are generally set in contrast within a proverb but sometimes only one of the paths is underscored in a proverb.

2. NO PROVERB IS EXHAUSTIVE

- Because these pithy, wisdom-filled sayings are so concise, they concentrate truth in such a way that they cannot possibly express everything there is to say about a topic.
- Example: Prov 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

- We have to take this single component of truth and see how it fits together with all of the other truths in God's word to get a more comprehensive understanding of how this works out in real life.

3. PROVERBS ARE GENERAL PROMISES

- For the righteous, they are generally true now, but ultimately true later.
- However, we should not read them as absolute, unconditional, guaranteed promises (if I do A, then I will always get B).
- They are generalizations that always have exceptions.
- The right time and the right circumstance with the right application will generally yield the desired outcome.
- It takes a wise person to activate the teaching of a proverb correctly and it takes a wise person to understand that even doing the right thing at the right time may not give them the desired results in the moment because of sin and brokenness in our world.

4. REMEMBER CHRIST IS THE FULFILLMENT OF WISDOM

- Ultimately, in Christ, the perfect fulfillment of the promises are ours.
- Jesus identified himself as someone greater than Solomon (Luke 11:31).
- Christ is identified as the wisdom of God and wisdom from God (1 Cor 1:24, 30; Col 2:3).
- Christ is the perfect, faithful, and obedient son, who has gone before us to secure our righteousness and all of the promises of Proverbs.
- Christ fulfills every promise to the righteous who are made righteous through Him!

5. REMEMBER THE GOSPEL

- Because Christ is the fulfillment of wisdom and righteousness presented in Proverbs, don't read Proverbs as a list of things you have to do in order for God to love you or accept you.
- Rather, because God already loves you and accepts you in Christ, you do these things.
- Because we are His children, God is at work producing the behaviors you will read in Proverbs.
- God is at work in us conforming us to the image of Christ.
- Proverbs is a book on sanctification.
- As you read the proverbs, hold them up as a mirror.
- If you see patterns of foolishness in some area of your life, maybe finances, relationships, or any other thing, it is revealing some idolatry in your life and some areas you may not be believing the gospel.
- When we see that we should repent and turn to Christ.

III. THE TWO PATHS IN CHAPTER TEN

- Pay attention to the two paths.
- Observe the parallelism used to contrast these two paths, look for that where you see the conjunction 'but' used.
- Notice how many times there are references to our speech and words.

Proverbs 10:1-32

The proverbs of Solomon.

¹ A wise son makes a glad father,

but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.

- ² Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit,
but righteousness delivers from death.
- ³ The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry,
but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.
- ⁴ A slack hand causes poverty,
but the hand of the diligent makes rich.
- ⁵ He who gathers in summer is a prudent son,
but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.
- ⁶ Blessings are on the head of the righteous,
but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.
- ⁷ The memory of the righteous is a blessing,
but the name of the wicked will rot.
- ⁸ The wise of heart will receive commandments,
but a babbling fool will come to ruin.
- ⁹ Whoever walks in integrity walks securely,
but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out.
- ¹⁰ Whoever winks the eye causes trouble,
and a babbling fool will come to ruin.
- ¹¹ The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,
but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.
- ¹² Hatred stirs up strife,
but love covers all offenses.
- ¹³ On the lips of him who has understanding, wisdom is found,
but a rod is for the back of him who lacks sense.
- ¹⁴ The wise lay up knowledge,
but the mouth of a fool brings ruin near.
- ¹⁵ A rich man's wealth is his strong city;
the poverty of the poor is their ruin.
- ¹⁶ The wage of the righteous leads to life,
the gain of the wicked to sin.

17 Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life,
but he who rejects reproof leads others astray.

18 The one who conceals hatred has lying lips,
and whoever utters slander is a fool.

19 When words are many, transgression is not lacking,
but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.

20 The tongue of the righteous is choice silver;
the heart of the wicked is of little worth.

21 The lips of the righteous feed many,
but fools die for lack of sense.

22 The blessing of the Lord makes rich,
and he adds no sorrow with it.

23 Doing wrong is like a joke to a fool,
but wisdom is pleasure to a man of understanding.

24 What the wicked dreads will come upon him,
but the desire of the righteous will be granted.

25 When the tempest passes, the wicked is no more,
but the righteous is established forever.

26 Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes,
so is the sluggard to those who send him.

27 The fear of the Lord prolongs life,
but the years of the wicked will be short.

28 The hope of the righteous brings joy,
but the expectation of the wicked will perish.

29 The way of the Lord is a stronghold to the blameless,
but destruction to evildoers.

30 The righteous will never be removed,
but the wicked will not dwell in the land.

31 The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom,
but the perverse tongue will be cut off.

32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable,

but the mouth of the wicked, what is perverse.

- V1 tells us that these are the Proverbs of Solomon. It is the beginning of the collection of his individual proverbs that goes all the way through 22:16.
- At first glance these seem like random, disjointed thoughts.
- The reason it seems like it is random is because Solomon is obeying God's command to parents in Deut 6, to teach his children the law.
- Parents were to teach their children when they wake up, when they sit down, when they walk along the road, and when they lie down.
- All day, every day, at every opportunity, they should be instructing their children.

1. THE WISE SON

- V1 A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.
 - Solomon has been imploring his son to receive his teachings and the spiritual inheritance he is passing on to him.
 - When the son submits himself to his parent's instruction and preserves the family's values and inheritance, he proves himself to be wise and that brings joy to his parents.
 - 'BUT' - here is the parallel opposite - a foolish son brings grief to his parents.
 - The consequences of our children's terrible and foolish choices have impacts beyond them.
 - The decisions they make, the choices they make in life, don't only affect them. They affect everyone around them that loves them.
 - You should want to obey God's command to honor your parents.
 - You should also want to obey your parents and listen to them because they love you and want what is best for you.
 - Jesus is our supreme example of this. Luke 2:52, as a young boy, we see that he increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.
 - He walked this out perfectly. He is the wise and obedient son who goes before us.
-
- Read proverbs and find out what pleases God.
 - Paul exhorts us to "discern what is pleasing to the Lord (Eph 5:10)."
 - When you make the wise choice and commit yourself to wisdom, you gladden the heart of your parents.
 - You also gladden the heart of your heavenly Father.

2. WISDOM IN WEALTH

- In ch1, Solomon warns his son to avoid the enticements of sinners who wanted to make easy money through ill-gotten gains.
 - Solomon made it clear that those who pursue the path of gain through wickedness will be ensnared; in the end they will lose their very own life.
 - v2 Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death.
 - Money—if not gotten in the right way is destructive.
 - The wise son needs to heed his father's instruction and earn money through hard work and diligence. If he does that he will be delivered from death.
 - V16 The wage of the righteous leads to life, the gain of the wicked to sin.
-
- But is this always true?

- We have to read these things according to the principle mentioned earlier, these promises are generally true now, but ultimately true later.
 - We need to view these promises in light of Christ and eternity.
 - Sometimes the wicked may get away with things here and now, sometimes the righteous starve now, but when the King returns in glory, accounts will be settled.
 - The wicked will experience great trouble for eternity and the righteous will be trouble-free for all eternity.
- A challenge for us at times, when we are going through seasons of lack, is that we may be tempted to think that God doesn't care for us.
 - Luke 12:22-34 And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! 25 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! 29 And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. 30 For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. 32 "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
 - That is something we can take great comfort in—your heavenly Father knows what you have need of. You are of great value to your Father. God will take care of you.
- Additionally, here is what is true now.
 - The greatest hunger we have is a spiritual hunger.
 - The wicked seek to satisfy it through their uncontrolled, unrestrained, greedy appetite. But their hunger is never satisfied. Sin overpromises and under delivers.
 - But God gives food to his saints that satisfies the true hunger of their souls.
 - Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied (Matt 5:6)."
 - Jesus told the crowd, "Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. (John 6:27)."
 - John 6:35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."
 - That is a 100% guarantee—in Christ we will never hunger or thirst again!

3. WISDOM IN WORK

- 4 A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.
- 5 He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.
- The wise son is diligent, he is prudent, he's not lazy.
- Solomon is saying two things in these two verses:

- Hard work leads to riches where you are able to provide for your family and bring joy to your parents.
 - Laziness leads to poverty and lack for your family that will bring shame to your parents.
 - The wise son is not lazy, his hands are productive.
 - In contrast, the lazy person has a 'slack hand'.
 - A lazy son is found sleeping when he should be working.
 - To sleep during the harvest is the height of folly.
- A lazy person is one who starts things that are never finished.
 - They don't see their assignments through to completion.
 - They love sleep more than work.
 - Paul says that a failure to provide for your family is a failure to believe the gospel, and the one who doesn't provide when they have ability to do so, "has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1Tim 5:8).
- But, Christ, the faithful, prudent, and diligent son, brings joy to his Father.
 - John 4:34 "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work."
 - John 17:4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.
 - John 19:28-30 After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." 29 A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

4. WISDOM IN SPEECH

- V8 The wise of heart will receive commandments, but a babbling fool will come to ruin.
 - The wise take wisdom into their heart.
 - Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks (Luke 6:45)."
 - The wise person knows how to control their tongue and will speak what is edifying and life giving.
 - In contrast, the fool babbles on and on.
 - The fool loves the sound of his own voice.
 - The fool speaks more than they listen.
 - The fool doesn't accept wisdom into their heart so all they can do is babble on with their opinions and foolish talk.
 - And the babbling fool will come to ruin.
 - Why? Because they don't stop prattling long enough to hear instruction, receive sound counsel and wisdom and correction so that they can learn from their own mistakes.
 - Wisdom is being able to humbly listen to and receive advice and instruction and follow it.
- V19 When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.
 - Chances are the more you talk, the more likely you are to sin with your words.
 - A wise person restrains his speech.
 - A wise person guards their tongue. Choosing to only speak words that fit the occasion, that build up and edify, and give grace to those who hear (Eph 4:29).
 - V21 The lips of the righteous feed many...
 - V31 the mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom...
 - V32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable...

- Jesus is our example of a tongue restrained by wisdom.
- Every word was fitting. Whether it was instruction, correction, rebuke, or encouragement.
- He knew when to speak and when to remain silent.

CONCLUSION

- I encourage you to read this chapter this week.
- As you reflect, you may be confronted in a specific area of your life where you're not walking in wisdom.
- Maybe you've made foolish choices that have brought shame to your parents.
- Allow the Spirit to slay those idols of the heart.
- Turn in faith to the gospel truths. Repent and turn to Christ.
- Receive forgiveness and grace from him.

- The righteous are mentioned thirteen times in this chapter.
- V3 The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry
- V6 blessings are on the head of the righteous
- V7 the memory of the righteous is a blessing
- V11 the mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life
- V16 the wage of the righteous leads to life
- V20 the tongue of the righteous is choice silver
- V21 the lips of the righteous feed many
- V24 the desire of the righteous will be granted
- V25 the righteous is established forever
- V28 the hope of the righteous brings joy
- V30 the righteous will never be removed
- V31 the mouth for the righteous brings forth wisdom
- V32 the lips of the righteous know what is acceptable

- Every single one of those promises of provision, and blessing, and life, and wisdom, is ours in Christ.
- We are made righteous through Him!
- And while in this life, that is destined to have its struggles, we may not always see these fleshed out in our day to day life, we can be absolutely assured, that as His children, all of these things are true for all eternity.

- **Graeme Goldsworthy, Tree of Life**, "Jesus has fulfilled in our place the perfection God demands. He was the truly wise and fully sanctified human on our behalf. Thus, as we struggle to become wise, we know that our failures do not disqualify us from life because Christ himself is our only qualification. He, when all is said and done, is our wisdom, and to possess Christ is to be accounted wise by the only judge who matters."

- All of these promises have their ultimate application in eternity.
- Pursue wisdom, pursue Christ, find out what pleases your heavenly Father, and these blessings are yours.
- Christ, the wise Son, has seen to it!