

Proverbs 22-08-03a

Good evening, welcome to the Wednesday Night Bible Study at Grace and Truth Bible Church. We are in the book of Proverbs and a corking good book it is. We missed last week due to the absence on the part of the pastor.

I don't know why that guy keeps falling off the grid, but he does sometimes and we play oldies, but we're back tonight. We're going to review what we covered at the beginning of chapter one of Proverbs on this third day of August 2022. And then we will move forward into the remainder of this chapter.

This chapter divides into three parts. We've seen the first part. We're going to look at the next two parts tonight.

Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our investigations on our fellowship and on our lives and conversation and we'll begin. Father, what a privilege it is to have a life that is not defined by circumstances or events or situations or what streams across our consciousness by way of media and the news, but to be defined by our relationship to you through the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for him.

We thank you for his ongoing ministry of representation and intercession on our behalf. Even as he represents us before your throne, we represent him on this earth. We pray that our study tonight will help us to do that more effectively and to redeem the time and rescue these days from the inherent evil thereof.

We ask it in Jesus name. Amen. The book of Proverbs authored by Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel.

It's helpful to note that the king of Israel portion there in verse one refers to Solomon, not to David. Now we know this by the word order, the construction in Hebrew is helpful in that regard. So Solomon is son of David and Solomon is king of Israel.

This establishes the authority, as we saw, for the collection. His imprimatur is on what follows. He is well known as one to whom God gave exceptional and divinely inspired wisdom.

He himself is described by many of the good qualities that follow in the next few verses in terms of someone who is able to discern what is wise, what is true, what is proper and acceptable in God's sight. And as such a man in the day that these were collected, he is qualified as an author. This is an inspired collection and therefore has a power to transform us that simple Proverbs, popular aphorisms and such do not have.

I feel like I'm having a lightning storm here. That's distracting. Ah, the miracles of modern LED lighting.

As I was saying, this is an inspired collection and unlike many of the posters, bumper stickers, witty sayings, pithy aphorisms and such, these may move our intellect. They may spark a recognition from our experience when we hear someone give out with a little piece of wisdom or an observation and so on about how things ought to be or how they actually are. And many people are drawn to these and they end up in sermons.

They end up in a stream of communication that is intended to be Christian ministry. Here's the problem. While they may be witty, they may be catchy, they may contain a nugget of sage wisdom in our eyes, the difference between inspired and uninspired proverb saying aphorism observation is that the uninspired, while we can see its truth, we can see its pertinence, we can see it's matching our experience.

It does not have the power to transform us. The Holy Spirit does not use humanly originated sayings to change our hearts and cleanse our souls, motivate us and encourage us in the faith because these humanly generated sayings don't reflect God's glory. And we live to embody, to be enabled and empowered by God.

It is His name. It is His glory that is on the line. And it's a weird thing.

I've spent some time. I don't know if you've ever thought about this. Why isn't it that you can say, well, a stitch in time saves nine? Well, that's a powerful thing, you know, fix something while you can, nip it in the bud before it becomes something that's too big to fix.

That seems like a piece of wisdom. Why isn't that the same as bad company corrupts good morals, which is in scripture? What's the difference? Isn't it an expression of truth? Can't a secularly recognized piece of observation or wisdom be beneficial? There is a mystical, I don't know how else to describe it. There is a power in the Word of God.

It is alive where the Word of man is dead. It is powerful where the Word of man is helpless. The Word of God is living like the King James.

The Word of God is quick. When we say, wow, that was quick. We don't really think about where that word came from, but it comes from that which is alive and moves.

I first learned that quick had more than one meaning when my mother was explaining to me when I drove a splinter under my fingernail that I had gotten it into the quick, or I had trimmed it too short and it was bleeding because the quick is what's under your nail. It's alive under there. It's alive with nerves.

It's alive with blood vessels. It's alive with pain if you mistreat it. The Word of God is quick.

The Word of man is not quick. It is not alive. You can put negatives in that entire Timothy verse.

The Word of man is not alive. It is not powerful. It is not sharper than a two-edged sword.

It does not pierce to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit and the joints of the marrow, and it is not a critic, a judge of the thoughts and intents of our hearts. As catchy and pleasing as it may be to the eye, it is wax fruit when it comes to nourishment for our souls, ineffectual. I wish that this was better understood in the Christian world because sermons are full of these.

I will go so far as to say that illustrations, if they always come from life or from experience or from somebody's book or a quotation here and an allusion there, our illustrations are most powerful, let me put it that way, when they come from Scripture. That's why God put them in there. That is something the Holy Spirit can use.

The Word of God in the hands of the Holy Spirit does things in us and to us that secular wisdom can't. These proverbs may be found in other forms. They may be floating around in Egyptian literature or in other wisdom, but at the point that they were inspired by God and incorporated into His Word, they have attained a power that they do not have otherwise.

Secondly, that power is only effectual, it is only meaningful, it is only operational when the Holy Spirit is there to take it and employ it. You can have the best tool in the world, but if you do not have an artisan who knows how to properly use that tool. I was cleaning out a toolbox this past week that belonged to somebody in my antecedent past, and there were wonderfully crafted things in there, and I can tell that they were used and they were fashioned.

Some of these were homemade tools, but they're useless to me. I don't know what they are. I don't know what they're for.

I don't know why they were made. I don't want to pitch them out. Maybe I can find my own use for them, but I am incapable of using them for their intended purpose because I am not their maker and I am not qualified to make use of them.

There's a secular illustration of a biblical truth that I am trying to emphasize here. God is the maker of His Word. The Holy Spirit is the artisan who knows how to use that Word in our souls, and no knock-off, cheap, imported tool can do what God's Word can do.

That is the difference between the Book of Proverbs and bumper stickers. So these Proverbs are authenticated at the beginning. We are given God's intermediary, His name, His authorship.

We don't have this for every book. The collection is self-titled. This is a collection of Proverbs.

The word is mashal, M-A-S-H-A-L. We talked about how that verb is also used for ruling.

These Proverbs represent, in the same way that a ruler can represent his people, that an illustration or an example can define, can sort of rule the domain in terms of this is what is typical.

This is what will likely happen. This represents a truth that is germane, that rules the domain of these things. So these first five verses are so critical in stating the purpose of the book and its value.

You cannot underestimate the value. And what it says about these truths, these Proverbs, is true of all of the Word of God. These are distillations.

These are condensations of divine truth that we find elsewhere in Scripture. But what is said about this collection and what is said about these Proverbs is true of every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, every portion of God's Word, from the index to the maps, from Genesis 1-1 to Revelation 22-20, every single bit of it. Do not allow someone in your presence to denigrate, dismiss, or treat lightly God's Old Testament Scriptures.

This is popular and widespread in the modern day and it is fatal to be partial. Remember in Malachi we saw where the Levites were starting to become partial. They were picking and choosing the parts of the law that they would communicate and emphasize and they were dismissing other parts.

It is fatal to our mission and function to not value the Old Testament. What is it that empowered the Lord Jesus to survive the tests from the personal presence of Satan himself? What did Jesus use? Did He start quoting the Sermon on the Mount to the devil? He quoted Old Testament, Old Testament truth, Old Testament Scripture. How did Jesus explain at the other end of His ministry, after His resurrection, on the road to Emmaus, to the two men, what had happened? He opened to them the Old Testament Scriptures and explained everything concerning Himself from the Old Testament Scriptures.

Do you remember the description that those men gave of their hearts after Jesus spoke? That's the power of the Old Testament, in which we find the book of Proverbs. So what is its purpose? What is the opportunity that we have as we study this book? We saw this beginning in verse 2, to know, Yada, Y-A-D-A. Very similar meaning to our own.

What is it that we can know? What is it that we can come to understand? The first thing is Chakmah, wisdom, C-H-A-K-M-A-H, Chakmah. This word originally meant something that is compact, something that is organized and firm, it's dense, solid. And this word came to be used for wisdom.

This is solid. It reminds me of Jeremiah, remember our memory verse, is not my word like a fire set the Lord and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. Why can you break a rock in pieces? Because the hammer is more solid and dense than the rock.

That's the wisdom from God, Chakmah. It is dense, it is compact, it is powerful, it is the

steel in the sword, the two-edged sword that divides asunder. So this yields the meaning of Chakmah, wisdom.

This is ability. It's not just wisdom in the abstract, a wise hermit sitting up on a hill doing nothing, saying nothing, being nothing. You could say, well, he's a wise, his only wisdom is in getting away from too many people, maybe.

But this is not isolated, abstract wisdom. This is wisdom in the sense of ability. Chakmah, wisdom, is prudence.

It is wisdom in your actions, wisdom in your policies, wisdom in your priorities, wisdom in your values, wisdom in pursuing your goals. It is ability. It is worldly wisdom.

If you've ever known how to do something really well, I was watching video of little kids, my niece on her third birthday, opening packages. She's three. And her dad says, you know, I think this is the first year she's ever opened her own presents.

Well, she is sweet. It's the most fun thing in the world to watch. But she's awkward.

And at one point, she's got a well-wrapped present. And she says, how do you open it? She's turning it over, and there's no place to get her fingers in. It's well-taped.

And finally, somebody says, just rip it. So she takes one tiny little tag and begins to carefully tear. And then she realizes, oh, you mean I can? And then she goes at it like little kids do.

But there was another package, and her mom had taped the box shut. Well, she doesn't have a little knife like I've got. They had to go get scissors and such.

And she said, oh, I shouldn't have taped that box shut. But there is a lack of chakmah, of worldly skill, when you're very young, when it comes to things like opening packages. You don't have experience.

You know there's something in there you want to get to, but you fumble. And what you see so often happening is that an adult will reach over and say, let me get that for you. You've got one end of it open, but the package won't come out of the paper.

Or you've got the box open, but the object won't come out of the box. It's got those Styrofoam boxes. And we've been through this so many times.

We have the worldly wisdom to get a package open. But the only thing that defeats some of us still is this hermetically sealed plastic that's made of some kind of super acrylic. And you know, scissors won't cut it.

Knives won't pierce it. And you can see the thing in there, but it's got those ribbed edges. And you know, you've got to go get the sawzall to get into some of these

packages.

But this is the idea of Chokmah. How do I get this package open? How can I do this skillfully? I really don't want somebody reaching over my shoulder and saying, let me show you how to do that. I am famously guilty of this when it comes to electronics, when it comes to computers.

I should stand back and just be patient and let someone learn by doing, oh, you don't need, that's a single click. No, that's a double click. No, no, no, don't double click.

You only single click. That's why the thing is not working. You didn't double click it.

And that's Microsoft's fault. Why some things single click and some things double click is just insane. But some of us know that and some of us don't.

And you know, we just get impatient because in that particular narrow area, we've got Chokmah and someone else doesn't. But this is what it is. Wouldn't it be great if you had that kind of skill? Think of something that you are really good at.

I know people that can cook five different portions of a meal all at the same time. There's something in the oven. There's three things on the burners.

There's something chilling down in the refrigerator. And all of a sudden, everything hits the table with all of the condiments and accessories and tools with which to eat. And there's placemats and drinks.

And this person has ice and this one doesn't. And this one gives lactose this and this one is gluten that. And magically, three or four different meals have all hit the table all at the same time.

That is a kind of Chokmah, a kind of experienced wisdom and foresight and knowledge and skill and endeavor with motivation that you would love to have in every area of life, especially our spiritual life. Wouldn't it be great if we had that kind of wisdom, that kind of get-it-done-ism when it comes to our challenges, when it comes to our opportunities, when it comes to making our decisions, to be versed, to be that expert that knows exactly how to do it? That's Chokmah. So this is what the collection of Proverbs is going to do for us.

Amazingly, this is what the Word of God does for us. It is the spiritual that dictates and rules over the material and the experiential. Because we have spiritual wisdom, the experiential part is going to fall into place.

Most of the world, including most of the Christian world, is trying to negotiate experience and circumstance and challenge and adversity and opportunity, lacking the spiritual Chokmah. And that's why it gets so fouled up. That's why Christians have been guilty of

tolerating death camps and holocausts and inquisitions and slavery and all other kinds of things, because most of Christianity in the past has goofed it up.

Because we as believers have to start with the spiritual, getting spiritual priorities, spiritual insight, spiritual understanding, spiritual skill in knowing what to do and how to do it. If our spiritual Chokmah came first, if we as Christians in generations past and in generations present, if the Israelites in their generations after Egypt had had this wisdom, it would be a whole different Old Testament. It would be a whole different New Testament age.

We would not be guilty or held guilty by people for stuff in the past that the Christian world tolerated, you know, different drinking fountains, back of the bus and the rest of it in the white South that was dominated by, you know, white people going to church every Sunday and then, you know, abusing people the other six and a half days of the week. It is good to know that that happened, but the only value in it is to make sure we don't repeat history. And we don't repeat history by constantly going back and rehearsing the mistakes of the past.

We are aware of the mistakes of the past, but the way to not repeat them is to get God's power operating in our souls. And that doesn't happen by constantly harping on history and decrying the past and trying to shame, blame, and game a bunch of other people in the present and saying, you're not a social justice warrior, you're not aware, you're not down doing this and doing that and the other. That is not going to get it done.

Only the Word of God in the hands of the Holy Spirit in our souls will give us the insight to know not to do those things. If you want to look at the mistakes of the past, don't just look at what was done wrong. Look at why it was done wrong.

Why was it done wrong? And how can we not make that mistake? Well, that's what this will do for us. That is Chokmah. It says to know this worldly wisdom.

We will know things. This is a quote from Kylan Dalich. It's really good.

I love going back to these guys that are, you know, over 100 years ago. Chokmah is knowledge of things in the essence of their being and in the reality of their existence. To know the situation in the reality of its being and the essence of its existence.

Have you ever gotten a partial story? Parents get this all the time. You know, you come in, something's broken in the room, there's several little kids around, you try to get this, how did this happen? You get nine different stories and none of them match the laws of physics or why this actually took place. To know the reality, to perceive the reality, wouldn't it be great if you watch the news and you could immediately tell if there was truth in what you are being told or not? If this is something we should support or something we should avoid, if it is something that is worth knowing about and pitching in

with or to ignore, that's what Chokmah does.

This discernment is great. Then the second thing, Musar, this is translated instruction. That is a bad translation.

Musar doesn't begin to capture this. In the Tanakh, it says, for learning wisdom and discipline. Instruction, you know, a program of instruction, that just kind of talks about the teaching and learning process in the abstract.

Well, so somebody is going to give a program of instruction and this is going to help? No. Musar is discipline, but it goes further than that. The Tanakh gets closer to saying discipline, but this is moral discipline.

This is self-government, self-discipline, self-control. So think about this. If you know Chokmah, this practical, insightful, ways to get it done well and properly, wisdom, and it is guided by and is in the context of moral restraint, restraint, my self-discipline, my self-control.

Not only do I know how to do it, but I know when to do it. I know how much to do it. I know when to refrain from doing it and this has moral implications.

This is going to make a difference in terms of what is right and what is wrong. It will be right to do this or right to withhold and refrain from doing this, to have self-control. Self-control is such a wonderful thing to have when you are doing something skillfully.

Again, think about little kids. You say, now you just need to give it a little pressure. Don't overdo it.

Riding your bicycle, don't oversteer. Just a little bit of steering is all you need. The bicycle will come back to vertical just a little bit, but without practice in restraint and knowing how to apply just the right amount of your skill, or your function, or your action.

That's what Musar is. Musar is the moral understanding of what is right. This is why Paul says, let your moderation be known unto all.

The Lord is at hand. There is a thing that is right, but too much of it is wrong. You can think of many examples of this.

Think of gluttony and any other things related to intake. Many times a moderate amount of a thing is great. Too much is bad.

Too much of almost anything is bad. You can have too much Bible class. I know.

I tried it. God didn't intend for us to be getting His Word flowing through our ears and into our hearts for hours and hours and hours a day. A little here.

A little there. A line upon a line. A precept upon a precept.

Here a little. There a little. The Word of God is so powerful, if you aggregate too much of it at once, it's kind of like uranium.

You're just going to blow something up. We only need a little bit. We can only handle a little bit.

It's like joy. If you had an excessive dose of joy and you couldn't come down from that hilarity and that intense experience, it'll drive you insane. I had a former pastor who worked at an insane asylum and talked about people who had gone down the road of cultivating excessive joy that didn't have a foundation and they actually lost some of their marbles from it.

You don't want too much joy just like you don't want too much sorrow. Godly sorrow is a good thing. Regret for having failed the grace of God is a good thing.

But you can't wallow in regret. You can't wallow in sorrow just like you can't wallow in joy. You can't get hooked on the feeling and be constantly pursuing that.

There's emotional burnout, moderation. This is what Musar is. Think about that.

We've only really looked at three words in Proverbs in this review to know Chokmah and Musar. Think of the richness and the fullness of what God's Word can do, what this collection of wisdom is going to do for us. So this is the purpose of this collection.

These Mashals, these Proverbs will enable us to know wisdom and moderation, self-control, moral restraint, moral understanding. To perceive the words of understanding. The word to perceive here is, this is a really good translation.

It comes from bin or b-i-y-n. And this word is going to recur. And to perceive the words of understanding, this is to perceive the words, to bin the words of binah.

Remember that? They're cognate. It's the verb and the noun. And to perceive perceptive words.

What does this mean? Well, there are things that seem very sage and very wise and make people nod their heads and say, oh, that's really profound. That is wise. But not all of them are.

Some of them are catchy, but they're not really true. If guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns. It's pithy.

People who are sympathetic to the Second Amendment like that saying, but stop and think about it. If guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns. Outlaws being criminals, nefarious types.

Is that actually true? If that is a perceptive truth, what do you perceive about it? If they outlaw guns, will only outlaws have guns? What about police? What about the military? What about the National Guard? What about those who have the bumper sticker? Actually, if you have this attitude, you shouldn't put it on a bumper sticker. They can have my gun when they pry my cold dead finger, et cetera. There's already restrictive gun legislation all over the place and people flout it all the time.

Out here in the hills of Rogers County, there are automatic weapons going off frequently. They're outlawed. You're not allowed to have automatic weapons.

Are they technically outlaws? Are these people criminals with nefarious intent? Are they going around doing gang warfare and such? No, they're just people who think that's a silly law and I'm not going to follow it, which is not wise, especially if you're going to then crank the thing off where people in a mile and a half radius can hear it. I know exactly where the people are who have automatic weapons because both of my ears work. I can do directional perception.

I know where these people are. Houses are far enough apart. I know who's got them.

I wouldn't call up the law on them or anything, but I'm just using this as sort of an innocuous example. I don't really care one way or another about only outlaws will have guns, but it's an example of stop and think about the premise. If you are able to exercise this beam kind of analysis and you think, wait a minute, my body, my choice, is that an accurate way to characterize this problem? These quick little aphorisms, are they valid to perceive what is allegedly a perceptive statement or a perceptive thought? This is what we want.

This is what I love about the Word of God is we don't have to just sit and wonder. So many people in the country are just swayed by every wind of propaganda or every catchy, pithy little soundbite that comes along. The Word of God gives us the ability to see past the surface, to see into a thing.

Chokmah, to tell the reality, its essence of being and its reality of existence, is it a real thing? And then to understand the moral implications and whether or not we ought to support, resist, or otherwise be implicated in a thing and to understand what is inside the shell. You get enough boxes of things and when you're going through your storage and you've got something wrapped up and the label fell off, some stuff, isn't that something? You have it so long and you haven't used it and the label fell off. You think, why do I have this if not only have I not used it in so many years, it's been so much time, the label has fallen off.

But you can shake it and from the rattle you say, oh, I know what this is. I know what this is. I don't even have to open it.

That's why the label fell off and I don't care. I can rattle it and I know what it is. This is being, to see inside a thing, to see past the surface.

And this is a wonderful, comforting, peace-inducing kind of wisdom to have in the maelstrom of provocateur wordsmithing that is going on today. Oh, let's redefine this term and redefine that term and we'll talk about this in a new and different way. Well, see past that.

Get inside it. Know the truth of it. That's what these do for us.

What a blessing. What a great promise from God. It just makes you really want to dive in, which we need to do.

So now that we know what this is going to do, we're going to dive in and we'll get a little further. That's pretty much our review. I'll skate through the next three verses and then we'll continue right after our break.