

Proverbs 23-04-05a

Good evening. Welcome to Wednesday night Bible class at Grace and Truth Bible Church. We continue our study in the book of Proverbs.

We are in chapter 10. We noted last time some structural clues there. We're going to see some vocabulary clues tonight because this is a very well thought out, well-designed, organized presentation, explanation.

It is not haphazard. It is not a crazy quilt of scattered Proverbs. It is designed around themes and purposes.

And we hope to discover those so that we can take them to heart, learn and benefit from them. And next time somebody quotes a Proverb, we can say, you know, there's context for that Proverb. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and we'll begin.

Father, thank you for all of the ways you provide for us, bless us and meet our needs. We thank you for the provision for our souls, this manna from heaven that sustains us and strengthens us and motivates us, guides us, does so many wonderful things to enable a healthy and productive Christian life. In the hands of the Holy Spirit, we pray that the material that we cover tonight, the things that we learn, the things that we see in your word will inform us and encourage us and result in a Christ-like life.

As he said that we don't live by physical circumstance alone, but by the spiritual guidance and food that you provide with every word. We pray that as we look at these words tonight, that will be the case in our lives and that our study and our fellowship will result in fruit that reflects your glory and vindicates the work of the Lord Jesus on our behalf, which we are commemorating this week. We ask it all in Jesus' name, amen.

As a quick reminder of the fact that this is the week leading up to Resurrection Sunday, you remember that this sequence of events began on Friday, the 8th of Nisan, shooting for Passover on the 14th. Friday the 8th, Jesus ate a meal at Simon the leper's house in Bethany. This is in Luke chapter 16, verse 20.

And then Saturday, the 9th of Nisan was of course the Sabbath and he eats a meal in Bethany at the house of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Sunday the 10th is the tragic entry, the approach to the owner of the cult, bearing water on his head and so on. And the cries of Hosanna, which are reflecting Psalm 118, that was this past Palm Sunday.

And you remember that there is lip service. This people draws near to me with their lips, but their heart is far from me, Isaiah 29, 13, and Matthew 15, eight and nine. Jesus goes to the temple and looks around after he proceeds down the hill on the palm fronds and scattered clothing and so on.

And in Mark 11, 11, he looks around at all things and then returns to Bethany. Many other things you can say about that. The feast of booths was often celebrated with the same kinds of branches and fronds.

Leviticus 23, 40 makes a note of that. The garments which are scattered in his path, you find in 2 Kings 9, 13, with the approach of Jehu. And in this regard, you might also check Revelation 7, 9 and 10.

We have covered these things in the past. This is just a quick review in commemoration of this season and this week. Monday, 11 Nisan, this is when Jesus is returning to Jerusalem, goes to the fig tree, looking for figs, even though it is not the season for figs because this tree has special expectations in the same way that the nation of Israel in the season of humanity may not be expected to bear fruit, but Israel is expected to bear fruit.

It has been especially situated and especially blessed and there ought to be early figs with this wonderful special blessing and situation of the tree, but this tree has leaves and no figs. And so it is cursed. Jesus then goes to the temple and cleanses it for a second time.

You remember the tables of the money changers and so on that happened at the beginning of his ministry. The first time this happened was in John chapter two, verses 13 through 22. And of course, there's no way John would put that so near the beginning of his gospel when it so clearly happens again at the end.

Jesus heals blind and lame people on this day and the Pharisees and the Sadducees, after hearing children repeating the hosannas that they heard on the preceding day on Sunday, the little children are shouting hosanna and the religious leadership is complaining about that. On Tuesday, 12 Nisan, the disciples once again on the same path see that that fig tree within 24 hours has withered and died. And the question to Jesus by what authority? And then you have the three parables, the three questions and the eight woes.

You have the three son parables are given on this Tuesday. The parable of the two sons asked to go to work. The parable of the wicked vine dressers and after sending servants to collect what is due to the owner, the owner sends his son.

And then the third is the parable of the wedding feast, which is thrown for the son. So you have those three son parables and there is another reference to Psalm 118 in this context. The kingdom will be taken from you and you will be ground to powder and so on.

There's references to the outer darkness and weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is a very busy teaching day. Then three questions, basically Caesar or God is the first

question.

The question of resurrection is the second and the greatest commandment is the third. So three parables, three questions. Then Jesus asks a question, David's son, how is he his Lord if he is his son? And of course that confounds them and they can't answer him.

Then Jesus pronounces the eight woes on the scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites. The widow with the two mites is observed on this day. Jesus comment that there will be no two stones one upon the other is on this day.

The signs of the last day, the coverage of Matthew 24 that we have recently seen is on this day. Then Jesus tells three more parables. The parable of the fig tree when it puts forth its leaves and so on.

Harking back to the preceding two days on the third day, cursing it one day, seeing it withered on this day. And then I guess it's the same day. He tells the parable of the fig tree putting forth its leaves.

The day and the hour are unknown. Those who are wise are going to sense it coming. Who is that wise and faithful servant who is master finds doing what he is supposed to do.

And this is one of the reasons we are so interested in Proverbs because the guidance that God gives to his children Old Testament and new is the same. How can we be faithful? How can we be wise? How can we be diligent? How can we be righteous? And that's what we're going to be seeing in Proverbs 10 tonight. Who is that faithful servant, wise servant, righteous servant that when the master returns unexpectedly will find fulfilling his responsibilities, being a good steward.

That was on the Tuesday, which of course in this week was yesterday. Then he gives the parable of the virgins and the lamps, often called the wise and foolish virgins. Oil, who's got the oil? And remember in Revelation 3, verse 18, buy for yourselves what you need.

Procure it, spend what you need to spend, invest what you need to invest, to have what you need to have to fulfill your responsibility. Parable of the talents. These were given, not purchased.

There are some things that we invest in and we put ourselves out for to obtain. Others are given to us without regard to any investment on our part. So the parable of the talents, they are given, not bought.

What is the result? We are either given more because we're faithful with what we have been entrusted, with that which we have been entrusted, or there is weeping and gnashing. And then the sheep and goats judgment parable, which is only a semi-parable, it's more of a metaphor. Sheep and goats.

Then you have the note in Matthew 26, verse one, that after two days comes the Passover. The reason we know that there is no silent Wednesday as many traditional chronologies want to invent is in Matthew 26, one, after two days comes the Passover. After two days, that is Wednesday and Thursday.

And at the close of the day on Thursday is the Passover. Matthew 26, one comports with the gospel of John in making it clear that the crucifixion took place on Thursday, just before the sun went down and the high Sabbath of Passover, which lasts all day Friday, begins. And then the Saturday Sabbath, so that the ladies could not come back to the tomb until Sunday morning.

After two days, the Passover, Wednesday and Thursday. Today, this is Wednesday. It was 13 Nisan in the year of our Lord's crucifixion.

This is where you have Matthew 26, verses 17 through 19, the preparation for the Sabbath, the evening meal, Wednesday night, followed by the arrest and the things that we have been seeing in Matthew chapter 27. In verse 20, evening had come and you have the explanations that we've been going through on Sunday as to those who did not want to enter the praetorium lest they defile themselves and not be able to eat the Sabbath. People have tried to reconcile this various ways saying that Passover is celebrated by two different persuasions on two different days.

And all of this is gymnastics. It's very clear, very plain. Scripture interprets itself.

Anyway, that is a quick reminder of what's going on. But this week, this hour, which we are sharing together is the evening on which the Lord Jesus celebrated the meal in the upper room, washed the feet of the disciples. Peter's nine denials take place on this night, et cetera.

All right, back to our Proverbs study. If you are in Proverbs chapter 10, you will remember that we looked at the first five verses last time and saw a wonderful symmetry there. In verse one, you have a wise son and a foolish son.

In verse five, you have a wise son and a son who causes shame. And within that, you have the treasures of wickedness that profit nothing. In verse two, righteousness delivers from death.

What is more valuable than life? Being delivered from death and extinction. What is more valuable? But the treasures of wickedness, whatever they may appear to be, actually profit nothing. And that is symmetrical with verse four.

He who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. So what is wealth? What is substance? And what is poverty? What is loss? Great food for thought in balancing verse two and verse four against each other. And right in the center, the Lord will not allow the righteous soul to famish.

Another picture. He casts away the desire of the wicked. Is there gain or is there loss? Is there treasure or is there poverty? Is there substance or is there absence of substance? All of that so beautifully woven together.

You can look at these verses and reflect on them for quite a period of time with great profit. We pick up tonight in verse six. Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked.

The memory of the righteous is blessed, but the name of the wicked will rot. And so we begin at this point to see that there are themes that are gonna be woven through this entire chapter. And we're going to view it as a chapter.

The chapter and verse divisions were not in the original, but I think these divisions are pretty good. I like where chapter 10 starts. I like where it finishes.

I think we pick on the people that organized the Bible and translated it in some cases, but I would like to commend whoever did this. And in my New King James, I think they attempted to group verses together and leave spaces when there's kind of a new topic being addressed. And I think that was a good and helpful effort.

And you can look at, well, why did the translators, why did the editors of the New King James group the verses this way? And you can look for the clues and look for the correspondences and for the complimentary nature and the either additive or contrasting nature of these comments. Once again, this is work we have to do for ourselves. You can't just sit and be spoon-fed.

You know, milk is for babies. Meat is for those who can pick up a knife and fork, cut it, stick it in their mouth and chew it. That's us.

This is we. And we want to do this for ourselves, but it takes a commitment. It takes the establishing of a priority.

I am going to set aside time. What happens to efforts for which we do not set aside time? We don't schedule it. We don't put it at the top of the list and say, as soon as I finish this, I am going to do that.

Deadlines force us to get stuff done. Company's coming. I have got to run the sweeper.

I have got to, you know, clean up and declutter and throw everything behind closed doors and, you know, put a lock on it so nobody does the Fibber McGee thing and open it and get avalanched. But deadlines and due dates force us. But when we are trying to self-impose, it's much more difficult.

Things float. Things get pushed aside. Well, not today, tomorrow.

A little sleep, a little folding of the hands to sleep, destruction coming suddenly, et

cetera. We'll see that down the road. But if we are serious, and hear me now, it is material in the Proverbs that I cannot parse, digest, put into the blender and present as paste.

Each of us has to look at this and reflect on it, pray over it, think about it, try to find the areas of application in our own life for ourselves. You can look at what it means. You can observe it.

You can interpret it and see that there are elements like a parable where it doesn't have to be the specific thing mentioned. Mouth is not just the mouth. It's speech.

It's communication. It could be a text. You don't text with your mouth.

Most people don't. But it's our communication, right? So we can interpret. But the application, nobody can do for us.

We have to do it for ourselves. And the word of God falls to the ground, fruitless and ineffectual if it does not result in application. So this is my pitch, and I'll be all done in 15 seconds here.

But I appeal to you from the word of God, whether it is the Lord Jesus, the Apostle Paul, Simon Peter, John, anybody in the New Testament will tell you, we have got to get the knife and fork, cut this into bite-sized chunks, which is what Proverbs is, and chew on it, imbibe it, digest it for ourselves. If you do not do this, this class is a waste of time. I'm telling you, as with any Bible class, we have to figure out how it applies.

I don't know your circumstances. You don't know my circumstances in the detail required to make application of these. So as we go through them, and as we look at these principles, make some notes that you can come back to, and in a quiet time, remember the principle of the Sabbath, one seventh of our time, of our waking hours, ought to be devoted in some form or fashion to the maintenance of our spiritual life, directing our attention and our prayers and our listening to God and His word, right? One in seven, it's a no-kidding commandment on the tablets, and none of the other commandments have been rescinded.

Can you think of a commandment of the 10 that doesn't apply in the church age? There's not one. I'll save you the trouble. There's not one.

They all apply, including remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. And this is why we get up early, we pause in the middle of the day, we reflect in the evening. This is something we can do together or individually.

By together, I mean when we're intimate enough that we can share situations and thoughts and challenges and so on, but it has to be done. So with that proviso and with that encouragement and exhortation, let's take a look here because we've already seen

that wisdom and foolishness have been introduced as a topic beginning at verse one and emphasized again in verse five, wise and foolish. And as we skim down through verse 10, and you'll want to make a note of these verses unless you want to discover them for yourself, but point one, it's rare for me to give points, but you'll want to organize this if you want to reflect on it later.

The reason we're organizing it on paper, we are not as smart as the people that could hear this and do it in their head. Remember in the old days, everybody could do math in their head, sophisticated math. We get a calculator, we find our phone, we do it the easy way.

People that think that we are the pinnacle of human development are wrong. People in this age were at the pinnacle of human development. They could do this stuff in their heads.

We can't, so we write it down. So I encourage you to write this down. Wise and foolish, we saw it in verse one, we see it in verse five.

Look at verse eight, the wise in heart and the prating fool. Wise and foolish, verse eight. Look at verse 10, he who winks with the eye causes trouble.

This is not but, this is and. And a prating fool will fall. This is a synonymous dis-stitch as they like to say.

Winking with the eye causing trouble and the prating fool. That's verse 10. Get verse 13, wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding, but a rod for the back of him devoid of understanding.

What are you if you're devoid of understanding? Starts with F and ends with ul. Look at verse 14, wise people store up knowledge, but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction. Wise and foolish.

So what do we have so far? Verse one, verse five, verse eight, verse 10, verse 13. Do you begin to think that this is a thread woven through this entire chapter? Verse 14, look at verse 17. He who keeps instruction is in the way of life.

What would you call somebody who intakes instruction? And keeps it, he's wise. But he who refuses correction goes astray. If you refuse correction, what are you? A fool.

Verse 19, multitude of words, sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise. Wise. Verse 21, the lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom.

Verse 23, to do evil is like sport to a fool. It's a game, it's an entertainment. But a man of understanding has wisdom.

Then for the whole rest of the chapter, wise and foolish drops out. There is not another

direct reference and very few indirect references to wisdom and foolishness for the whole rest of the chapter. So what would we conclude if we turn this sideways? If you read the spreadsheet rows instead of columns, what would you get? Let's, so point 1A is here are the verses where wisdom and foolishness are noted.

1B, what can we learn about wisdom and being wise? Well, out of verse 1, what do you find? A wise son makes a glad father. This is generational blessing. This is a blessing that goes backward to those to whom we owe life and sustenance and training and inculcation.

The notions that you find in the earliest chapters of Proverbs, my son, receive my instruction, listen to the words of your mother and so on. So it vindicates, it blesses, it makes glad the heart of one's parents. John in his epistle, I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

My children walk in truth. That's verse 1. We said the next one was in verse 5. What does it tell us? A wise son gathers in the summer. So those who are characterized by wisdom see and exploit opportunities.

Wouldn't you say? It's summertime, there's crops, there's available resources for the future. And a wise son is going to gather those. Remember the grasshopper that fiddled in the summer and the ant is harboring everything away.

And then in my little kid's book, you know, there's this grasshopper with an icicle hanging off the front of his face, banging on the door of the ant. And hey, you know, you got anything in there? I'm freezing out here. It's, that's a biblical principle.

So why would we note these? You could say, well, it would sure be nice to make my parents glad. And it would sure be nice to recognize opportunities and exploit them. What is the application for this? I'm hoping to give a few examples of how to do this on our own.

How would you make application of this? If I review my life, and this takes quiet time to think about my circumstances, think about my opportunities, think about my conversations, think about my expenditures of time. Can I look back over the last few days or the last few weeks? And can I see where hopefully others have been blessed? Especially those close to me. Remember, there's a parable element here.

It doesn't just have to be making your dad glad. It could be anyone in your near periphery who is, there is give and take. There is call and response.

There is support and dependence, sometimes in both directions. Is that relationship resulting in gladness and blessing? Are people glad to know you? Are they glad to be around you? Are they glad they came? Are you glad to know them? Are you glad they came? Is there joy? If there's not, guess what's lacking? Wisdom. Wisdom creates joy in

relationships.

It makes people glad. It's really great when both parties are wise, but God's wisdom is so powerful, even if it only exists on one side. The result ought to be joy, not consternation, not fill in your mental attitudes in here, fill in your sin of the tongue here.

When a wise person is involved in a relationship, see how we're working with this truth and figuring out how it applies. My father has passed away. Can I ignore this proverb? Not at all.

It's not just about fathers. It's about interpersonal relationships where one or more people are wise. It ought to result in gladness.

If there's a problem with gladness, you can't go searching directly for gladness. You go for the wisdom. I need to find me some wisdom.

I don't know about the other person, hopefully they're wise, but I can pursue wisdom. Where is the wisdom that will help me make this interpersonal relationship a blessing and a gladness? We've done one half of one verse in the Proverbs, and you can think about that for 15 or 20 minutes, right? So that's just the first point. The glad father principle, a wise son, glad father.

Gathering in the summer, recognizing opportunities. I can sit and think about, I don't have air conditioning. I'm living in Barstow, and the evaporative cooler is not working.

It's hot out here, I'm sweaty. I got a sunburn, there's red ants out here. The goat heads are everywhere.

I'm trying to run around barefooted, and I'm getting stickers in my feet. What do you look for in the summer? Everything that's wrong with it, or the opportunity to gather. This is whatsoever things.

To the extent that you've got purity and nobility and goodness and opportunity, think on these things. I'm not gonna worry about what I don't have. I'm gonna exploit what I do have, and build it into my soul for the future.

What are those circumstances in my individual life, in my married life, in my family life? What are those things? Am I too busy looking at the goat heads that made my tires go flat in Barstow, or am I looking at opportunities to learn and gain skills? That same bicycle that I used to have to fix flats on all the time, I distinctly remember riding that bicycle down the streets in the hot summer in Barstow, and learning how to whistle. And it's fun to whistle. Seems like a trivial thing, but whistling is cool.

If you can't sing, and somebody wants to know the tune to a song, you can whistle it when you can't carry a tune. But do you wanna just complain about the perspiring in

that, or do you want to look for what is profitable, what builds into the future? If there's wisdom present, we look around for what we can gather in the summer, and we gather it, and we're grateful. That's verse five.

What was our next verse about wise and foolish? That was verse eight. We look down at, the wise in heart will receive commands, a prating fool will fall. Wisdom and foolishness.

So just on the wisdom side, we'll cover foolishness shortly. What does the wise do in verse eight? Receives commands, receives commands. If instruction is coming from the word of God, do I quickly think of somebody who needs to hear that sermon? Boy, I wish so-and-so could hear this.

They really, you know, they would benefit from this instruction so much. Or do we figure out how can I take this to heart? How can this particular truth, especially in the realm of command, what does a command do? What is an imperative? Think about the military. What does a command in the military do? It changes the status quo.

If you have troops at ease, it brings them to attention. If they are at attention, it will right shoulder arms. It will give them a column left march.

It will have them order arms. It'll have them do an about-face. And it will remind you that it's a bad command to have them at right shoulder and then give about-face, especially if you have fixed bayonets.

You put people at order arms and then have them about-face and then pick the weapons back up onto the shoulder. That's the best practice. You don't want a lot of creased foreheads, you know, blood spilling down onto white uniforms and such.

But what does a command do? It changes the status quo. What part of the word of God that I can receive as an instruction is gonna change my status quo? What do I need to do that I'm not doing? What do I need to stop doing that I am doing? If we receive commands, we're wise. I need to look.

Are there some commands that I have not really received? Reception isn't just, did I hear it? But did I respond? Did it make a difference? That's verse eight. Verse 10, he who winks with the eye causes trouble, but a prating fool will fall. This is what we're gonna see when we cover the fool is what are the contrasts? If I catch any of the descriptions of a fool applying to myself, what am I not? If I am in the dictionary with my picture next to the word fool, I am not wise.

So when we get to looking at the description of fool, which is in this verse, we're gonna see this is what to run away from, what to stop. What if we see it in the mirror? You know, you find something you don't want people to see when you look in the mirror, well, you fix it. Well, we're only halfway through the characteristics of the wise.

But once again, we are driving toward application. This doesn't help if we just hear it. Looking into the law of liberty like a mirror, walking away and straightway forgetting what we saw.

This has to make a difference. This is the gift and the privilege we have as believers is God's word is alive and powerful. It's not an aphorism.

It's not a quip. It's not a pithy little Aesop fable. Those have no power.

The word of God has power, but we can negate the power. We can neutralize the effect if we do not actively seek it and search for it and ask God to impress it on our hearts and then respond to it, receive the command, receive the instruction. This has been emphasized in Proverbs for these first nine chapters.

Listen to lady wisdom, respond, come when she calls. Don't get distracted and deflected and led down the dark alley to the crafty harlot's house. That is the way of death.

And in spiritual terms, that is living the days that God gives us these precious opportunities, these great potentials and stewardships to no purpose. Well, we have a lot more to see in this regard and we will see it after the break.