

Woodland Baptist Church
Wednesday November 6, 2013
Seeking Wisdom Together - Proverbs 2:1-22

1) Introduction

- a) How many of us can agree with this statement - "if I knew then what I know now, I would have made some very different decisions." That is the birth of wisdom - hindsight, based on consequences of bad /unwise/ungodly decisions.

2) READ Proverbs 2:1-22

- a) Proverbs 2 is a 22-line poem, exactly the number of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and it constitutes one continuous (and conditional) sentence. The verses are marked by the starting letter aleph, which opens v. 1 and closes v. 4; the same letter also begin vv. 5 and 9. The second half of the Hebrew alphabet begins with lamed.

i) Suggested outline:

- (1) Aleph stanza [2:1-4], "If you" (three times, vv. 1,3,4)
- (2) Aleph stanza [2:5-8], "Then you will understand ("guard," v. 8)
- (3) Aleph stanza [2:9-11], "Then you will understand" ("protect," v. 11)
- (4) Lamed stanza [2:13-15], "to be saved" from evil men
- (5) Lamed stanza [2:16-19], "to be saved" from the adulteress
- (6) Lamed stanza [2:20-22], "in order to walk" safe in the land¹

- b) This means that the major theme of the fear of Yahweh, placarded in 1:7 and spotlighted in 1:29, is here floodlighted into even greater prominence. What is implicit in all of Proverbs, chapter 2 makes brightly explicit: Wisdom comes from God and no one can enjoy it who does not choose God's paths.²

3) Verses 1-4 - The Great Value Found in Seeking and Accepting Wisdom

- i) The intensity of the appeal matches the intensity of the speeches of Moses in Deuteronomy.³

¹ Koptak, 98

² Hubbard, kindle book

³ Murphy, 15

b) 1 My son, if you receive my *words* and treasure up my *commandments* with you, 2 making your EAR attentive to wisdom and inclining your HEART to understanding; 3 yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, 4 if you seek it like *silver* and search for it as for *hidden treasures*...

i) Notice these are conditional situations...If...If...If...the three “if you” statements work together to portray this search for wisdom as strenuous, requiring all the strength that one has.⁴

(1) Receive my *words*...treasure up my *commandments* - What words and commandments is he talking about? [The law and prophets]

(2) Making your EAR attentive....inclining your HEART [understanding]

(a) EAR - HEART connection - what goes into your ear is collected in your heart, as heart in Jewish understanding is the character of the person.

(b) Have you noticed how loud noises scare us or how music causes our body to react in certain ways? What we hear in our ears, affects our heart in more ways than just it's rate, the Jew saw it as the entirety of the person's existence.

(3) *Call out* for insight...*raise* your voice [understanding]

(a) Where wisdom was clamoring to be heard, here it is the pupil who must clamor; its method is not one of free speculation, but of treasuring and exploring received teachings so as to penetrate to their principles.⁵

(4) *Seek it* like silver....*search* as hidden treasure [understanding]

(a) Like “silver,” once so rare in Palestine that it outranked gold in value, like hidden treasures (the Hebrew word depicts the money that Joseph slipped surreptitiously into the grain bags of his brothers, Gen. 43:23), wisdom is to be garnered and then put to work (v. 4).⁶

⁴ Garrett, Logos

⁵ Kidner, 61

⁶ Hubbard, kindle

c) This process of learning, accepting, and keeping is equated with attentiveness to wisdom and understanding (2:2), calling out for insight and understanding (2:3) and searching for them as for treasure of silver (2:4).⁷

d) The Attitude that should be brought:

i) First, the student should listen attentively to the teacher (vv. 1–2). That is, he must accept the teachings as valid, commit them to memory, and focus all his attention on them. Second, he must yearn for Wisdom in a way analogous to that of the supplicant pleading to God or the king for deliverance from trouble (v. 3). Third, he must seek it as one seeks for lost money or hidden treasure (v. 4; Job 28; cf. Luke 15:8–10).⁸

4) **Verses 5-8 - The Source of Wisdom the Protection found in Wisdom**

i) This is somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, the teacher speaks as if everything depends upon listening and obedience of the youth. On the other hand, wisdom is a divine gift.⁹

b) 5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. 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 watching over the way of his saints.

i) From God's mouth comes - Understanding & knowledge of God which will lead to the Fear of the Lord

(a) From who's mouth? The One True God - Yahweh of the Old Testament, Jesus of the New Testament - one in the same - God in three persons - Father, Son and Spirit.

ii) Through pursuing wisdom we are striving for the mind of God - for from his heart comes his mind - **1 Corinthians 2:10-12** -For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends

⁷ Ibid, look at mining for treasure in Job 28

⁸ Garrett, Logos

⁹ Murphy, 15

the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

c) **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 watching over the way of his saints.**

i) *God stores up sound wisdom for the upright* - as we learn to fear God through wisdom and knowledge of God; this knowledge is stored up and the Spirit assimilates it into usable, practical wisdom that is “stored” in our hearts.

ii) *God is a shield for those that walk in integrity* - the stored up wisdom, when called upon and applied, leads to a shielded walk of integrity.

(1) **1 Peter 3:13-17** - 13 Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15 but **in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect**, 16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, **those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame**. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. [we are shielded, even when attacked]

iii) *Upright/Those that walk in integrity* = Saints that walk in guarded paths of justice being watch over by God.

(1) **Philippians 4:4-11** - 4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. 5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

d) The three benefits that follow all mention Yahweh's protection ("shield," "guard"), the image of the way ("walk," "course), and the character of the way and its travelers ("upright," "blameless," "just," "faithful").¹⁰

i) **Psalm 84:11** - For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

5) **Verses 9-11** - Then the PROTECTION wisdom offers will be YOURS

a) **9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path; 10 for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; 11 discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you,**

i) *Righteousness, justice, equity and every good path* - according to the Scriptures can only be known through the fear and knowledge of God.

ii) *Wisdom will come into your heart* - again connect to the ear and being willing to listen and apply wisdom to your life - through this process, it takes root in your character, which is assimilated and grows over time.

iii) *Knowledge will be pleasant to your soul* - knowledge from God that enables good discretion...the ability to make choices that will reflect righteousness, justice and equity.

iv) *Discretion will watch over you* - who would argue that discretion is not a very needed thing in our lives? The ability to have good judgment in a variety of different situations?

v) *Understanding will guard you* - when we exercise good discretion and minimize chaos and confusion...through good understanding, we are guarded, spiritually, emotionally, physically...etc.

6) **Verses 12-15** You will be PROTECTED from evil MEN

a) **12 delivering you from the way of evil, from men of perverted speech, 13 who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness, 14 who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil, 15 men whose paths are crooked, and who are devious in their ways.**

i) One of the primary goals of the proverbs is to help us choose relationships that are healthy and not destructive. Here the the parent is helping his son to avoid the wicked man that will invariably try to snare him in his wickedness.

¹⁰ Koptak, 100

(1) Delivering you from the way of evil men:

- (a) Perverted speech - what is in the heart, comes out of the mouth; they are vile in speech; they will tell slanderous jokes, talk about women in ways that are disgusting, ridicule people for they way they dress or talk; purposely deceive people just for the fun of it; share half truths to convince someone to do something to get what you want.
- (b) Walk in darkness - be an enemy of God, reject the light of the gospel and the fear and knowledge of God;
- (c) Rejoice in doing evil - having fun while actually doing evil deeds; getting excited while calculating evil; looking forward and getting satisfaction out of harming others, much like the “enticement of sinners” from chapter 1.
- (d) Delight in perverseness of evil - enjoying thinking about evil; getting actual emotional stimulation from the thoughts of doing evil things; beating people up; stealing from people; physically assaulting people; perhaps filming the event and watching it over and over again.
- (e) Paths are crooked - unlike the righteous whose paths are straight according to the Lord’s wisdom; their paths are bad “off track,” and “crooked,” mostly because they walk in darkness and stumble about.
 - (i) **1 John 2:11** - 11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.
- (f) Devious in their ways - always plotting some form of deception for evil purposes; willing to lie and trick people to get what they want.

7) **Verses 16-19 - You will be PROTECTED from evil WOMEN**

- a) **16 So you will be delivered from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words, 17 who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God; 18 for her house sinks down to death, and her paths to the departed; 19 none who go to her come back, nor do they regain the paths of life.**

i) You will be delivered from the forbidden woman/adulteress

- (1) Her smooth words [His perverted speech] - again her speech is also misleading and evil, but very convincing and alluring - she is flattering

with words - compliments continually, deep alluring eye contact, flirtatious in her mannerisms.

- (2) Forsakes the companion of her youth [walking in darkness] - this would indicate that she has divorced her first husband, who was most likely affirmed by both families when she was a younger woman, promised by dowery to a young Jewish man. But she left him for someone else.
- (3) Forgets the covenant of her God [rejoice in doing evil] - Although she is a Jew and Israelite, she is not one of the true Israelites, as she has set aside her covenant with God, which would be indicated by casting off her covenanted marriage to her first husband.
- (4) Her house sinks down to death [delight in perverseness of doing evil] - she is headed toward destruction and "her house" means that everyone that gets involved with her is headed in the same direction.
- (5) Her paths to the departed [paths are crooked] - meaning those that are no longer living;
- (6) None who go to her come back/Nor do they regain the paths of life ["evils in their ways] - those that give in to her temptations fall into a trap and they are unable to regain the way of life.

(a) It seems best to refer here to **Malachi 2:14** -14 But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

- ii) If the emphasis seems one-sided, slanted toward the seductiveness of women and the gullibility of men, the reasons are understandable: (1) Proverbs by its very purpose centers in the needs of the men who were to play strategic roles in public life; (2) in that society women would have been much more protected than men by their families from whose watchful care they would have little opportunity to stray.¹¹

¹¹ Hubbard, Kindle book

8) **Verses 20-22** - You will be identified as RIGHTEOUS and PROSPER

a) **20 So you will walk in the way of the good and keep to the paths of the righteous. 21 For the upright will inhabit the land, and those with integrity will remain in it, 22 but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the treacherous will be rooted out of it.**

i) The process is that wisdom and knowledge, when they become your own way of thinking, and your acquired taste, will make the talk and interests of evil men alien to you. Even the adventuress with her smooth words will show up at once false - as both quitter and precisely, femme fatale, who offers you a taste of life, and sells you death.¹²

b) **Deuteronomy 30:15-20** -15 "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. 16 If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. 17 But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, 18 I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. 19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, 20 loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

¹² Kidner, 62