

INTRODUCTION

Isaiah 17

10. ***Because you have forgotten the God*** of your salvation, and ***have not been mindful*** of the Rock of your stronghold, therefore you will plant pleasant plants and set out foreign seedlings;

11. in the day you will make your plant to grow, and in the morning you will make your seed to flourish; ***but the harvest will be a heap of ruins*** in the day of grief and ***desperate sorrow***.

Isaiah is one of the most quoted Old Testament books, even by Jesus. Do you know why? It's ***because everything he had said came to pass***. As the word of God, he has excellent credibility. And this is what he had to say on Israel's lack of basic wisdom.

Their lack of wisdom ***showed in their response to the Lord***. They knew Him, but they ***forgot*** Him. They knew He was a solid stronghold in a dangerous world, but they ignored His ways. They ***planted pleasant, but foreign seedlings*** in their culture, thinking, values, and practices.

And it ***worked out really well!*** It all seemed to be good, ***until the end*** when things came to their full effect. Then it was a harvest of "desperate sorrow." That word "***desperate***" is a powerful word in the original language ("anash") which means, among other things, ***incurable***.

Unwise minds- ***forget God and are unmindful of His ways***. For ***that person, even that civilization; things may seem to be going well, but the end will be ruin and "incurable" sorrow***.

As we journey into wisdom as described in Proverbs, ***there are a few things for us to know***:

First is to be aware that ***righteous, learning, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom are used almost interchangeably***.

Another thing is the ***matter of our approach***. There are ***many ways to approach*** the wisdom of Proverbs: One approach is the ***comparison of opposites***. For example, the writer teaches wisdom by comparing the ***foolish with the wise and the diligent with the lazy***.

But another approach is by focusing on how wisdom ***affects the different layers of our humanity***. A working definition of wisdom may be "common sense," but ***wisdom doesn't start with the mind, and it doesn't end there***. So our approach will be the influence of wisdom through the layers of our being as ***represented by physical body parts***; starting with the ***brain or mind***. So let's look at...

DISCUSSION

IN WHAT WAYS HAS OUR CHRISTIAN CULTURE "FORGOTTEN GOD" AND HAS "NOT BEEN MINDFUL?"

WHAT CONSEQUENCES CAN WE EXPECT?

HOW CAN WE CORRECT THIS?

QUALITIES OF WISDOM IN THE MIND

- **A wise mind is open**

Prov 14

6. **A scoffer seeks wisdom and does not find it**, but knowledge is easy to him who **understands**.

7. **Go from the presence of a foolish man, when you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge.**

What is the scoffer scoffing? -*The basic premise that wisdom comes from the Lord.* There are books written at the PHD level on Scripture that are not worth reading; because they reject the basic premise that God is real. If the basic premise rejects God, how can there be any power or wisdom for you; even in the very words of God?

By in ***starting from the right premise, you can gain understanding.*** The word here for “understanding” is “biyn.” Among other things, it ***means diligent, instruct, and teach.*** The open mind ***actively processes*** what it is hearing.

- **The wise mind is open, but with discretion**

Prov 1

5. **A wise man will hear and increase learning**, and a man of **understanding** will attain wise counsel,

The wise mind is open, but ***it has its filters.*** There is every possible point of view in the world, and quite frankly, they all can't be right. People can teach some of the most foolish things and yet make them sound so reasonable.

I think of some of the ***cults like David Koresh.*** He had a group of people thoroughly convinced that he was the Messiah. But it was foolish teaching and just as Proverbs told us last week, it ended in their death. These people were very sincere, they were open-minded, and they truly wanted a connection with the Lord. ***What filters were they missing?*** Filter number one; ***trusting what the Lord has already given us.*** This “messiah” was completely out of step with the teaching the genuine Messiah has already left us.

The original word for “understanding” used here (tabuwn) means ***reason, skillfulness, or discretion.*** The wise mind is open, but with ***skilled discretion*** as a filter.

- **The wise mind learns from its mistakes; *through the rebuke of others***

Prov 17

10. **Reproof is more effective for a wise man** than a hundred blows on a fool.

Wise minds are still human, ***we all make mistakes.*** What will distinguish us as wise or foolish will be ***how we respond to those mistakes;*** particularly when someone points them out. I think we all have the same basic impulse, we become ***defensive.*** But the wise mind deliberately goes against impulse for the sake of a constructive change.

- The wise mind learns from its mistakes; *through the rebuke of life*

Prov 15

31. The ear that hears the reproof of life will abide among the wise.

32. He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, but he who heeds reproof gets understanding.

We all have our “pity parties.” We suffer some type of bad fortune and we automatically say, “It isn’t fair.” Often it really is fair, because it is simply the consequences of our own actions. The wise mind realizes it had better rise above the pity party so the same thing doesn’t happen again.

And even if it is not fair, ***life is not necessarily fair or unfair***, it is simply a chain of events and consequences. Even ***God is not overly concerned with fairness in this life***, that is reserved for the Day of Judgment. What God is concerned about in this life is allowing whatever it takes to ***bring us to eternal life***. The wise mind realizes this and learns to navigate life from that basic premise. “—***What does God want me to learn from this?***”

DISCUSSION

NAME SOME GOOD WAYS AND BAD WAYS TO HAVE AN OPEN MIND?

HOW DO YOU CULTIVATE GOOD DISCRETION?

HOW DOES ONE LEARN FROM HIS/HER MISTAKES?

- The wise mind isn’t simply open, it actively seeks out wisdom.

Proverbs 2

4. If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures;

5. then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

No one becomes wise by accident. No one wakes up in the morning and says, “Oh darn! I just became wise by accident! How did that happen?”

It is quite simple; ***if we don’t make wisdom a priority, we simply never become wise.*** The number of years you live; the events you are exposed to; the academic knowledge you attain; in themselves, they will not make you wise. It is an objective all of its own.

- The wise mind has enough sense to know where its real strength comes from.

Prov 8

14. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength.

What is mine? –Counsel. Again, this word in the original (‘etsah) carries some interesting meanings; it means ***prudence, advice, but it also means purpose.***

The word for understanding here (biynah) means to ***grasp the meaning perfectly*** or correctly or completely.

God gives advice directly; and through people He sends our way, when we are wise enough to **catch the meaning**, it will help us in our God-given purpose, and the wise mind realizes that is where we get our strength. It is strength in direction and it is strength in resolve.

- **The wise mind is compassionate.**

Prov 29

7. The **righteous considers the cause of the poor**, but the wicked does not understand such knowledge.

Why the poor? -Because the poor and the powerless are so easy to overlook. They can't really do anything to directly benefit us, so they are easy to drop off our radar. But even if we don't see a natural reason to take them into account, it **must be very important, because we are told to consider them in both the Old and New Testament.** In fact, the Book of James says their care is the core of pure religion. **Why is that?**

Taking care of those who have no hope of paying back is at the very heart of God's nature. That is the story of Jesus Christ **with us**. The main reason the wise mind considers the poor is this: **We are never more like our Lord than when we are pouring ourselves out for those who are powerless to reciprocate**; those who are powerless to even help themselves.

The mind that is wise in Christ realizes this, but the mind outside of Christ can make no sense of it.

- **The wise mind is fair**

Prov 24

23. These things also belong to the wise: It is **not good to show partiality in judgment.**

Once again, the wise mind is simply **taking on the nature of God**, because God loves humanity without prejudice or partiality. God is infinite and partiality is a very limiting thing.

- **The wise mind stays connected**

Proverbs 18

1. A **man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment.**

In our broken human nature, this is another instinct. **When we realize we aren't doing something quite right, what's our natural tendency?** We tend to hide it so nobody knows. If people know they just might give us some honest advice and we don't want to hear it.

We see it in churches all the time, all of a sudden a person withdraws; you just don't see them for a while. Even pastors are subject to this. It is foolish and dangerous to isolate yourself, not just from God, **but God's people**. The wise mind overcomes the instinct to **break** the connection, or to even allow it to **slowly shrivel up**.

DISCUSSION

NAME SOME WAYS YOU SEEK OUT WISDOM?

WHY IS IT WISE TO “CONSIDER THE POOR?”

WITHOUT NAMING NAMES, GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF SOMEONE ISOLATING HIM OR HERSELF

- The wise mind lives up to what it knows.

Prov 16

20. He who heeds the word wisely [acts prudently] will find good, *and whoever trusts in the Lord, happy is he.*

- Above all things, the wise mind trusts God.

“...trusts in the Lord”

Trust is another interesting word in the original Hebrew (batach).

It means to hide for refuge, to be confident or sure, to be bold or secure, and to hope.

Do those terms describe your relationship with the Lord? That is the beginning of wisdom, and it is a standard practice through life for the wise mind.

CONCLUSION

Open, discrete, learns from reproof or mistakes, actively seeks what is true, aware of its real source of strength, compassionate, fair, accountable; and all of these qualities, first and foremost, come through confidence in the Lord.

What kind of a mind does that sound like to you? It sounds like a Christian mind to me, and yet this is nine hundred and fifty years before Christ was born. It just illustrates how timeless truth and wisdom really are!

As you look at those qualities, *how does your mind stack up?* -Any areas that need a little help? It's an interesting mixture, isn't it? *These qualities are not fully possible without the Spirit of God alive within you; and yet they are impossible without your personal effort.*

For us to experience a relationship with God, we really need to make two decisions.

Phil 2

5. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

We decide to accept Christ as Savior; but we must also resolve with all our being, to absorb the mind of Christ.

Do you want to experience God? Then ask yourself: How are you doing with both those decisions?

DISCUSSION

IN YOUR CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE, WHAT THINGS DO YOU FIND HARDEST TO LIVE UP TO?

GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF TRUSTING GOD

HOW ARE YOU DOING WITH DECISION 1; DECISION 2?