

Sermon Discussion 2/5/17

Overview

Proverbs is given to us to help us live well in God's world. This assumes that God made the world and that there's the potential for creating beauty and harmony or making a mess in areas like how we talk, how we think, and how we feel. It provides wisdom for how to navigate the gray areas in life – where values compete. For how to obey God in clear areas – to avoid paths that end in trouble.

We need help to not just be rule-followers, but to live lives of holistic beauty.

1. What is this book?
 - a. Short, pithy sayings. Not extended narrative.
 - b. Written by Solomon and others. A "community of wisdom" (Ortlund)
2. Why is it here?
 - a. To know wisdom. To capture the depth/breadth: wisdom is intellectual, practical, ethical, and progressive.
3. Where do we start?
 - a. V7: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (fear = reverent trust that leads to love)
 - b. See God as holy *and* gracious
 - c. Seek to maintain a posture of humility – being open to the source of wisdom

Quotations

"As we come to the book of Proverbs, we're approaching a community of wisdom, a group of people standing around talking together, men and women, who are Yoda-smart. We beginners sidle up to this circle of people that includes Solomon and Isaiah and Paul and Augustine and Luther and other remarkable people we've known personally and admired. We start listening in on the conversation inside that circle. We overhear words and concepts we don't understand at first, so we have to stick with it to catch on. But as we do, we start to leave behind our shallow entertainment-mindset that expects effortless, pat answers that in fact have always failed us. As we listen to the wise, we grow. We, even we, become profound people too." – Ray Ortlund

"Godly fear flows from a sense of the love and kindness of God to the soul. Where there is no sense of hope of the kindness and mercy of God by Jesus Christ, there can be none of this fear, but rather wrath and despair, which produces a fear that is... devilish;... But godly fear flows from a sense of hope of mercy from God by Jesus Christ." – John Bunyan

Understanding & Application

1. Why should we study the book of Proverbs?
 - a. Describe an area that feels gray to you – where values are in tension with each other
 - b. Describe an area that is black and white, but you value wisdom that keeps you from taking wrong paths
2. What type of writing is the book of Proverbs?
 - a. How should we approach it compared to other literature forms?
 - b. What is the difference between prescriptive and descriptive parts of Scripture?
3. Proverbs 1:7 says that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
 - a. How else is the Hebrew word for wisdom translated in the OT? Where is it used?
 - b. Do you have a biblically robust view of the phrase "fear of the Lord"?