

I'm All Ears, part 4

(Proverbs 22:17-24:22)

5/23/18; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

Our daughters actually like old TV shows.

Anna has completed all the seasons of Andy Griffith on Netflix.

And sometimes at lunch, they will all eat while watching a rerun of I Love Lucy.

Lucy is truly timeless humor as her antics and schemes are some of the funniest out there..

One of the most popular episodes is called “Job Switching” where Fred and Ricky take care of the house while Lucy and Ethel head to work...

In the episode, the girls get a job in a candy factory, and their job is to wrap the candy coming at them on a conveyor belt...

All is well while the belt moves at a slower speed, but chaos breaks out when the belt speeds up..

Lucy and Ethel begin stuffing the excess candies in their hat, in the shirts and in their mouths to keep them from passing by them...

It is really one of the funniest scenes of the show..

Well, I kinda feel like Lucy and Ethel the past few weeks as we have seen Solomon's collection of 30 sayings come at us in rapid fire fashion.

We have picked them off one at a time for a few weeks now but it is kind of overwhelming each week...

Tonight, we will make it to wisdom saying #30 of Solomon's collection, but we will probably feel a little frazzled by the time we get there..

However, take the time to read back over these and really the rest of the book of Proverbs and you will begin to really retain this wisdom in your life...

Well enough said, let's begin the conveyor belt and grab Wisdom Saying #19 is verses 1-2 of Proverbs 24..

WISDOM SAYING #19

Proverbs 24:1-2***1******Do not be envious of evil men,
Nor desire to be with them;******2******For their [a]minds devise violence,
And their lips talk of trouble.***

Due to the paparazzi around famous people, due to social media in the lives of ordinary people, we can now see into the lives of so many people...

Take out your phone and you can see what your favorite celebrity had for breakfast...

Get on the computer and you can see where your high school friend's family went on vacation..

And often times what we are witnessing are the lives of unbelievers...

These aren't the people that we want to imitate with our own lives, yet our hearts grow jealous of all they do and have.

We want to take the trips they take, buy the cars they buy, and spend a vacation with them on the beach in Florida...

Yet the wisdom of God is clear in verse 1..

Do not be envious of evil men nor desire to be with them..

And the reason is that their evil will rub off on us since their minds are filled with sinful thoughts and their mouths speak evil..

You have all heard the saying that if you lay down with dogs, you get up with fleas...

But I heard a new one last week...

You can't soar with eagles if you hang out with buzzards..

On top of all that, why would you be envious of someone who is lost...

There is nothing to envy in a person who is headed for destruction..

IF there is anyone to be envied in this world, it is the believer committed to the Lord with his whole heart...

If you must be must be filled with envy, be jealous of the Christian living his life with integrity and desire what he or she has..

Wisdom saying #20 is found in verses 3-4..

WISDOM SAYING #20

3

***By wisdom a house is built,
And by understanding it is established;***

4

***And by knowledge the rooms are filled
With all precious and pleasant riches.***

Verses 3-4 present a little challenge to us..

Is this meant to be taken as a literal house, as representative of a family tree, or is building a house symbolic of the journey of growing old...

Well, I always take the literal unless told otherwise..

And building a home is not a simple undertaking, either in the days of Solomon or today...

But the wisdom of God is this..

Be wise in house building...

Location, financial investment, family considerations, and plenty of other things factor in building a home, so be wise and seek understanding and counsel..

And if you are, the Lord will bless your home with more wisdom, more understanding and more knowledge.

Fools build without planning and their resistance to wisdom often leads to trouble..

WISDOM SAYING #21

5

*A wise man is [b]strong,
And a man of knowledge [c]increases power.*

6

*For by wise guidance you will [d]wage war,
And in abundance of counselors there is victory.*

There is strength that comes from lifting weights..

And there is strength that comes from using your mind...

For a while I worked with a guy who installed and serviced overhead doors..

These doors are incredibly heavy and incredibly difficult to maneuver into place...

Yet, he could do most installations all by himself...

And the reason for that is that he used his knowledge of physics and mechanics to position these doors with the right equipment and tools...

Where I would probably break my back trying to pick up one of these doors and hold it in place, he could do it with very little physical effort...

The old saying, "Work smarter, not harder" definitely applied to him...

And that is also the wisdom of verses 5 and 6 here in Proverbs 24..

Though there is strength in brute force at times, there is also great strength in knowledge and wisdom and wise counsel..

Verse 6 says that victory in war is the result of wise counsel as much as it is the result of physical superiority..

The application for us is to use God's wisdom to our advantage in life...

Sometimes it is much better to use our heads rather than our muscles..

WISDOM SAYING #22.

The next wisdom saying is a single verse...

Proverbs 24:7.

7

***Wisdom is too exalted for a fool,
He does not open his mouth in the gate.***

The gate is a reference to the town square or the meeting place of a community where people discuss the matters of the day..

And the simple wisdom here is that foolish people have nothing to contribute to the conversation..

In other words, people who despise wisdom, who are too lazy to seek knowledge, who are too simple minded to pursue understanding suffer in intelligent conversations...

They listen to these conversations but they have no insight to offer since they ignored the value of wisdom..

Ever been in a conversation with others, and one of the members of the group says something foolish or not even related to the topic?

You are witnessing the teaching of this proverb.

If you want to offer wisdom to a conversation, you better make sure you are a student of wisdom first.

Otherwise, you will either speak foolishly or not be able to speak at all during intelligent conversations...

WISDOM SAYING #23

In verses 8 and 9, we find wisdom saying #23 in Solomon's collection of 30...

8

*One who plans to do evil,
Men will call a [e]schemer.*

9

*The devising of folly is sin,
And the scoffer is an abomination to men*

People tend to carry many labels in society..

There are good people and bad people.

There are honest people and liars..

There are generous people and greedy people.

In verse 8, people who plan to do evil are schemers..

And the wisdom lesson is simple.

Live in such a way that people put a good label on you and not a bad one.

Some translations use the word troublemaker instead of schemer here...

And that is probably a clearer translation for our vocabulary..

In other words, live in such a way that people call you a peacemaker and not a troublemaker...

It amazes me and saddens when I see people who call themselves Christians, but are seen by the world as unfriendly and unkind people...

If you are going to claim to be saved, your reputation in the world should reflect Christian living..

A Christian who is known as a liar or a drunk or a gossip or hot-tempered is a shame to the name of Christ..

WISDOM SAYING #24.

In verse 10, we find wisdom saying #24...

10

***If you are slack in the day of distress,
Your strength is limited.***

If you live in this world, you are going to experience days of distress..

Jesus told his disciples, “In this world, you will have trouble.”

The book of Job tells us that man is born for trouble..

So the issue is not, “if I find distress,” but rather “when I find distress.”

And since we will find trouble and distress, the question is will we be ready for it?

Well, this proverb teaches us that if we are slack or if we fail or if we are faint in the day of distress, then our strength to endure will be small or limited...

In other words, prepare your hearts in the days of peace for the days of trouble that are coming..

Be ready for distress by building a solid foundation in the word of God..

As Jesus, if your foundation is sand, expect your house to be washed away in a storm..

Because the foundation is weak..

However if your foundation is the rock of Christ and His word, your strength to endure is great.

There have been countless Christians who fall into despair in days of trouble and they wail and cry and scream for help..

But the reality is that they were lazy building their foundation in their Bible reading and prayer life...

And if you are lazy in days of peace, you will be weak in days of trouble..

God's wisdom tells us to be prepared and ready for distress..

WISDOM SAYING #25

Verses 11 nada 12 give us wisdom saying #25..

11

***Deliver those who are being taken away to death,
And those who are staggering to slaughter, Oh
hold them back.***

12

***If you say, "See, we did not know this,"
Does He not consider it who weighs the hearts?
And does He not know it who keeps your soul?
And will He not [f]render to man according to his
work?***

As we dig for the meaning here, the question is who are those in verse 11 “being taken away to death and the slaughter?”

Well, it could be a prisoner of war about to be wrongly executed..

It could be someone unjustly accused of a crime...

OR it could simply be the foolish unbeliever marching to hell..

I tend to take the last view but the wisdom of the verse is clear..

We must do all we can to protect the one headed for destruction...

In the case of the wrongly accused criminal, we must call for justice..

In the case of the eternally doomed unbeliever, we must call for repentance..

Now, the often used excuse for not saying anything in found in verse 12...

“We didn’t know what was happening.”

Yet, God reminds us all that while we may tells others that we didn’t know, He knows what we know...

And we clearly know the future for all who reject the Lord...

So, don't stand around thinking that everyone around you is on the same road to heaven...

But rather, get busy trying to hold other back from busting the door to hell wide open...

WISDOM SAYING #26...

As we inch closer to the end of Solomon's collection of 30 sayings, we find wisdom saying 26 in verses 13-14...

13

***My son, eat honey, for it is good,
Yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste;***

14

***Know that wisdom is thus for your soul;
If you find it, then there will be a [g]future,
And your hope will not be cut off.***

Every morning before school, my grandma would fix biscuits for me..

For years, I ate them plain...

No butter, no cheese, no meat, just a plain ol biscuit and they were good...

But then one day, I got up the nerve to do what my grandpa did...

And what he did was pull the biscuit apart and pour dark Karo syrup over both halves and eat it with a fork..

My life has never been the same since..

Look, we all understand the sweetness of honey..

The father tells the son in verse 13 that honey is good and sweet to taste..

And then he makes the comparison of honey to the word and wisdom of God...

Just like honey is good for your taste buds, God's wisdom is equally good for your should today and forever...

I agree with David who said in Psalm 34:8...

Taste and see that the Lord is good...

Verses 15 and 16 give us wisdom saying #27..

WISDOM VERSE # 27

15

***Do not lie in wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous;
Do not destroy his resting place;***

16

***For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again,
But the wicked stumble in time of calamity.***

Though the book of Proverbs is written to the righteous man, God also warns the evil man within this book as well...

Case in point are verses 15 and 16 where the evil man is warned of the dangers of the taking on the righteous man..

And the wisdom is simply...

God raises up the righteous man over and over again..

If you remember in the book of Acts, the Jews were furious that the gospel of Christ was spreading and they hatched a plan to kill these early Christians..

But one of the Jews spoke up and said this..

Acts 5:38-39

38 So in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or [x]action is of men, it will be overthrown; 39 but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God.”

This is the reality of Proverbs 24:15-16...

Evil men may try to overthrow the righteous, but they will have to overthrow God to be completely successful..

WISDOM SAYING #28

Wisdom saying 28 is very appropriate for our present culture...

17

***Do not rejoice when your enemy falls,
And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles;***

18

***Or the Lord will see it and [h]be displeased,
And turn His anger away from him.***

The divide in our culture is only growing daily...

There are divisions based on the color of skin..

There are divisions based upon amount of wealth..

There are divisions based upon political ideas..

There are divisions based on all sorts of other things...

And those growing divisions make it very tempting for a person to gloat and rejoice when their enemy stumbles...

Yet the wisdom of verses 17-18 says that we should not do that..

In fact, our pleasure in their destruction may even cause God to pull back from their full destruction..

Look, I feel this temptation all the time when I see enemies of the gospel fail...

But I cannot forget my ultimate purpose and that is to see people come to faith in Christ...

And that includes even those who may not be my favorite people in the world...

The world needs to see more compassion from the church and less gloating especially when our enemies fall..

WISDOM VERSE #29

Verses 19 and 20 give up next to last piece of wisdom from Solomon's collection...

19

Do not fret because of evildoers

Or be envious of the wicked;

20

For there will be no [i]future for the evil man;

The lamp of the wicked will be put out.

On the heels of hearing how we should have compassion on our enemies, we given the reason why in verses 19-20..

And the reason is that the enemies of God have a very dark future without Christ..

Though evil may win temporarily...

Though the wicked may have the careers, the fame, the cars, the houses, it is all a passing fancy...

Because none of those possessions can be carried into eternity, and none of those possessions can earn eternity either..

Though we are tempted to be jealous of the prosperity of the wicked, we must consider their eternity if they do not turn from their wickedness...

And no believer should be jealous of someone who will spend eternity apart from God...

Yes, they may have earthly successful and prosperity but they will have eternal failure and poverty...

Next time, you are tempted to be envious of the unbeliever...

Simply remind yourself of their final destination if they die rejecting Christ...

WE now reach wisdom saying #30 in Solomon's collection in verses 21-22 of Proverbs 24...

And in it we find a most interesting piece of God's wisdom

WISDOM SAYING #30

21

***My son, [j]fear the Lord and the king;
Do not associate with those who are given to
change,***

22

***For their calamity will rise suddenly,
And who knows the ruin that comes from both of
them?***

We have seen the principle of honoring the government numerous times in the book of Proverbs..

That principle is repeated in the NT as well in the book of Romans and 1 Peter among others..

In verse 21 of Proverbs 24, we find this same wisdom..

Fear the Lord and the king...

And it is important to note that there is an order here...

Our first allegiance is to the Lord but our second allegiance is to the king or government over us..

Therefore, the second line of verse 21 is where we find God's wisdom which tells us not to associate with those given to change...

This could also be translated as those who rebel against God or against government...

In other words, hanging around rebellious people is not good or wise in the eyes of the Lord..

And the reason is simple...

We are to submit to God and we are to submit to the government that God has put over us...

That is the clear teaching of Romans 13 in the NT..

However if you do hang out with rebels, you see the result of that in verse 22..

You will experience calamity and ruin...

And the calamity and ruin are bot from the hand of God and the hand of the king..

When Peter pulled out a sword and chopped off the ear of Roman soldier trying to arrest Jesus, what was Jesus' reaction?

Did he applaud Peter?

Did he encourage Peter to keep rebelling against government?

No, he rebuked Peter and told him that the sword he used would be used against him by the government that had the God-given authority to use it against him...

If you live by the sword of rebellion to government, don't be surprised if you die by sword that God has given to the king to promote good and punish rebellion...

As I have said before, it is disturbing to see so many so-called Christians who have such a rebellious attitude to government...

Government is good because government is from God...

Yes, government is fallen because the people in government are fallen..

Yes, government can and will do evil things...

But in the end government restrains evil and promotes good, and government enables the spread of the gospel by the promotion of peace...

To be found in rebellion to government is most likely to be found to be in rebellion to God.

Wisdom says to avoid rebellious people or we may experience the consequences of rebellion.

Conclusion

Well there we go...

It took us a few weeks but we have seen a group of 30 wisdom sayings that Solomon had collected most likely from folks who lived years before him...

I would encourage to go back through these 30 over the next few weeks in your devotions or with your family..

And I want to end with something that I always want to make clear every time when deal with God's wisdom..

All the wisdom in the world is pointless without Christ.

You can follow all 30 of these sayings..

You can live by the wisdom of 31 chapters of the book of Proverbs, but if you miss the wisdom of repenting and trusting in Christ, you die a fool.

Even if you live by God's wisdom, that isn't a ticket into heaven...

The ticket to heaven comes through Christ, who is the perfect wisdom of God, who lived by the wis-

dom of God and is the beginning and end of all wisdom..

Heaven forbid we get the wisdom of God but fail to believe the gospel of God..

Let us pray.