May 30

Greetings, DGCC Family.

Today we will continue our walk through the books of Bible by spending the week looking at the Book of Proverbs. Solomon wrote most of the proverbs during his reign (he was the third king of Israel, and King David’s second son), though two men named Agar and Lemuel wrote brief sections at the end.

Generally, a proverb, as written here, are short sayings about how to live wise and Godly lives. Many of the Proverbs in this book center around wisdom and folly, with wisdom often associated with obedience to the Lord and His Law.

For example, at the outset, this is what Solomon says:

“The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:
   for gaining wisdom and instruction;
   for understanding words of insight;
   for receiving instruction in prudent behavior,
   doing what is right and just and fair;
   for giving prudence to those who are simple,
   knowledge and discretion to the young—
   let the wise listen and add to their learning,
   and let the discerning get guidance—
   for understanding proverbs and parables,
   the sayings and riddles of the wise.

   The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
   but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (1:1-7).

It is important to note that Solomon, whose gift from God was great wisdom, states that the place to start is “the fear of the Lord.” To “fear” the Lord does not mean to shrink away from Him in fright or to view Him in a state of dread or terror. Rather, it means to stand in reverent awe of His holiness, goodness, and love.

As it was true in Solomon’s day, so is it true today. Standing in awe and reverence before the Lord is a great place to start.

IHS,
Pastor Lou
May 31

Grace and peace to you this day.

As I mentioned yesterday, fear and knowledge of the Lord, which Solomon says leads to wisdom (that is, how to apply that knowledge), is a central theme in Proverbs. For example, chapter 8 is titled "Wisdom's Call." These are some of the verses from this chapter:

"Does not wisdom call out?  
Does not understanding raise her voice?" (v. 1)

"I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence;  
I possess knowledge and discretion.  
To fear the Lord is to hate evil;  
I hate pride and arrogance,  
evil behavior and perverse speech" (vs. 12-13).

"The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works,  
before his deeds of old;  
I was formed long ages ago,  
at the very beginning, when the world came to be.  
When there were no watery depths, I was given birth,  
when there were no springs overflowing with water;  
before the mountains were settled in place,  
before the hills, I was given birth,  
before he made the world or its fields  
or any of the dust of the earth" (vs. 22-26).

This last section is really a fascinating statement about wisdom and what God intends for it. By saying that wisdom was "brought forth as the first of [God’s] works," "formed…at the very beginning when the world came to be," Scripture is teaching us that wisdom, that is wisdom that comes through fear and knowledge of the Lord, is primary and fundamental. It is the foundation upon which life is built.

Most importantly, God includes it as part of His Creation because of His deep desire to be in relationship with Him. He wants us to know Him. He wants us to gain knowledge of Him. He wants our actions and our words to honor and glorify him. He wants us to live our lives in His sight.

And that means not just today, but for eternity.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
June 1

Happy June, everyone! Wow, can you believe it?
Continuing today with our theme from Proverbs of knowledge and wisdom of the Lord, many Proverbs speak of helping the poor among us. For example:

“He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker;
    But whoever is kind to the needy honors God” (14:31).

“It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor
    than to divide the spoil with the proud” (16:19).

“Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord,
    and he will repay him for his deed” (19:17).

The generous will themselves be blessed,
    for they share their food with the poor” (22:9).

“Whoever oppresses the poor to increase his own wealth,
    or gives to the rich, will only come to poverty” (22:16).

Proverbs makes clear that serving the poor is not just some mere act of selflessness or something we do to make us feel good about ourselves. Rather, to do so is to further our wisdom of the Lord and to understand that His heart is a heart of justice and mercy. So much so that when we fail to serve the poor, it is the same as “showing contempt for their Maker.”

Later on, the son of God would echo these words as recorded in Matthew: ““The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”’ (25:40).

As always, I am so thankful to be serving a church that takes this to heart. And not just our hearts, but His.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
June 2

Greeting you today in the name of the Messiah.

I would like to conclude our study of Proverbs today with my all-time favorite:

“As iron sharpens iron, so one man [or person] sharpens another” (27:17).

Of course, this speaks to the issue of accountability. Our son and I have often spoken of this, with him saying looking back on things (he’s 30 now…Yikes!) he is glad that Judy and I held him accountable for his actions.

But what does it mean for the modern church? What does it teach us today?

Certainly, we are called to hold each other to account. The apostle Paul writes this in the Book of Galatians: “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently…” (6:1-2).

But I think maybe it means more than that. I think it also means that we as the church are accountable for the things we say and teach.

For example, it’s one thing to take a stand on, say, abortion. But that means we are accountable for that stand. That means we are to care for the pregnant and single mothers in our community and help provide them with the support they need.

Or, if we say our youth and church youth programs are important to us, it means that we are accountable in encouraging our children and grandchildren to participate in church and church-related activities.

And so on. You get the idea. To be sure, it is appropriate that we hold others to account. That being said, I often think that a good place to start is with ourselves.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
June 3

Happy Friday, everyone!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9f2FXxDVO6w

Here's your music devotional for today. Turn up the volume and enjoy.

IHS,

Pastor Lou