

Walking in the Way of Wisdom

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Date: 02 June 2024

Preacher: James Ross

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

We're so thankful for your presence with us. We're looking forward to having Pastor John preach for us this evening.

We're also really glad to be able to welcome friends and family for Dara's baptism and for welcoming Callum into membership. We're so thankful for God's work in their lives. We look forward to that shortly.

[2 : 00] But welcome everybody as we gather together to worship our great God. Just a couple of notices. I've said already we're back here again for worship at 5.30.

John, our friend from the church in Atlanta, will be preaching. Please do come along if you can to hear God's words again and to worship together. On Wednesdays we're back with our CDGs, our community discipleship groups in various locations.

Again, check in with your leaders for the details for that. That will also be the beginning. So this month, our run-up to the election, UK election, we're going to give some time to praying for our nation and for the church within the nation.

So Wednesday is going to be the first time where we do that within our groups. We'll do that together as well. So please come along if you can. And then one thing, you may have seen it in our notices. Dara and Shoris and Callum and Ewan and Joshua, they have a charity event for Bethany, a local Christian organization here.

So that's on the 8th of June. So it's going to be a day of cycling and running and playing football. They'll be working hard all day. If you want to sponsor them, support them, encourage them, then you can check the newsletter for that.

[3 : 13] Our call to worship, which we can share together, comes from Psalm 111. Let's stand together for our call to worship, and we'll remain standing for our opening hymn, which is give to our God immortal praise.

Praise the Lord. I will extol the Lord with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly. He provided redemption for his people.

He ordained his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. All who follow his precepts have good understanding.

To him belongs eternal praise. And let's remain standing as we praise our great God together. Give to our God the immortal praise.

Mercy and truth are all his praise. Wonders of Christ in the heart below.

[4 : 46] Breathe his mercies in your soul. Qi if for your God of love.

And let's not live for your God in the Bible. Give to the Lord of the kingdom, enz Bubba■■■.

His mercies never shine too The lives of dogs are no longer Amen.

Amen. Amen.

He sent his son, may and God will stay, from the darkness and the grave.

[7 : 20] Wonders of grace will come, may he be born, repeat his mercy in your soul.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Please have a seat. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Let's join our hearts in prayer. Let's pray together. We recognize it is good and fitting to praise you, our Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

[8 : 51] We praise you as the creator of this world, the sustainer of this world, and indeed the sustainer of each one of our lives.

We thank you for bringing us here in this place to hear your word, to receive your grace, to take time from all the busyness, all the worries and cares of our lives, to be in your presence, to hear from you, to remember who you are and all that you have done for us.

Lord, we thank you that you have provided redemption, that there is salvation that comes from you, our God. Father, we thank you for your love in sending your Son, Jesus, into this world to be our Savior.

And we thank you for the perfect life of the Lord Jesus, for his sacrificial death, taking on himself the sin of his people, dying in our place, taking the punishment that we deserve, so that we might have life.

Lord, we thank you for the work of your Holy Spirit, showing to us our need of a Savior, showing us our sin, and showing us the glory of Jesus, so that we might trust in him.

[10 : 20] Lord, we thank you that you are the God who has entered into a covenant relationship with your people. And you've done that not because we deserve it, but simply because of your grace.

Lord, we thank you for the new covenant established in the broken body and the shed blood of the Lord Jesus, that guarantee that you will always and eternally love your people, your church.

Lord, as we consider all that you have done for us and who you are, and we pray that you would cause us to worship you, to recognize your great glory.

Lord, your word calls us to trust in the Lord with all our heart. And as much as we recognize the wisdom of that, we confess the times when we haven't trusted you with all our heart, when instead we have leaned on our own understanding, where we have pursued our own direction in life.

Lord, your word calls us to worship the Lord our God and to serve him only. And again, we confess the times in which we have made other things and other people more important in our hearts and our lives than you, the one true and living God.

[11 : 51] We have that capacity towards idolatry, to take good things, good gifts, and to make them ultimate things, and to live for them above all.

Lord, as we recognize our sin before you, we would confess our sin. That we would pray as the tax collector in the parable, Lord, have mercy on us as sinners.

And as we confess our sin, we thank you for the wonderful promise we have in your word of forgiveness. That because of the saving work of the Lord Jesus, that you are a God so gracious as to cast all our sins into the depths of the sea, fully and finally paid for.

And so we confess, knowing that you are faithful to forgive. Lord, we thank you that you have promised to be with us as we gather. And we pray that we would know your presence, that your spirit would be at work in all of our hearts and lives, so that together we might praise and glorify and magnify our God.

And we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. And now, this is the point where we're going to, just in a few moments, welcome our new church members.

[13 : 17] We're going to baptize Dara, and we're so thankful, as we said, to God for that. Both Callum and Dara have given a clear testimony of their faith in the Lord Jesus, both in their words and in their lives.

It's been a real encouragement to us as a church, no doubt an encouragement to their families.

Now, just before welcoming them, we're going to read a few verses from Acts chapter 2.

Acts chapter 2, from verse 38. So, Peter is just, the apostle being filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter has preached a great sermon.

The crowd have asked, brothers, what shall we do? And Peter replied, With many other words, he warned them, and he pleaded with them, save yourselves from this corrupt generation.

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about 3,000 were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.

[14 : 42] So, just a few words about church membership and baptism from that text. What's happening here, as the church begins, is that there's a whole group, 3,000 people responding to the good news about the Lord Jesus.

So, Peter has told them that Jesus is God's promised Savior King. That in the coming of Jesus, all God's wonderful promises in the Old Testament come true.

He's spoken to them about Jesus' perfect life. That His miracles were evidence that He was none other than the Son of God. He's spoken to them of Jesus' death on the cross.

A death that secures the forgiveness of sin. He's spoken about the reality that because Jesus is sinless and perfect and God accepted His sacrifice, that Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day.

And that Jesus gives the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus truly does forgive sins. Jesus does give the promise of eternal life that it's possible for people like us, by nature separate from God, because of our sin, to be brought near and to be brought home.

[15 : 54] And all of this as a gift of God's grace and all of this to give glory to God. So, they've heard this message. And how did they respond? They responded with repentance.

So, acknowledging that need to turn from sin and to turn back to God. And then they stand up publicly to declare that Jesus is Lord. Now, that wasn't easy for them in their setting.

And maybe it's never easy to stand up and say, Jesus is Lord. But that's what they do. And these first-generation believers, they're all baptized. And then they're added.

They're numbered among the church. And this group then, how do they live? We hear about how they devote themselves. They devoted themselves to worshipping together.

To hearing God's Word and to hear it be taught. So, they gather to hear teaching about Jesus. We hear them devoted to praying together.

[16 : 55] That they share food and they share the Lord's Supper. They commit to serving with one another for the good of others. It's a great picture of what happens whenever anyone becomes a member of God's church.

It's what we're celebrating today. Callum has already been baptized as an infant. Adara is going to come and shortly be baptized. And baptism is a wonderful thing for us to see.

The eyes of faith allow us to see this gospel sign. That the water, which we usually associate with washing and cleaning. It is pointing to the reality that Jesus washes away sin.

By His death on the cross. We think about water that gives new life. That gives satisfaction in life. In fact, we were thinking about that on Friday. That through the death of Jesus and faith in Him.

A person is now dead to sin and is alive in Christ. We have this living water. We have eternal life. So, there's wonderful messages in baptism.

[18 : 08] And then, Dara and Callum, they're going to be added to our church. To this church. As church members, of course, members of Jesus' church. But members of this local church.

Where they will worship, continue worshipping with us. Where they will grow in faith as they grow in maturity. And where they will come alongside us to serve with us. And where we will serve them.

And encourage them. And pray for them. So, we welcome them with thankfulness today. We welcome them because we remember. God still answers our prayers.

These prayers that we make for our family members. For our church family. Our children. God answers them. We give thanks that God still loves to save people. He's not done building His church.

And as we give thanks, we pray. We pray for all of our children. All our covenant children. That together, they might join in professing faith and love for Jesus.

[19 : 10] So, without further ado, Dara and Callum, do you want to come up here? I removed the foliage so you wouldn't have to live in the forest. We appreciate that.

So, I have these five questions to ask. So, in Bible class, I know that you've been working through these. And you've been thinking about what they mean. So, let me ask them.

You can answer them together. Here's the first one. Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God? Justly deserving His judgment. And without hope, apart from His sovereign mercy.

Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of sinners? And do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the gospel?

Do you now resolve in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit that you will endeavor to live in obedience to God's word as a follower of Christ?

[20 : 12] Number four. Number four. Do you promise to support the church in its worship and work to the best of your ability by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service?

Okay. And one last one. Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the church and promise to seek its purity and peace? Yes.

Wonderful. Now, having professed your faith, Dara, let's baptize you. It is a wonderful thing to be able to do this in the name of...

Come over here. I'm going to baptize you, Dara Faulkner, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

May the Lord bless you and keep you and make His face to shine upon you. And for both of you, it's such a wonderful thing to be able to welcome you both into this church, to see you standing up for Jesus.

[21 : 16] Because you know, we know, standing up for Jesus is never an easy and a straightforward thing. So it's a real encouragement, I think, to our faith to see you as young guys ready to do this.

And I know that you're doing it in school and in your lives. And so it's our prayer that the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit would be with you always. That you would know, always, that you would know much joy as you serve Jesus. That you would find encouragement from us here. You'd always know that you've got elders here within your own family, but within the church family, who want to help you to grow.

And towards that, Keith, who is our Bible class leader, is going to come and pray for you both.

Thanks, Keith.

Thank you. Thank you.

[23 : 10] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Now we're going to sing together before the children leave for their junior church classes.

We're going to sing them nothing but the blood of Jesus. And again, let's stand together to sing praise. Amen.

Oh, precious is the flow that makes me white as snow.

No other font I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus.

[25 : 34] For my pardon this I see, nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my cleansing despite me, nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Oh, precious is the flow that makes me white as snow.

No other font I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Nothing can force sin atone, Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

[26 : 40] Not of good that I have done, Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Oh, precious is the flow that makes me white as snow.

No other font I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Nothing but the blood of Jesus. This is all my hope and peace, Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

This is all my righteousness, Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

[27 : 43] Oh, precious is the flow that makes me white as snow.

Oh, no other font I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Jesus.

Our first Bible reading this morning is in John chapter 14.

If you're using a church Bible, that's page 1082. And Katrina McDonald is going to come and read that for us. John chapter 14, verses 1 to 7.

[28 : 57] Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God. Believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms.

If that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me so that you also may be where I am.

You know the way to the place where I am going. Thomas said to him, Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?

Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him. Amen.

[30 : 07] Let's once again join our hearts in prayer. Let's pray together. Lord, we thank you for the wonderful compassion of Jesus, our Lord and Savior, as he comforted his anxious disciples, giving them this wonderful picture of heaven as your home, a home with many rooms, and of his going to prepare a place for his people, that he's going to die and then to rise, to return to heaven, to send the Spirit, to come back at the end of time, all towards this great end of God being with his people forever.

Lord, we thank you for the wonderful goal of the gospel, that we might enjoy your presence now with the promise of seeing your face for all eternity when our faith and our trust is in Jesus. Lord, as we who are Christians enjoy that good news and as we find hope and comfort, we pray for many who as yet are not followers of the Lord Jesus.

We pray for family members and friends. We think of neighbors and colleagues. Lord, we think of our various ministries, for the folks in Connect, for our student and young workers group, for people that come week by week.

Lord, we pray that by your grace, you would send your Spirit, you would open people's eyes, open people's hearts, that they might receive Jesus as Lord.

[32 : 07] We pray that you would help us, who are your people, to be faithful in the way that we live, to be courageous in the words that we speak, to be able to point to the truth, that Jesus is our Lord and that he is good news and that there is no other way of salvation.

Lord, we also want to give you thanks as a local church that we are part of your global church. Even as we look around the room, we recognize that we represent many different countries and cultures, languages and people groups represented here, giving us just a tiny glimpse of that great gathering of your people around your throne from every tongue and tribe and nation and people group.

Lord, we thank you for our friends from the church in Atlanta. We pray for their church, for their ongoing ministry. May you encourage them and may you grow them in faith and in numbers, enable them to reach their communities for the Lord Jesus.

And we thank you for their coming to encourage us and to serve us and to serve alongside us for a few days, Lord, that they would be an encourager of us and that we would encourage them.

Lord, we thank you again for the recent visit of Wilbert Chepenu from Dumasani. South Africa has been in the news for their election process and as there is so much uncertainty and so many challenges facing South African society, we acknowledge the great need there is of the gospel of the Lord Jesus to take root and to penetrate through all parts of that nation.

[34 : 05] And so we pray for the church in South Africa. Lord, we remember our friends Manuel and Patty who we support in their ministry in Colombia that as they adjust to life in Bogota that you would be giving them fruitful avenues for a ministry of mentoring and encouraging pastors and their wives for those who are leaders in the church.

We thank you for all the wisdom you have given to them. I pray that they would keep being refreshed in the gospel of your grace so that they might serve others. Lord, we do pray that you would help us in our calling.

We know that Jesus called the church to go and make disciples of all nations. You know the challenge that we often find that. We feel small, we feel a sense of our own inabilities, but Lord, we know that your grace is sufficient.

We know that you have given your spirit to help us and so we do pray for each one of us who are Christians individually and for our church collectively that you would guide us as we seek to make disciples for the Lord Jesus.

Lord, we also want to thank you this morning for those who are in government over us, both here in Holyrood and down in Westminster. as attention turns to a general election, we recognize the significance of that moment for us as a nation.

[35 : 38] And so we pray that for your church it would be a time of seeking your faith, of seeking repentance and renewal, both for ourselves and within our nation.

Lord, we ask for us as a local church that you would give us the spirit of prayer, that we would recognize the darkness, the fear, the uncertainty that grips so many in society, the challenges that face our political leaders and that we would pray for them, that we would pray for the light of the gospel to shine.

And Lord, as we pray for the light of the gospel to shine through our nation, we also pray that that light would shine as we hear your word read and preached, that you would speak truth and that you

would give life.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Now we're going to stand together to sing the first of the psalms, Psalm 1, a great wisdom psalm, reminding us of those two paths and those two destinations for our lives.

So let's stand together as we sing Psalm 1. Psalm 1. How blessed the one who does not walk where wicked men would guide his feet, who does not stand in sinners' paths or sit upon the scorner's seat.

[37 : 27] The love of God is his delight, his meditation day and night.

He prospers like a tree which has been planted by a flowing stream and in its season yields its fruit. Its leaves are always fresh and green. In every act, in every word he knows the blessing of the Lord.

Not so the wicked they are like the chaff the wind will blow away.

They will not in the judgment stand, nor sinners with the righteous stay.

[39 : 19] God knows the way the righteous go, the wicked's way he'll overthrow.

Now can you turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Proverbs?

This is on page 636 if you're using a church Bible. And we're thinking this morning about walking in the way of wisdom. So we're going to hear Proverbs 3 from verse 1 to 12.

My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity.

Let love and faithfulness never leave you. Bind them round your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will learn favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.

[40 : 30] Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight.

Do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops. Then your barns will be filled to overflowing and your vats will brim over with new wine.

my son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke because the Lord disciplines those he loves as a father the son he delights in.

Okay, so we're in the book of Proverbs today and the book of Proverbs is ancient wisdom literature. we can think of it in a sense as classroom material.

[41 : 33] Lessons in the school of life in the first instance given to boys to young men teaching us about God the wise creator teaching about the moral order within the universe and instructions and promises connected to growing in wisdom.

Seems a good day a fitting day to consider that as we welcome two young men into membership. I'm sure as people we recognize that we are searching for wisdom maybe all the time.

A quick search on Amazon the online bookstore will tell you that there are over 10,000 books dedicated to the topic of wisdom. So clearly there is a hunger.

What's the key to being wise? Who is it that can guide me into wisdom? Perhaps people are asking a more basic question. What is wisdom?

Wisdom I think we know is more than simply knowledge. Perhaps we know people who are incredibly book smart but perhaps quite foolish lacking common sense.

[42 : 48] Wisdom is also more than though it includes moral goodness. it's not just knowing about what is the good to do. Wisdom also includes things like when to do it.

Think about it like grass cutting in Scotland. Wisdom knows you always need to cut the grass where information knowledge knows that. Wisdom knows when to do it.

If you're a fool like me you try and do it on Wednesday afternoon you get caught in a deluge. So wisdom requires knowing what and when. Here's a helpful definition of what is wisdom from a biblical scholar by the name of Von Rad.

Wisdom is becoming competent with regard to the realities of life. So there's a growing competence in how we apply wisdom to make choices.

Recognizing that the vast majority of the choices that we make on a daily weekly basis are not strictly moral choices. You know it's not always the case that one is good one is bad.

[43 : 57] When it comes to relationships or things to do with our work or money or location how do we grow in wisdom? If you read through the book of Proverbs you discover as if we didn't know

already that wisdom is something that's vital for life.

And without appropriate wisdom we can make a real wreck of our own lives and we can deal damage to the lives of those around us also.

We need wisdom. Some of the wisdom in here is really practical. So we all know I think that being a good neighbor is good. It's good to be friendly and hospitable but five o'clock in the morning is not the time to sing your good morning neighbor song.

Okay that's part of wisdom. Timing matters. And maybe some of you read the book called When Helping Hurts. It's absolutely right and it's moral to want to help with the issues of poverty whether that's locally or globally.

But that book is making the point that you can make a mess of things if you are well meaning but you are unwise in how you operate charity. So the what and the when and the why.

[45 : 13] And so here we find ourselves invited into the classroom for wisdom. And in this short section we're going to think about the path of wisdom the practices of wisdom.

We're going to consider briefly the problem of wisdom and think about the person of wisdom. So let's begin with the path. Verse 5 and 6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to Him and He will make your paths straight. So this is a popular image in wisdom literature that's biblical and non-biblical.

The idea that life is a journey and wisdom is a path to follow. We just sang in Psalm 1 with the same image. We could go down in this chapter Proverbs 3 verse 17 speaking of wisdom.

Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace. wisdom. And this is helpful for reminding us that wisdom is not a simple technique to master.

[46 : 17] You know, it's not a door we unlock. Rather, it's a lifelong path that we follow. If the image was that of a door to unlock, well, there would be that sense that we could easily arrive, we could open, we could get wisdom.

And we would like that, wouldn't we? It's the appeal of so much of the information that we have. It's the appeal of the TED Talks. It's the appeal of all those life hacks.

If you've ever gone to a bookshop and seen seven steps to ten ways to improve your life, download these six episodes, subscribe to this podcast in wisdom, it'll be yours.

Now, it sounds lovely, doesn't it? But we know that's not how life works. Somebody said information comes through learning, wisdom comes through living.

To make the point there's no shortcuts on the path to wisdom. But this idea of the pathway is a really helpful picture. You'll think about the progress when you walk on a journey.

[47 : 24] Progress is steady, is gradual, it's the same habit, step, step over a long time. And the Bible uses this to give us this idea that over time, with the right habits, we will grow in wisdom.

And for those of us who are more mature, you probably recognize that. That decisions become a little bit easier. The right responses to challenging circumstances perhaps come a little bit quicker or more naturally.

That's the growing in wisdom. Following a path is nothing fancy. We don't make much progress if we try to cartwheel our way on our journey, so speaking personally at least, it's step by step.

It's a long obedience in the same direction. And verse 5 and 6 tells us how the journey begins. The journey of wisdom begins with who we trust.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. It's asking us basically, which path are we going to follow?

[48 : 43] Who is going to call the shots in our lives? Whose authority are we going to rest in? The Lord's or our own?

It's the image of the two ways to live, the two roads that we can follow. Jesus used that same image in the gospel, Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7, verse 13 and 14.

As he invites people to trust him, he spoke about the narrow gate and the narrow way that leads to life, but the broad road that leads to destruction.

And then he said towards the end of his ministry, and we heard it in John 14, I am the way. That's the same idea, the same wisdom, like I am the path, the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. And Jesus is telling us something remarkable there. He's reminding us every path, every journey has a destination, and we know that.

[49 : 46] But Jesus is telling us the destination that our lives should travel along towards, that God has designed us to enjoy life with him.

And Jesus says, I am the way home to life with God. He is the track upon which our lives are to run. That to be on the path of wisdom begins with receiving Jesus as Lord.

That's the beginning of our journey towards God, that in the end we would see God. And knowing that all the way along that path we walk with him. So that's the path of wisdom, that slow, steady, step-by-step that begins with trust.

But let's think now about what are the steps, what are the practices to put on to help us to grow in wisdom. The book of Proverbs again has many examples of these, but we can find three of them in our text.

The first is here in verse 3, we need to know God. It says there in verse 3, let love and faithfulness never leave you, bind them round your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

[51 : 01] Love and faithfulness, those two words together, those were words that God used to describe himself in Exodus 34. It's the language of our covenant God, the personal Lord God who enters into covenant relationship with his people.

And wisdom begins with knowing God, to know this God of covenant love and faithfulness, this God who is so gracious as to bind himself to his people.

And wisdom binds that truth, the truth of God's love and faithfulness around our neck, inscribing it, tattooing it onto our heart that we would never forget that we'd grow deeper and deeper into the love and the faithfulness of God.

Now how does that lead to wisdom? If I know and trust that God loves me and is faithful towards me, how does that help? Well back in chapter 2, we're told that wisdom has a way of saving us. So in verse 12, it says, wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men. And the teacher warns about the ways of wicked men, about the pull towards greed and violence and the love of money.

[52 : 18] In verse 16, it also says, wisdom will save you from the adulterous woman. So wisdom will save from sexual sin. Sometimes sexual sin becomes a picture of idolatry.

So how does knowing God's love and faithfulness save us? Well if God's love has truly captured our hearts, if we know that we have everything in Jesus as Lord, that we won't need or want or be pulled away by those other things.

We need to know God. Here's another way of thinking about it. In verse 11 and 12, speaks of the Lord's discipline. My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline, because the Lord disciplines those he loves as a father, the son he delights in.

If I know the Lord, he is my father and he loves me and I can trust him, then I can receive his discipline, his testing, his shaping, his refining as something that is good for me even when it's hard. To read the stories of anyone who is creating a masterpiece, whether that's a novel or a piece of music or some artwork, is to understand that there is in some ways a painful process of editing, of revising, of sometimes scrubbing, of cutting that work.

[53 : 48] And those acts, painful, but it's a sign of love. Crafting something beautiful requires love and commitment.

Now God is seeking to craft each of us into the beautiful image of God. We were made in God's image. Jesus is the perfect image.

God would make us more like Jesus. That's a refining process. That's going to require discipline. Our rough edges need to be removed. Our sin needs to be exposed.

Dependent faith needs to develop sometimes through hardships. But wisdom knows he's my father and I can trust him. Wisdom grows in the knowledge of God.

So in verse 5, we know I can trust him as Lord and Savior. Verse 6, I will submit to him as king in all my ways, not just in the ways that it's convenient.

[54 : 54] Verse 9, I will worship and honor him as Lord. So that's the first practice. We need to know our God. We need to also know ourself.

And that's related. Since God is created and we are made in his image, we only truly know ourselves as we know our God. Look with me at verses 5 and 7 again.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Verse 7, do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and shun evil.

We need to know our own hearts. We need to know the battle that rages within our hearts. Whose wisdom is going to guide me today in this moment? Whose rule will I live under in this circumstance, in this relationship?

And the warning comes, don't be wise in your own eyes. Don't lean on your own understanding. Perhaps it's helpful to think of a person with a broken leg.

[55 : 55] So their leg is in plaster and they've got crutches. So the leg is broken. If you have a crutch that's broken, you try and lean on that, what happens? Well the crutch breaks and there's collapse. And the wisdom of the Proverbs is saying, learn to mistrust your own understanding as it is separate from God's wisdom.

Why is that? Well it's because the reality of sin in our hearts and our lives that pulls us out of sync with God's good design, that causes us to go against the grain of the moral order within the universe.

It is folly to lean on our own understanding. It's wisdom to know God and His word and His promises to lean on those because they are solid and reliable and unchanging.

So we need to know ourselves. And the third practice is we need to know God's word. This takes us to verses 1 and 2. My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart.

So the premise here is that there is a creator. And we are invited to follow the creator's guidelines, the maker's manual.

[57 : 12] That's the key to life lived well. here is the way to know deep and true joy. Joy in God.

C.S. Lewis put it this way, like a car is made to run on petrol by its inventor, we are designed to run on God Himself.

And God's word informs us of God's design for our lives, which is God's design for our joy.

And so we need God's word to tell us what God teaches because, as we discover, it often runs counter to the wisdom of the age. So here's one example in verse 9.

Here's God's wisdom, honour the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops. And so you read the Bible, what's the Bible say about money? It says, it's better to be generous, it's better to be sacrificial, it's better to use it for the sake of others, for God's mission, for God's church.

[58 : 20] The wisdom of the world often says, well, take, take, take, and hoard it for yourself, spend on your pleasure. We need to hear the wisdom of Jesus.

For example, Jesus said, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. That's very different to the wisdom of the age that says, revenge, that says, tit for tat violence.

The wisdom of Jesus is better wisdom, but if we don't know God's word, we don't know that wisdom. We also need to hear and to know God's word to discover the gospel, to discover the good news of what God does to save a people for himself, according to his perfect wisdom and for his glory.

And that's actually really important, even for how we read a book like the book of Proverbs.

Because to read the book of Proverbs, without thinking about God's wisdom for salvation, we might think, well, if I live the right way, then I will gain reward.

If I do this, then God must do that, and we'll find ourselves on the road that's known as legalism, and we'll think about that problem in a moment. So it's really important for us to read, to study, to meditate, to memorize, to worship God, to hear him, wisdom, that we would discover more of his character, that we would be staggered by his love and salvation, that we would grow in wisdom.

[59 : 50] So those are the practices of wisdom. But thirdly, we need to think for a moment about the problem of wisdom. So I wonder if anybody, as we were hearing this being read, if you sensed a tension growing within you.

So these statements all sound like, here's the condition, and then here's the consequence. If X happens, then Y happens.

So just hear this again. My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for, here's the consequence, they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity.

Here's another one, here's the condition of verse three, let love and faithfulness never leave you.

Here's the consequence, then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.

Verse seven, here's the condition, do not be wise in your own eyes, fear the Lord and shun evil, here's the consequence, this will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

[60 : 57] Do we sense the tension? As we look at our own lives, as we look around at the world around us, is this how life always works? We know it's not.

We know godly people whose lives are cut short. We know those who honor Jesus and it does not bring them honor and a good name.

We know people who fear the Lord and does not bring them health and wealth. love. And so there is a problem and sometimes this is true and generally as people live God's way we might expect this but we need to understand that these are not fixed laws.

This is not like a slot machine. If I put in X then out comes Y. There is a problem. So we need to say there is an order to the world that God created and we absolutely need to say that life by God's design is and always will be the best path to flourishing but we also need to say that we as people we have broken the moral order within the universe.

That ever since the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve we have turned our back on the God of wisdom on God and his wisdom. If wisdom begins with fearing and honoring the Lord then folly is pursuing my own honor.

[62 : 31] It's putting my own glory first. And ever since Adam and Eve did that in the Garden there's been an unraveling. There's been a disorder as a result of our sin.

So when we read the book of Proverbs in a broken world as we recognize this problem we cannot expect to see this cause and effect always play out.

So how do we read a book like the book of Proverbs? It's like any part of the law. It exposes our failures.

Who of us can say we have always kept God's commands in our heart? Who of us can say we have always trusted in the Lord with all our heart?

Who of us can say in all our ways we submitted to God? We've never sought to be wise in our own eyes. That we've always honored the Lord with our wealth.

[63 : 34] We read this and we understand we simply don't do it and indeed we can't keep the conditions of wisdom perfectly. So it reminds us of our own failure and says to us we need God's help, His mercy, His grace.

grace. And it should also encourage us to believe the gospel. That because of God's salvation, because of God's Son, there is a day when these wonderful promises will come fully and finally true.

That takes us to our last point, the person of wisdom. To be wise in God's eyes, to think about the whole Bible, begins and continues with the Lord Jesus.

Paul in his letter to the Corinthians described Jesus as the wisdom of God. Our righteousness, our holiness, our redemption. He is God's wise way for us to be saved and brought into relationship with God.

So as we think about Jesus, three things very briefly. Think about the path, his path, and Jesus with us on the path. So back to John 14.

[64 : 55] Back in John 14 when Jesus was using wonderful words to comfort his disciples, there was that striking statement, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

Jesus is saying, I am. He is saying, I am none other than God. And then he uses wisdom language to say, as God, I am the truth.

I am the only truth. I am the only path to life with God. He makes a claim about himself that none of those 10,000 plus books on the Amazon bookshelf would ever dare to make.

He is the wisdom we need to hear. He is the Son of God we need to trust. He is the path to wisdom. Now let's think about his path.

Jesus, the eternal Son of God. What was his journey? He left the glory of heaven that he might live among us.

[66 : 04] Jesus is the only one who could read the Proverbs and say, yes, I always did my Father's will. He is the one who perfectly kept all the commands, living with perfect trust, submitting always to his Father's will, desiring the Father's honor and glory always, even as it led him to walk the road to Calvary to die on the cross.

And there on the cross, Jesus, the sinless, righteous one, is cut off as if he were wicked. He is regarded as if he were an unfaithful one.

And so we need to ask, why that path? Why that day? And the Bible tells us that it's God's wisdom. It's God's wisdom for your salvation and mine.

It's God's gracious response to our lack of wisdom. wisdom. To listen to the message the cross communicates to us is to hear Jesus say, do not lean on your own understanding.

That you and I simply do not have the ability to enjoy life with God, to be saved by ourselves. In fact, the message of the cross says we are so wicked and foolish selfish that nothing less than the

death of the sinless son of God could save us.

[67 : 39] That's how deeply our folly and our sin runs. But the message of the cross also says, let God's love and faithfulness never leave you.

Recognize, here is God's gracious, loving response to our sin to give us salvation. So we are invited to trust him as Lord.

He is the one who secures our favor with God. That when we are trusting in Jesus it is true of us that God the Father delights in us as his children.

When our faith is in Jesus God the Father loves us as much as he loves his own precious son. Last thing to think about with a person of wisdom.

To recognize that he is with us on the path of wisdom. So to walk in wisdom we must be walking with Christ Jesus. We must be trusting him as Lord and Savior.

[68 : 44] We must be living daily in the gospel of grace, the wisdom he provides. And we recognize that God's grace is so wonderful, so amazing, so outrageous, that the whole of our Christian lives, the whole journey of faith and growing in wisdom is about going further up and further in, in our experience of it.

To read Proverbs chapter 3 is to be reminded that Jesus is the only one who fulfills the demands of wisdom. He lived a perfectly wise life, but also for us he secures all those wonderful promises. So in him, trusting in him, there is eternal peace. There is treasure in heaven. When he is our Savior, we do find favor with God.

We are given a place of honor. when we fear him and trust him, we do enjoy, we will enjoy the true and final healing of body and soul in resurrection life.

And so walking the way of wisdom is walking with Jesus, putting on those practices, loving and enjoying Jesus who is for us the true wisdom of God.

[70 : 15] let me pray for us. Our Father in heaven, we thank you for the wisdom of your word. We thank you for the perfect wisdom of Jesus, your Son.

We thank you that in the fullness of your wisdom, you have given your Son to be our Savior, that by your grace, you have made a way for us to be restored to the life that we were made for, to have our sins forgiven, to have peace with God, to have eternal life, to have joy of knowing that you are with us as we walk through life's journey.

We do pray that you would help us to grow in wisdom, that we would put on these practices growing in our knowledge of our God and ourselves and of your word, that more and more we might look like and enjoy life and love from Jesus our Savior.

We pray in his name. Amen. Now, we're going to sing a section of Psalm 116. While we're singing, our boys and girls will rejoin us and then we will move towards the Lord's table.

But let's stand together first of all to sing this section of Psalm 116. Rest, O my soul, God has been good to you.

[71 : 55] For you, O Lord, have saved my soul from death, my feet from stumbling and my eyes from tears, that I may live for you while I have breath.

I trusted in the Lord, and then I spoke.

I said in anguish, I am sorely tried, and in the very depths of my dismay.

All men are liars, every one I cried.

How can I thank the Lord for all he's done, with gratitude salvation's cup I'll raise.

[73 : 35] I'll call upon his name and will fulfill my vows to him before his people's face.

Please have a seat. I want us to hear again two verses we already heard from John 14 and then one other verse, 14:23.

Actually, I'll read verse 1. Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms. If that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me, that you also may be where I am. And then down in verse 23, Jesus said, anyone who loves me will obey my teaching.

my Father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them. You put these together, what have we got?

[75 : 01] We've got this beautiful picture, don't we, of, first of all, Jesus saying God comes to make our heart his home if we are believers in the Lord Jesus. He comes to live in us until we are at home

with the Lord.

It speaks to us of life lived with the Father and with his Son, the Lord Jesus, of sharing love, of sharing fellowship.

And that takes us to what we're going to do in just a few moments at the Lord's table. God's people will share in the Lord's Supper. Jesus will invite us to his table as his welcomed and well-loved guests.

and God's word promises that this is an anticipation that one day we will sit with the Lord and eat at his table at the great marriage supper of the Lamb.

Eating together, being at home together, these great pictures of love and personal fellowship.

That's what the Lord's Supper speaks to us about.

[76 : 12] God has loved us so much that he gave his Son, the Lord Jesus, to die in our place, to take our punishment, to forgive our sin, to give us eternal life.

God has poured his grace and his love out on us. And because of that, as we trust in Jesus, we are invited to eat as those who are welcomed and well loved.

And that in itself tells us who this meal is for. Because it's only for those who have received Jesus as Lord and Savior.

It's only for those who know his forgiveness. It's those who know we are sinners who stand in need of his grace. It's for those who have gladly responded to his invitation to love and friendship.

It's for those who know that the Father and the Son by the Spirit have made their home in our hearts and we have a home waiting for us in glory. So let me say if that's not true of you, you're very welcome to be here, but as we share the Lord's Supper, can I ask you to please stay seated?

[77 : 32] and may it be true that even today you may come to know Jesus the way, the truth, and the life. If you're here and you're exploring truth and you want to know more about Christianity, please speak to me.

Please speak to Keith or one of our elders. If you're part of our church and you want to become a member so that you can share the Lord's Supper with us, please speak to me.

After you get in touch, we'd love to welcome those who are followers in the Lord Jesus. But if it is true of you that your love and your trust are in Jesus, that He is your Savior, if you're a member of God's church here or anywhere, then please come, this meal is for you.

Now before we come, we have an opportunity to confess our faith using the words of the Apostles Creed, wonderful words that remind us of that unity that binds us as churches, as Christians, across history, across culture, across languages.

So we can share these words together as the people of God. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

[78 : 50] I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to hell. The third day, He rose again from the dead.

He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From there, He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and a life everlasting.

Amen. So how we do it in this church, you'll be ushered up from the back to come and to receive.

There's bread, and there's wine, and there's grape juice. The wine is the darker, the grape juice is the lighter.

[79 : 57] Please hold on to those, take them back to your seat so we can eat and drink together in a few moments. Amen. Here, city call to members.

Thank you so much. You are tekki vom Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[84 : 15] Amen. Amen.

We turn to Paul's words in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, where we read, For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you, the Lord Jesus.

On the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had broken it, he gave thanks. Let's pray. Lord, our God, we thank you for the amazing privilege of gathering around this table, of being invited by your grace, of you showing such warm love and a welcome to us, because we come in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Now we come because of his finished work through his death and resurrection. Now we come claiming covenant promises. We come because the Spirit has given us new life.

We come because Jesus pleads our case and prays for us. And we come because we know you're a good and loving Father. And we thank you for your grace to us in the gospel.

[86 : 15] And we thank you for the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, for the cost of forgiveness that he was willing to bear, taking the wrath that we deserve, suffering the consequences for sin that we should face, so that in his death we might have life, that by his wounds we might be healed.

And Lord, we thank you that even now he meets with us, to draw close to us, to give us grace. And we thank you for our salvation.

And we pray in Jesus' wonderful name. Amen. So when Jesus had given thanks, he broke the bread and said, this is my body, which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. Let's eat together. Amen. In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

[87 : 42] Let's drink to remember our Lord. Every time we share the Lord's Supper, we look back with thankfulness to what Jesus did in history.

Oh, Mount Calvary. Every time we share the Lord's Supper, we are reminded of what he still does in us and for us. Feeding us for that journey of faith.

Giving us wisdom and grace that we need. And we look ahead to what Jesus is still to do. That he'll come back and he'll take us to be with him.

That we might be where he is, always and forever, to feast with great joy. Let's pray. Father, thank you for this simple meal that speaks such wonderful truth.

We thank you for your grace and your kindness. And we do pray that this would nourish us spiritually.

[88 : 58] That it would feed us. That we might go into this week and indeed into the rest of our lives. And knowing satisfaction, knowing life, knowing joy that comes from knowing Jesus as Savior.

Amen. Now our closing hymn is the hymn, Not My Will But Yours Be Done. And we're going to stand together to sing. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Father, as in heaven, so on earth, my heart is drawn to self-exalting.

Help me seek your kingdom first. As Jesus walks, O final walk, held by your same unchanging love, He stilled my vow, O lift your voice and pray, Father, not my wrath, but yours be done.

Oh, in the garden He persisted, I may never fully know.

[90 : 53] The fearful weight of true obedience, it was held by him alone. What wondrous faith to bear that cross, to bear my sin, what wondrous love.

My hope was sure, whether my Savior prayed, Father, not my will, but yours be done.

Amen. As Jesus rose, so I shall rise in ransom glory at the throne.

My heart restored, with all your sins I sing, Father, not my will, but yours be done. As we go forth, our God and Father, lead us daily in the fight.

That all the world might see your glory, and your name be lifted high.

[92 : 45] And in this name we overcome, for you shall see us safely home. Now as your church, we lift our voice and pray, Father, not my will, but yours be done.

As we leave the Lord's table, we go with God's promise to be with us, to send us. Here is benediction from Romans chapter 1, verse 7.

To all who are loved by God and called to be his holy people, grace and peace to you, from God our Father and from the Lord.