

# AM Proverbs 3:1-18 & Colossians 2:1-5 Hidden Treasure

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, let's hear from the Bible, from that treasure house of wisdom. And we're going to hear firstly from Proverbs chapter 3.

And I'm going to read the first 18 verses. Proverbs 3, page 636 of the Church Bible. My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments.

For length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you.

Bind them round your neck. Write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favour and good success in the sight of God and man.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him. And he will make straight your paths.

[ 1 : 20 ] Be not wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

Honour the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce. Then your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will be bursting with wine.

My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof. For the Lord reproves him whom he loves as a father the son in whom he delights.

Blessed is the one who finds wisdom and the one who gets understanding. For the gain from her is better than gain from silver.

And her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels. And nothing you desire can compare with her.

[ 2 : 24 ] Long life is in her right hand. In her left hand are riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness. And all her paths are peace.

She is a tree of life. To those who lay hold of her. Those who hold her fast are called blessed. And now we turn over to the New Testament.

To Colossians chapter 2. And the first five verses. Page 1184 of the Church Bible. These are the verses that we'll look at a little later.

Colossians chapter 2. For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you. And for those at Laodicea.

And for all who have not seen me face to face. That their hearts may be encouraged. Being knit together in love. To reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding.

[ 3 : 37 ] And the knowledge of God's mystery. Which is Christ. In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. For though I am absent in body. Yet I am with you in spirit.

Rejoicing to see your good order. And the firmness of your faith in Christ. Let's bow together again in prayer.

Let's turn now to the Bible. And continuing with our studies in Paul's letter to the Colossians. I want us to look at chapter 2 and verse 3.

Where he says of Christ. In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Many years ago we had a small church youth group.

[ 4 : 51 ] In our house in Woking. And we had a number of Christian board games that we used to play with them. And one of them was called Solomon's Treasure.

Treasure. And it was based on the book of Proverbs. Well our text this morning could be described as Paul's treasure.

Paul had found treasure in Christ. And he wants to share it with these Colossians. And with us. It's quite likely that he had the book of Proverbs in mind. Paul was Jewish. He'd been brought up on the Old Testament.

He would know those verses that we read in Proverbs 3. Verses 13 to 15 there. Proverbs 3.

[ 6 : 18 ] Instruction. To understand words of insight. Paul no doubt had been seeking that wisdom all his life.

And now at last he'd found it. In Christ. Christ is the fulfillment of everything in the Old Testament. Including the book of Proverbs. The wisdom that Solomon longed for. Is found. In Christ. But I think he's not only looking back to the Old Testament.

He's also looking out. At the culture. Of his day. Most of these Colossians would have been Gentiles.

And they were surrounded by Greek culture. And they would have encountered Greek philosophy. Which offered them a different kind of wisdom.

[ 7 : 26 ] The very word philosophy. The very word philosophy. The very word philosophy. Means the love of wisdom. Paul himself had encountered it at Athens.

With all those various schools of philosophy. The Stoics. And the Epicureans. And so on. Now there was undoubtedly some wisdom in Greek philosophy.

Plato and Aristotle and the rest are still read today. God has granted a measure of wisdom to all the nations.

But Paul is offering them here. A better philosophy. The Greeks understood a literal.

But in Christ are hidden. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Perhaps also he had in mind certain false philosophies.

[ 8 : 29 ] That were creeping in from the East. The various mystery religions. That offered secret wisdom.

The secret names of angels. And things of that kind. That really was of no value whatsoever. But some of the Colossians might have been attracted to it.

So Paul is pointing them instead. To the true wisdom. In Christ. So I want us today to look at this treasure.

What it is. Why it's precious. And where it's to be found. And I want to encourage you to. To explore.

And enjoy. This treasure. To the full. First though let's look at the context. Paul is writing here of his concern.

[ 9 : 33 ] For the church. He wants them to be a strong church. And he doesn't want them to be swept away. By false teaching. He speaks of this as a struggle.

In verse 1. I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you. And for those at Laodicea. And for all who have not seen me face to face. Now Paul was in prison in Rome at the time.

So this struggle can only have been a struggle in prayer. And prayer can be a struggle. Paul. The Greek word he uses is agony.

Which reminds us of Christ. Praying in agony. In the garden of Gethsemane. Paul loves this church at Colossae.

Along with the neighboring churches. At Laodicea and Hierapolis. Even though most of them have never met him. And he's praying for them.

[ 10 : 45 ] An encouragement to us incidentally. To pray for churches all over the world. Even if we don't know them personally. It's a deeply spiritual prayer.

In verse 2. That their hearts may be encouraged. Being knit together in love. To reach all the riches of full assurance. And understanding. And the knowledge of God's mystery.

Which is Christ. Wonderful blessings. Which we should all seek after. And it's to this end. That he wants them to know.

All the treasures of wisdom. And knowledge. In Christ. But also the flip side of that. He wants them to be kept from false doctrine.

In verse 4. I say this. That no one may delude you. With plausible arguments. False doctrine usually does come. In the form of plausible arguments.

[11:49] It very seldom comes in the form of something totally outrageous. We listen. And we think. Hmm. That could be true. And so we're snared.

The church at Colossae is doing fine at the moment. He says in verse 5. Though I am absent from you in body. Yet I am with you in spirit. Rejoicing to see your good order. And the firmness of your faith in Christ.

But the danger is always there. And therefore they need to hold fast to Christ. And in particular. To the wisdom of Christ.

So let's focus now on Paul's treasure in verse 3. First what it is. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Those two words. Wisdom and knowledge. Are found numerous times in the Bible. Wisdom is found 234 times.

[13:03] The related word wise. A further 247 times. Knowledge occurs another 172 times. So it's a big theme in scripture.

It gets off to a bad start. When Eve eats of the fruit of the tree. Of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan having tempted her to think.

That it would make her wise. Wrong kind of wisdom. Wrong kind of knowledge. But true wisdom. True knowledge. The wisdom and knowledge that God does allow. That is precious. The Greek words here are interesting.

My knowledge of Greek is very basic. But you can look these things up in lexicons. And it's very revealing. The word for treasures.

[14:08] The word for treasures. Is thesaurus. Which means literally. A storehouse. Particularly a place where precious things.

Are kept. In English. Thesaurus. Has come to mean. A book. Containing. A storehouse. Of words. Well here. Is a storehouse. Of wisdom. And knowledge. Wisdom. In Greek. Is Sophia.

As in philosophy. Philosophia. The love of wisdom. Knowledge. Is gnosis. As in.

Diagnosis. Knowing. From the symptoms. What a patient has. One of the heresies. In the early church. Was gnosticism.

[15:06] Claiming to have. Secret knowledge. And an agnostic. Is one who. Doesn't know. There is a difference.

Between wisdom. And knowledge. Knowledge. Knowledge is simply. Knowing the facts. Wisdom. Is knowing. How to use them. And you need both.

You can have. A huge knowledge. Of facts. But if you don't know. How to use them. They're worthless. That's why we have.

University graduates. And professors. Who know. So much. And yet. Make shipwreck. Of their lives. You meet people.

Who can. Tell you. The population. Of Russia. Or. The weight. Of an elephant. But they're.

Desperately. Unhappy. Because they simply. Don't know.

[16:04] How to live. But equally. You could be. Very wise. But if you don't have. The right information. You'll still get things wrong.

Well here. You have both. Wisdom. And knowledge. And you have them. In abundance. Indeed. More than abundance. Paul says.

That in Christ. Are hidden. All. The treasures. Of wisdom. And knowledge. In ages. Gone by. There were. Clever men.

Who. Aimed. To know. Everything. The entire. Sum. Of human. Learning. It was said.

Of. Robert. Grossetest. Bishop. Of Lincoln. In the 13th. Century. Who was a great. Scientist. As well as being. A theologian. That he alone.

[17:01] Of all men. Knows. Everything. I'm sure. If you actually. Met him. He would. Admit. That he didn't. Certainly.

Today. We can. Only master. A tiny. Fraction. Of human. Knowledge. But here. Is a storehouse. Of. All.

Wisdom. And knowledge. Not just. The sum. Of human. Learning. But the sum. Of divine. Wisdom. Everything.

That the. Omniscient. God. Himself. Knows. Is found. In Christ. Secondly.

Why is this. So precious. Well. We count things. As treasures. Either. Because of their. Intrinsic. Worth. Their beauty. Or their usefulness.

[ 17 : 56 ] Or because of their rarity. Sometimes both. Proverbs 3. Compares wisdom. With silver. And gold. And jewels.

Or to be more accurate. It says. You can't compare it. With these things. It's much more precious. The AV translates it there.

More precious than rubies. Job says. Chapter 28. 15. That it cannot be bought for gold.

Silver cannot be weighed as its price. Cannot be valued in gold of fear. In precious onyx or sapphire. Gold and glass cannot equal it.

Nor can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal. The price of wisdom is above pearls. The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it.

[ 18 : 57 ] Nor can it be valued in pure gold. Gold, silver, jewels. These are all beautiful. They're also rare.

Likewise with wisdom. It's beautiful. And it's rare. Most people have very little of it. It's also useful. Very useful. Because it changes our lives. Most obviously. Wisdom teaches us how to live. That's the main focus of the book of Proverbs.

It's a very practical book. Concerned with everyday living. Teaches us the blessings of a godly life. And the danger of an ungodly life.

Teaches us about friendship and family life. And relating to those in authority. All precious wisdom.

[ 19 : 56 ] Which everyone needs. But also there's a deeper wisdom. The wisdom of salvation. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3.15.

From a child you have been acquainted with the sacred writings. Which are able to make you wise. For salvation. Through faith in Christ Jesus.

Now that is rare wisdom indeed. Who would have guessed. That salvation would come. Through a man. On a cross.

And yet that was the wisdom of God. Wisdom we can only know. If it's revealed to us. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians.

For since in the wisdom of God. The world did not know God through wisdom. That is through human wisdom. It pleased God through the folly of what we preach.

[ 21 : 00 ] To save those who believe. Looks like folly to the world. But it is in fact the true wisdom. Describes Christ as the power of God.

And the wisdom of God. And this again is precious. And all too rare. Very few. Understand these things.

To you here. They are probably obvious. But walk down the road. And ask them what they understand of salvation. Person after person.

You will find the answer is basically nothing. What a treasure. You have. Wisdom also teaches us to understand this world around us.

In Romans 11. In Romans 11. After wrestling with the vexed issue of God's dealings with Israel. Still an issue today.

[ 22 : 03 ] Paul concludes. Oh the depth of the riches and wisdom of the knowledge of God. When we finally understand. When we finally understand what all the conflicts of the nations are about.

That must be our reaction as well. If in heaven finally God tells us what Ukraine was all about. And Syria and all the rest. We will say.

Oh the depth of the wisdom of God. Such understanding is beautiful.

It's rare. It's useful. Precious. Finally where is it found? In Christ.

Christ. And only in Christ. In him. And nowhere else. Are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

[ 23 : 09 ] Throughout Colossians. Paul speaks of everything precious as being in Christ. Christ. In chapter 1. 14. He speaks of Christ. In whom we have redemption.

The forgiveness of sins. Chapter 1. Verse 19. In him. All the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. Chapter 2.

Verse 9. In him. The whole fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. Chapter 2. Verse 10. You have been filled. In him.

In the AV. You are complete. In him. And of course. We ourselves are in him.

This letter is addressed to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ. In Colossae. And we are precious to God.

[ 24 : 07 ] Everything precious is in Christ. So it's no surprise to find that this treasure of wisdom and knowledge is hidden here too. But why does he say these treasures are hidden?

When we speak of hidden treasure perhaps we think of pirates. Hiding their gold away on a tropical island. With a secret map to remind them where it is.

X marks the spot. They are hiding it to stop people from finding it. Whereas God actually wants us to find this treasure.

Perhaps it's better to think of it as being stored in Christ for us. Remember that idea of the storehouse.

So that all who find Christ will find wisdom in him. Matthew Henry in his usual pithy style says the treasures of wisdom are not hidden from us.

[ 25 : 18 ] But for us in Christ. They are hidden from the world. They are hidden from the unbelieving. They are hidden from the ungodly.

But they are revealed to the faithful. Indeed since we are in Christ. When we come to him we find his wisdom as it were all around us.

We've actually entered the treasure house. Perhaps you've visited some richly decorated palace. And you've thought as you look around simply wow. Wow. I've been in Buckingham Palace. And that certainly overwhelms you. With the red carpets and the chandeliers and the gold everywhere. I think the most impressive place I've ever been to. Is St John's Cathedral in Malta. Where the floors and the walls and the ceiling are all covered with gold.

[ 26 : 27 ] But that's nothing compared with Christ. When you come to him you discover riches that you had never even imagined.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1.30. He has become to us wisdom from God. Righteousness and sanctification. And redemption.

Everything. You'll not find this anywhere else. You will find a few jewels of wisdom in Greek philosophy.

You will find some good ideas in modern self-help books. But the full beauty of spiritual wisdom. Beauty so glorious as to overwhelm you.

You'll only find that in Christ. You'll find it most obviously in the teachings of Jesus. Read through the Sermon on the Mount.

[ 27 : 27 ] Read through the parables. Read through Jesus' teaching at the Last Supper. And tell me if this isn't greater wisdom. Than you can find anywhere else.

Wise people will follow that teaching. As Jesus says. He who hears these words of mine and does them. I will liken him to a wise man.

Who built his house upon a rock. But it's not just his teaching. It's everything about him. All that he is and all that he's done.

The truth is that the whole Bible speaks of his wisdom. The whole Bible is the word of Christ. The whole Bible is about Christ.

From Genesis to Revelation. Here is wisdom. And it's waiting here. For us to discover. So let me close by encouraging you to explore.

[ 28 : 33 ] And enjoy. These spiritual treasures. Obviously first. If you haven't already done so. You must come to Christ.

That's where wisdom is. If you want wisdom. Then you must come to him. You know it's possible to hear of these treasures.

Every week in church. And genuinely believe that they exist. And still not see them. You need to personally.

Come to Christ. Seeking this wisdom. 19th century Swiss archaeologist. Johann Burkhart.

Heard rumors of astonishing ruins. In the Arabian desert. And he set his heart on finding them.

[ 29 : 31 ] He learned Arabic. He wore Arabic dress. He persuaded local guides. To take him to the Wadi Musa. And there he discovered.

The city of Petra. Half as old as time. As the poet has described it. Still today. One of the wonders of the world.

He sought those treasures. With all his heart. And he found them. Jesus says to us. To us. To us. To us. To us. Seek.

And you will find. And you don't have to go to the lengths that. Johann Burkhart did. Simply believe in Christ.

As the savior of the world. Repent of your sins. And trust in him. And these treasures. Are yours. And if you are a Christian.

[ 30 : 31 ] Make more of these treasures. For many Christians. It seems that these treasures. Of wisdom and knowledge. Are once again hidden.

They know they have them. They know where they are. But they leave them. Locked away. Unused. And unappreciated.

And they go on. Living like worldly people. Occasionally you read of a multi-millionaire. Who lived his life in an ordinary flat.

And never spent a penny. And some Christians are like that. Living spiritually. As if they had nothing. When in fact they have the true riches.

These treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Are there to be discovered. Read about Christ. Meditate on him.

[ 31 : 33 ] Enjoy fellowship with him. And discover. The riches that are yours. In him. Amen.

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