

The Way of Wisdom

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[0 : 00] Give ear, O my people, to my teaching. Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.! I will open my mouth in a parable. I will utter dark sayings from of old,!

I will utter a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments, and they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.

The second scripture reading comes from 2 Timothy 3, verses 14 to 16. But as for you, continue in what you have learned, and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is breathed out by God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. This ends the reading.

Thank you, Lila. Thank you, Lila. And good morning to everyone. Good morning. I want to thank all of you who participated in this graduation.

[1 : 57] That was something that I found encouraging, and I want to congratulate those of you who are moving on to another level. Well, you young ones, I think most of you know that you're special to me, and I want to serve you well this morning.

But I believe that although this is primarily something that is designed to resonate with our younger people, those who are specifically graduating, I think we'll all benefit from God's word this morning.

And since we are dealing with our younger people today, I want to start off with a story from my youth, if you want to travel way back in time. So when I was younger, about the ages of the people who are being graduated today, I had an older cousin, Hugh.

We called him Hughie. And me and my younger cousin, Stanley, we really, really looked up to Hugh.

Wherever he went, we went. It was sort of like Ruth and her sidekick this morning. We were inseparable. So back in those days, and I want you guys to think back to a time when parents didn't drive their children everywhere they wanted to go.

[3 : 22] We used to walk wherever we needed to be. We walked all over this island. Yes, it's a strange story, but true. So we walked everywhere.

And this one particular time, we had to walk to my grandmother's house. And Hugh selected the route, as usual. And he decided that we were going to cut through this yard.

So we're going to cut through this yard. And as we start walking, I notice that there is a dog sitting on the porch. So I immediately stopped. And I said, guys, there's a dog.

I don't think we should walk through here because we don't know how the dog is going to treat us. But Hugh assured me, everything is fine.

I can see the dog is chained. So there's no danger. We're safe. We trusted Hugh. So I continue to walk into the yard.

[4 : 22] We get closer to the dog. And as we get closer, the dog stands up. And he's ready to pounce. So as he stands, I notice that it's a sleek, lean, mean, Doberman pincher.

And I said, guys, we should not go this way. And Hugh says, look, the dog is chained. There is no danger.

We're safe. And as he says, that the dog jumps up and starts running toward us. So I'm trusting Hugh. And I'm waiting for that chain to yank the dog back.

And I'm waiting. And I'm waiting. And that moment never came. So the dog is running toward me. And so that's what I do.

I run away from the dog as fast as I could. And I think the Olympics owes me a medal. Because I ran so fast, I'm sure I broke some kind of record.

[5 : 24] And we ran until the dog decided to stop chasing us. See, Stanley and I, we believed in Hugh. We trusted him. We relied on him to show us the way.

But we discovered that he deceived us. Now, he didn't intentionally deceive us. But we were deceived in any case.

He counseled us according to what he truly believed, what his eyes could see. But in the end, we were deceived. And what's more, he was deceived himself.

Because he was relying on his perception. He was relying on his rationalization that actually led him astray. It led him to an error.

And this is the same situation that we find in the passage we've come to this morning. So, I hope this morning that you will see the similarities between my Doberman experience and the warnings contained in this morning's passage.

[6 : 40] There are warnings that are overt and warnings that are implied. And I hope this morning that you will see by God's grace that the world's way is deception and death.

But God's way is wisdom and life. Let's pray. Father, we come before you today and we rest this message before you, Lord, and we trust that you have directed its preparation.

And we trust, Lord, that you will direct its delivery. We pray, Lord, that your spirit will take it and do what you will with it. That we will be encouraged that you will call sinners to yourself.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen. So, this morning I want to consider the passage that was read under two broad headings.

And the first one is the way of the world. The passage that was read this morning begins with but, which indicates a contrast.

[7 : 55] It says, but as for you. So, it is showing a contrast between something. Paul is writing to Timothy, his spiritual son, and he wants Timothy to go through life a certain way.

He wants him to do certain things and avoid certain other things. But the things that Paul wants Timothy to do, they are different from some of the other verses that we would have read if we read that whole chapter leading up to verse 14.

In many of the verses before verse 14, we see men that Paul refers to and they are conducting themselves in a way that's different from the way that Paul holds out to Timothy.

They are actually conducting themselves in the ways of the world. So listen to how Paul described people in the world in the last days, which is the age that we are in now.

You will find these in verses 2 and 3 of 2 Timothy chapter 3. He says there would be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.

[9 : 49] So this is a description that's not a pretty one. It's a list of very ugly characteristics. characteristics. And I believe that they're not exhaustive.

I believe that there are other characteristics equally as ugly that Paul could have included here. But overall, we could sum all these up as characteristics of self-loving, pleasure-seeking, and having no regard for God.

God. We can see that anyone who is consistently displaying these traits is really making a god of themselves.

They're doing things their way. They're determined to live according to what pleases themselves. They want to follow their own rules. And that's really what prevails today.

the way of the world is that the world either disregards God completely or the world tries to make God into what they hope He would be.

[11 : 00] And the result is the same. If we do that, we're trying to get our own way. And even in that, we see the truth of the descriptions in verses 2 and 3 because it's really self-serving to try and misrepresent reality.

It reinforces that the way of the world comes down to deception. So look at what Paul says in verse 13.

He says that evil people and imposters will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. Paul speaks here about imposters.

And that's because in this chapter, if you read it all the way through, he makes the point that some of those people who are living in the way of the world are really supposed to be people who are supposed to be even teaching the word.

But even they, in some cases, are deceived and are deceiving. They're not true teachers because their lives reveal that they are false.

[12 : 16] Paul is very clear again. The world is deceived. And if we believe its rationale, if we accept its ways, if we listen to the world, we'd allow ourselves to be deceived as well.

And so, I'm going to try and not just be theoretical here. So I want to give some quick examples of the deception.

So, especially for those of you who are young, those of you who are graduating and still in the dwell classes, et cetera, I want you to really hear these examples.

Because I believe that some of them will be familiar to you. And you might not even have thought of them as deceptive. But I want you to give it some thought this morning. And I believe if you haven't heard them yet, very likely you will hear them sooner rather than later.

You might have heard people say we are born basically good. People are basically good. Or you might have heard if there even is a heaven, the way to get there is to do more good than bad in your life.

[13 : 36] A third deception would be all religions are the same. They all basically say the same thing and they lead to the same place, one God. So they are all equal.

I'll offer one more. You might hear, you don't have to sit under the teaching of a Bible based church because you could have church right here in your heart.

So we have these things over and over and the people who say them no doubt they really believe them. They've looked at some situation, they've reasoned out and they've come to a conclusion.

And their conclusion often conflicts with what believers in Christ have probably counseled them against or even warned them against. They've been told that their view brings danger and is harmful to them, but they don't believe.

They persist with their own reasoning. But the thing is, human reasoning is not enough to bring us to truth. It has its limits.

[14 : 53] The truth is we need sight beyond our own human sight. Without that, we often come to the wrong conclusion.

Without that, we are often like my cousin Hugh. We see a dangerous dog, we see it on a leash, and we come to the conclusion that that chain actually is fastened to something that will keep the danger away from us.

But how can we be sure that the end of the chain is fastened to something in the first place? And the answer is we really can't be sure with our own limited sight.

So we can have a wrong assumption, assumption, and if we blindly believe the assumption, we can be deceived, and we can end up deceiving others.

But thankfully, that's not the only way that we can go. We can go another way, and that is the way of wisdom. So I'd like to turn our attention to the way of wisdom, which is God's way.

[16 : 09] it's the way that Paul commends to Timothy. Paul draws a clear contrast between those who follow the way of the world and the way that Timothy has followed up to this point.

He encourages Timothy to continue on a different path than the way of the world. Paul urges Timothy to continue in what he had learned and to continue in what he had believed.

So Timothy had learned the Old Testament scriptures. He had the Holy Scriptures. He studied them. He trusted in the truths that were revealed to him in those scriptures.

And Paul pointed out that Timothy did not only believe. If you look at it, you'll see that Paul said that Timothy firmly believed these things. And what that meant was that he was so strong in his conviction that he would not abandon these beliefs because of temporary situations or because there were challenges from other ideas in the world.

So this is why I want to encourage our graduates this morning. first I want to say that your graduation is no small thing.

[17 : 39] It would be easy for us to just think of it as a nice thing to do. To say you've graduated, you've done well, and move on.

But I think we need to make sure it means more than that. We need to see the significance of it. We need to see that your graduation really is an acknowledgement that you are on a certain path.

You've been instructed in the ways of God, and you're on that same path, that way of wisdom that Paul commended to Timothy.

And you've really been put on that path. If I had to guess, I would think that really you had little to no choice in the matter.

The adults in your life, your parents, or those who are your guardians, they decided to bring you here, they decided that you would be instructed in Scripture. But as you were getting older, we all know that you will have more to do with your own beliefs, the way you will go, you're going to have to make decisions for yourself, and you will have more control over your path.

- [19 : 06] I want to encourage you, as Paul encouraged Timothy, I want to encourage you to continue in what you have learned, and to continue in what you have believed.
- believe. And I especially encourage you to not just believe, but to firmly believe. Don't just do it out of rote.
- Become firmly grounded in the Scriptures. So to arrive at that point of firm belief, that's what you need to do. You need to stay grounded in Scripture.
- Don't stray away. you have to pick them up for yourself, not just on a Sunday morning when you are here, but meditate on them at all times.
- That's a lifelong activity. You see that Timothy was immersed in Scripture from when he was a child. And that's just like many of you who are listening today.
- [20 : 14] Scripture should inform your thinking. It should inform your actions. And I'm not saying that you shouldn't be logical, that you shouldn't use your minds.
- I'm encouraging you to do that. I'm encouraging you to think through Scripture as you read it. But that's the important thing, that you allow for the truth of Scripture.
- Let it enlighten us. And that's different from what the unbeliever does. Because the unbeliever goes by their reasoning and their reasoning alone.
- And they give no thought to Scripture. As far as the unbeliever is concerned, they regard Scripture as a myth, sometimes as an outright lie.
- They regard the claims of Scripture as things that are impossible. These are fantasies. They can't even begin to consider the possibilities.
- [21 : 17] To the mind of the unbeliever, the universe cannot be created by the Word of God. They can't fathom that there is a spiritual world under which there is an all-wise, all-knowing God who sees all.
- There couldn't be a virgin mirth. And to the unbelieving mind, it's nonsense that a man claiming to be God in the flesh would give his life on a tree for sinners.
- Definitely he wouldn't rise from the dead. That just doesn't happen. But these are the things that are revealed to us in Scripture.
- I encourage you to regard the Scriptures as Timothy regarded them and as Paul described them in this passage. They are sacred writings that are able to make you wise and wise to salvation.
- The way of wisdom leads to abundant life. That's today. It leads to eternal life and the age to come.
- [22 : 46] So when you have this wisdom from Scripture, you are able to discern deceptions and we are able to reject those deceptions. We are able to live in a wise way that honors God.
- God. So when we are told that people are born good, immediately what we should recall is that the Scripture says I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- And this Scripture explains to us that we have inherited sin and it affects us even from the moment of our birth. And without knowing that, without having that revealed to us through Scripture, we can easily and we can falsely believe that we have the ability within ourselves to do what we need to do for our own souls.
- We would be deceived into thinking that lie that all we need to do is do more good than bad. and we will see heaven.
- And Paul makes it clear this morning in this passage that that's far from the truth. He points out that the Scriptures make us wise in the sense that being acquainted with them and searching them reveals the true path to salvation and it's through faith in Christ Jesus.

[24 : 25] Christ is the only path that Paul points to when it comes to our salvation. That's the wise path. The Scriptures affirm it time and time again and though the world hates it and the world would ridicule us for having that stand they would say that we are intolerant that we are hateful toward other religions.

in the end we have to accept that is what Scripture affirms. Our salvation is about who Christ is.

Our salvation is about the work that he did on the cross and how his righteousness is credited to us. Our salvation does not depend on us but it depends on him.

so our faith must be in who he is which is the second person of the Godhead and in what he's done which is presented himself as a sacrifice to pay our sins.

Not his sins because he had none but our sins. We are the ones who were born within dwelling sin and we are the ones who have fallen short actually sinning.

[25 : 50] he had no sin. But Paul says learning and believing these things that are presented in sacred scripture can lead us to salvation.

Notice he doesn't say the same thing about the way of the world. Paul says faith in Christ Jesus is the way to salvation with the way of the world it's the opposite.

the way of the world leads to death and leads to destruction. The way of wisdom is life and salvation.

And so I'll just quickly make the point that Paul also speaks about from whom Timothy learned the scriptures. scriptures. And later on he speaks about from whom he learned about Christ Jesus specifically.

He's alluding to himself. First of all parents have an awesome responsibility to train children and to instruct them in the ways of God.

[27 : 01] It's the parents' responsibility to set our children on this path of wisdom that Paul speaks about. and we heard it in the first passage that Lila so beautifully read for us from Psalm 78.

This is what she read. He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children to the next generation which might know him.

The children yet unborn and arise and tell them to their children. So we are commanded to instruct our children in the ways of the Lord and that duty doesn't stop when a child now becomes an adult.

Really for the entire life of my child I am their parent. That's just how it is and so our duty continues where they are not on the path of wisdom we are to counsel them we are to pray for them pray that their eyes will be open and their hearts will open to Christ.

And there are many children who are now adults who start off where our graduates are now. They were placed on the path of wisdom.

[28 : 35] As they get older they strayed away. So what does a parent do in a situation like that?

But if you look at Timothy Timothy's mother and grandmother they were Jews who most likely immersed him in the Old Testament scriptures from his early years.

But later in life Paul would have taught him directly about Christ Jesus about his fulfillment of scripture. And no doubt there were others who poured into Timothy's life.

So we have here adult members of this congregation who come alongside parents just as those who poured into Timothy's life. And here we have to teach our children through children's church, through kind of culture, and through less formal conversations.

So as a church family we commit to raising children in the fear of the Lord. God and even here with us, that commitment doesn't end because a child is now an adult.

[30 : 03] So parents who are in that situation I describe, you have brothers and you have sisters who you can lean on in prayer. They'll come alongside you in prayer for those who are lost.

and you can lean on them for seeking godly counsel for yourself and for that child of yours. Just like Paul was a spiritual father to Timothy, we have men, women in this church who are spiritual fathers and spiritual mothers to those who have passed through here.

And another thing for us to consider with those who are here with us now with our children, have we become okay?

Have we become fine with having them absent from opportunities where they can develop and grow in spiritual graces?

Are we bringing them along to Bible studies? Are they a part of our meetings discipleship groups? It's another opportunity for us to place them on the path of wisdom and to have our brothers and sisters come alongside us and mentor them and be spiritual fathers and spiritual mothers.

[31 : 33] and finally for all of us nothing I say this morning will make any sense nothing I said this morning could be relied on if the scriptures are not what Paul claimed them to be.

Paul claims that all scripture is breathed out by God. In other words they are God's very words though they would have been written by men Paul claims that God is behind it and that's what gives them their authority.

If the scriptures are written by men but ultimately they are directed by God in such a way that they are really and truly God's words it's then that they can be trusted.

They can be trusted because ultimately they come from the one who is all knowing who is all wise the one who is infallible and that is what makes them good for teaching for reproof for correction and for training in righteousness.

It's because the one who wrote those words the one who ultimately wrote those words he has the sight beyond our natural sight that can lead us in the path where we won't fall where we won't stumble.

[33 : 15] He can tell us the nature of all things because he is the one who created all things and we need him in all things especially in this area of continuing on the path of learning scripture especially in the area of belief if we try to fool ourselves and think that just on our human will we will come to belief we're going to be disappointed we need the spirit of God to help us in our belief so students this is what I'm going to say to you I want you to lean on God continue in the scripture continue in living them out and walking with God and the more you walk with God the more you will see that he reveals himself to you and you will understand how real

God is let's not trust the claims of the world in the end the claims of the world the views of the world are never the truth they are far far from the truth the world only sees a dog on a chain and makes an assumption based on their own faulty reasoning that they are going the right way and there is no danger to them but there is another way to go we can hear the voice of God by God's grace we will hear his voice and we will know that he is the one that we can trust wholeheartedly God calls us to go another way the way of wisdom just as Timothy went we can continue to learn his ways we can continue to believe firmly on him and if we believe we will come to abundant life and we will come to eternal life in him let's pray father we thank you for your word and we pray lord that your spirit will cause us to hold to it we pray lord that your spirit will cause us to hear your voice speaking to us fathers and spiritual mothers to continue to instruct them and to guide them we thank you for how you bless this congregation lord with teachers who sacrifice and teachers who yield themselves to you week after week for the sake of your little ones we pray for a blessing on them and we pray for grace for all of our parents that they would seek to instruct their children that they would seek to cause them to show their children your wise path and we pray lord it would be your will to bring all to salvation through faith in Christ

Jesus we pray this in his name amen