

What Do You Want Me to Give You?

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[0 : 00] question that should pop up on the screen. If God came to you right now and asked, what do you want me to give you? What do you want me to give you? What would be your answer? And the only answer I'm not allowed to say is my offering money back. You're giving that right now. What do you want me to give you? Well, let me throw out there. How would you answer that question?

Let all your family be saved. Okay. What are some other answers? Wisdom. What else? World peace. Give you personally world peace. Wow. All your wants. Wow. Okay. That covers a lot. That's almost like the genie comes out of the bottle and you ask for more wishes, right? Sorry? Okay. Holdings for Christ. Love. Okay. Sorry? The memories of the apostles. Okay. Yeah. Stuart, what? Sorry? Me. Oh, wow. Gosh. You get your wish. Stuart was the only one who asked for something he knew he was going to get. Good. There we go. Awesome. Yeah. There, you know, we could list off a lot of stuff. This is sort of like, I feel like throwing that out there right here is where we're going to get like all the right answers, so to speak. You know, I think in our hearts, though, there are times during the day when if God came and asked you that question, your answer might be very different, right? How about freedom from pain, freedom from anxiety, freedom from depression? How about more influence? I mean, you know, more influence with your children, more influence at work, more influence in our culture. Maybe you're like, our culture is going down the drain. I wish we could have more influence. Sometimes money's tight.

[2 : 20] Maybe you're wanting a spouse. Maybe you're kind of wanting to be single again. Maybe that's what you're wanting. No spouse. You want to, don't say that on Mother's Day to your wife. No. You're, yeah, maybe you got one of those. You're wanting humility. Be very, very careful about asking for humility or patience. Those are, be careful. God seems to be very quick to grant those requests.

I phrase that as though that's a hypothetical question. We're not expecting, you know, to, you know, go to bed tonight and then all of a sudden have a dream where God asks that of you.

There was a man for whom that wasn't a hypothetical question. This scenario actually happened to him. And that was 3,000 years ago. King Solomon was posed this question by the Lord.

And you can read about it yourself in 1 Kings chapter 3. It'll be up on the screen here. 1 Kings chapter 3. Here's what happened. At Gibeon, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night.

[3 : 26] And God said, Ask what I shall give you. Ask what I shall give you. What do you want me to give you? And Solomon said, I do not know how to go out or come in.

And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil.

For who is able to govern this, your great people? It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, Because you have asked this, And have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding, to discern what is right.

Behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you, and none like you shall arise after you.

I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you all your days. And if you walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.

[5 : 10] Now, is wisdom what you would have asked for? I guess David said it, so it's what he would have asked for. But how about the rest of you? Would you have asked for wisdom?

And, you know, of all the things he could have asked for, and many of the things that we said were like, they're really good things, really noble things. Why was the Lord especially pleased that Solomon asked for wisdom?

For wisdom. Well, that's the first question we want to tackle today. Why wisdom? Why would the Lord be very pleased by someone wanting to be wise?

And to learn the answer to that question, we've got to start first by knowing what wisdom is. What is it exactly? Wisdom, it's one of those concepts that we intuitively grasp.

You kind of know it when you see it. But it's really hard to define. And I'd struggled for many years trying to, you know, what exactly is wisdom? How would you define it?

[6 : 13] And I was pleasantly surprised a couple months ago when I encountered a definition of wisdom. It was given by J.I. Packer in his little book, Concise Theology. And I don't know if you've ever had one of those aha moments, one of those moments when something that you have felt by intuition for years, someone puts into words.

Isn't that a good feeling? That's a great feeling. You're like, that's it. That's it. That's what I've been feeling all these years. And right there it's in words. And I had one of those moments when I read how Packer defines wisdom.

Here's how he puts it. Wisdom in Scripture means choosing the best and noblest end at which to aim, along with the most appropriate and effective means to it.

Wisdom in Scripture means choosing the best and noblest end at which to aim, along with the most appropriate and effective means to it. I like that so much.

It's in your bulletin definition of wisdom. So wisdom encompasses ideas that our culture is familiar with. It encompasses ideas like mission and vision, goals and values, means and ends, purpose and process.

[7 : 32] Wisdom governs the thoughts that you think. It governs the things you desire, the words you speak, the actions you take, the habits you form. Wisdom is the art of living well.

It's knowing what you were made for, how you can live out your purpose. Now here's the good news for me as a preacher. If I'm a salesman, I'm selling you a product that you already really want. You're a motivated buyer. I don't have to sell you on wisdom. You want it. We live in a world of 7.6 billion people craving wisdom. Here's the problem.

Wisdom has its counterfeits. Our culture has actually refined the art of counterfeiting wisdom. If you've ever heard someone say, you know, you've got to just go and find yourself.

You've got to find your own purpose in life. You've got to find your own identity. You're listening to someone who is denying that there is one wisdom to be found. They're saying everybody's got to have their own wisdom.

[8 : 34] There are 7.6 billion little wisdoms out there. And effectively, that means there is no wisdom at all. Our culture is a wisdom-denying culture.

And no wonder people are lost and craving wisdom. That is the ancient lie of the serpent. You will be like God, knowing good and evil.

You will be God-like in your ability to judge and discern what's good and bad for yourself. To discern for yourself what is the best and noblest end at which to aim.

Our culture is a factory of counterfeit wisdoms. In contrast to that, we as Christians, we look for wisdom from God.

We turn to the wisdom literature of the Bible. We turn to the books of Scripture, which emphasize the need for wisdom. And then teach us how to develop it.

[9 : 35] Proverbs chapter 2 tells us what the ultimate source of wisdom is. The Lord gives wisdom. From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

It's the Lord who gives wisdom. It's from his mouth that knowledge and understanding are coming. So we would expect that God's words, we would expect the words of the Holy Spirit that are written in Scripture, we would expect these words to be a source of wisdom.

And God also delivers wisdom to us in other ways. In Proverbs chapter 1, wise King Solomon writes, Hear my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching.

The Lord has given Solomon wisdom. And now he's telling his own son to listen to the God-given wisdom of his parents. This is Mother's Day.

One of the best things you can do for your mom on Mother's Day is to talk with her or call her up and ask her, What has God taught you this last year?

[10 : 41] What can I learn from you? Listen attentively to her words of wisdom, whether she has few or whether she has many. Any wisdom that more mature people have developed, it ultimately comes from God, the giver of wisdom.

So God is the source of wisdom. He communicates it to us through his word and through wise people, and especially through wise people who have gotten it from his word. And from God's word, we learn the best and noblest end at which to aim.

Proverbs chapter 2, we read, My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding, yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, here's the best and noblest end that you're going to get.

Then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. Then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

To know God and to fear him is the best and noblest end of any man, woman, and child. There's another biblical book of wisdom, Ecclesiastes.

[12 : 06] And that book also, it concludes with these words, The end of the matter, all has been heard, fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

Literally, this is the all of man. Then J.I. Packer, he explains it this way, It, that's wisdom, means making the fear of God, that is reverent worship and service of him, one's goal, and cultivating prudence, fortitude, forbearance, and zeal as a means to it.

The fear of God is one's goal, and then the one's goal or end, that's the best and noblest end, and then the means to that are prudence, fortitude, forbearance, zeal.

All these are virtues of the Christian life. The Westminster Shorter Catechism, it famously begins with these words, Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. And these are all, those scriptures and those words of wisdom from believers who come before us, they're all saying the same thing in different ways.

[13 : 18] This is what human beings were made to do. We were made to fear God, to know him, to glorify him, to enjoy him forever. That is our best and noblest end. That is your best and noblest end, no matter who you are.

That's why God was so pleased that King Solomon would ask to be wise. And that's why God wants you to be wise too. God wants, God wants to give you wisdom.

You can be wise. You can be wise. Maybe you need more convincing. Maybe you still think, you know, yeah, okay, yeah, wisdom's a good thing, sure.

But you've got a lot of other things you want to do with your life besides being wise. Now, what God wants to do is he wants to convince you that the best thing you can be is wise. The best thing you can do with your life is to learn wisdom.

So when people ask you the question, what do you want to be when you grow up? Maybe they're still asking you that at age 50. When you finally grow up, what do you want to be?

[14 : 32] God wants to convince you that your knee-jerk immediate response is, I want to be wise. I want to be wise. That's what I want to be. So God the Holy Spirit has given us Proverbs chapter 8 from the pen of King Solomon.

Proverbs chapter 8. He's given it to us to answer that question, why should I be wise? Why should I be wise? You'll find Proverbs chapter 8.

If you're using one of the blue Bibles our ushers handed out, it's on page 532. 532. I'm going to read Proverbs chapter 8, and I'm going to stop at four points throughout the chapter to identify four reasons why you should be wise.

Four reasons why you should be wise. Let's begin in verse 1. Does not wisdom call? Does not understanding raise her voice?

On the heights beside the way, at the crossroads, she takes her stand. Beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals, she cries aloud, To you, O men, I call, and my cry is to the children of man.

[15 : 44] O simple ones, learn prudence. O fools, learn sense. Hear. For I speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right, for my mouth will utter truth.

Wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are righteous. There is nothing twisted or crooked in them. They are all straight to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge.

Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.

So notice that Solomon is identifying wisdom. She's a great lady. If you want to celebrate a great lady on Mother's Day, celebrate your mom, celebrate your grandma, and celebrate wisdom.

In literary terms, Solomon, what he's doing is he's personifying wisdom. He's presenting wisdom as a character who is speaking. Lady wisdom is communicating to us what wisdom is like, why we should seek wisdom.

[17:04] And the first reason that lady wisdom gives for seeking her is that there is a rightness to wisdom. There is a rightness to wisdom.

She describes her words in these verses as noble, right, truth, righteous, straight.

Maybe you're tired of being misled. Maybe you're tired of being confused.

Maybe you're tired of being betrayed by lies other people are telling you, lies that you are telling yourself. If so, wisdom offers a lovely rightness.

I remember once at a former church, one of our high school students, he talked about how he had this friend. And she, there were things about him, she wasn't a believer, there were things that he said that she didn't like.

[18:05] She didn't like it when he explained the Christian sexual ethic, for example. She would get really upset at him. But she kept coming back to him for advice, for counsel, for trying to sort through things in her life.

Why? Because she knew he was wise. She knew he had wisdom that far exceeded the wisdom of her peers. She knew that he thought about things in the right way.

If you're at a stage in your life in which everything seems murky and confusing and you don't know what to believe, if that's you, then you know what this means. You would rather find wisdom than silver or gold or jewels.

You would rather be wise than be confused and betrayed and believing lies and swimming in a Scrooge McDuck vat of gold coins.

Wisdom's better. Is there anything you crave more than wisdom in that situation? All that you may desire cannot compare with her. You want to sit at the feet of Lady Wisdom.

[19:11] You want to learn what she has to say. There is a rightness to wisdom. Oh, that is good. So let's move on to the second reason you should seek wisdom. Beginning in verse 12.

I, wisdom, dwell with prudence and I find knowledge and discretion. The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.

I have counsel and sound wisdom. I have insight. I have strength. By me, kings reign and rulers decree what is just.

By me, princes rule and nobles all who govern justly. I love those who love me and those who seek me diligently find me. Riches and honor are with me enduring wealth and righteousness.

My fruit is better than gold even fine gold and my yield than choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness in the paths of justice granting an inheritance to those who love me and filling their treasuries.

[20:19] So wisdom not only offers rightness wisdom offers many other benefits as well. Lady Wisdom says that she is the one who enables kings and presidents and prime ministers to rule and govern justly.

She offers riches and honor enduring wealth and righteousness. She helps you live a good and successful life. There's not only a rightness but a fruitfulness to wisdom. There is a fruitfulness to wisdom.

That's the second reason that Lady Wisdom gives. Wisdom enables you to live a life that is fruitful and productive. Wisdom makes you strong. Wisdom helps you make good decisions.

Wisdom helps you know how to say the right things at the right time. Wisdom helps you know how to set priorities. Wisdom helps you know how to manage your money.

All of these things are going to lead to a more productive life. There's a fruitfulness to wisdom.

There's a rightness to wisdom.

[21 : 29] There's a fruitfulness to wisdom. Sounds pretty great. We could stop there but we're not going to stop there. We're going to keep going. Verse 22, there's a third reason you should seek wisdom. The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old.

Ages ago, I was set up at the first before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths, I was brought forth. When there were no springs abounding with water, before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth.

Before he had made the earth of its fields or the first of the dust of the world, when he established the heavens, I was there. When he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world, and delighting in the children of man.

Notice here, wisdom isn't just a human thing. Wisdom is fundamentally a divine thing.

Wisdom is fundamentally something God possesses, first of all. God delights in his wisdom, and when he acts wisely, he enjoys it.

[23 : 06] It's through wisdom that the Lord crafted the heavens and the earth, the mountains and skies and sea that you see all around you. That's here because of God's wisdom.

You're here because of God's wisdom. wisdom. Because God has a best and noblest end at which to aim.

God has appropriate and effective means to achieve that end. And J.I. Packer explains it this way. God's wisdom is seen in his works of creation, preservation, and redemption.

It is his choice of his own glory as his goal. And his decision to achieve it, first, by creating a marvelous variety of things and people.

That's what we see here in Proverbs chapter 8. The creation. Second, by kindly providences of all sorts. The way he preserves the world and the way he preserves us.

[24 : 11] And third, by the redemptive wisdom of Christ crucified and the resultant world church. The way he's redeemed the world. So what is God's chief end?

It's the same as our own. The chief end of God is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. God the Father, Son, and Spirit.

They glorify one another. They enjoy one another. The world is created because the Trinity want to glorify one another.

They want to enjoy one another. God the Father wants to give a good gift to his Son. They've created the world, sustained the world, redeemed the people out of the world so that God might be glorified.

That's why you exist. That's why you're here. This is the wisdom of God. And so the third reason you should seek wisdom is that there is a godliness to wisdom.

[25 : 13] There is a godliness to wisdom. In this sense, God does want you to be like God by being wise.

You are created in the image of God. You are meant to reflect that image. One of the ways that you reveal to people what God is like is that you take on this godly wisdom and you become wise yourself.

You take on the character of the God that you are meant to image. There is a godliness to wisdom. And so we conclude chapter 8 with a fourth and final reason you should seek wisdom.

That's in verse 32. Verses 32 through 36. And now, O sons, listen to me. Blessed are those who keep my ways.

Hear instruction and be wise and do not neglect it. Blessed is the one who listens to me watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors.

[26 : 18] For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord. But he who fails to find me injures himself.

All who hate me love death. Interesting way to conclude there. If you aren't seeking wisdom, you love death. Some of you aren't seeking wisdom here this morning and I'm telling you right now, you love death.

You love death. The first reality, sorry, the fourth reality to wisdom is in these verses. The fourth reason to seek wisdom.

Twice in these verses, Lady Wisdom says that those who gain wisdom are blessed. Blessed are those who keep my ways. Blessed is the one who listen to me. They're happy. Wise people are happy people. Not in the fake and bubbly and superficial sense that most people mean when they say, oh, I'm happy today. They're happy in the sense that they have this deep-rooted joy.

[27 : 26] You know, their emotions change from day to day. Some days you're up, some days you're down, but underneath it all, you've got a foundation. You've got a happiness, a blessedness to life. They have found life.

They've obtained favor from the Lord. That's what it means to be blessed. God's words of favor spoken over you. The Lord has shown kindness to them, given them life.

There is a blessedness to wisdom. There is a blessedness to wisdom. That's the fourth reason to be wise. To be wise is to live the good life. You're looking for the good life.

This is it. To be wise. To be wise is to enjoy the favor of the Lord. So there is a rightness, a fruitfulness, a godliness, a blessedness to wisdom.

That's why you should be wise. So let's say that God the Holy Spirit has won you over. Let's say that you're sitting there right now and you're like, yes, you're right. I should be wise and I want to be wise.

[28 : 27] I want to be wise. But just knowing why you should be wise isn't enough. Answering the why question doesn't answer the how question. How can I be wise?

How can I find wisdom? Well, the answer to this question it's found as we continue into Proverbs chapter 9. And here you and I we will find three realities that govern how we can be wise.

Three realities that govern how we can be wise. So we'll continue. Verse 1. Wisdom has built her house. She has hewn her seven pillars.

She has slaughtered her beasts. She has mixed her wine. And she has also set her table. She has sent out her young women to call from the highest places in the town. Whoever is simple let him turn in here.

To him who lacks sense she says, come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways and live and walk in the way of insight.

[29 : 34] So the first reality is that there is an invitation to wisdom. There is an invitation to wisdom. Lady Wisdom has laid out the welcome mat.

She has built a house prepared a feast. She has sent her maidservants out throughout the town to come and call call you to the wisdom party.

There is a big party being thrown at her house and you're invited. You're supposed to be there. She wants you there. There's a feast there at no charge.

She says, come and enter. Zero dollar entrance fee. Your only qualification. You don't have to be smart enough. You don't have to have enough money. You don't have to have a lot of free time.

You've got one qualification. Whoever is simple. Your one qualification is that you identify as, yeah, I'm a simple person. I don't have a lot of experience.

[30 : 37] I don't understand the complexity of life. The reality is sometimes I'm misled. I'm kind of gullible at times. I'm easily enticed. If that's who you identify as, then you are on the guest list to Lady Wisdom's party.

She is welcome. You come in. There's an invitation to wisdom. This is what scripture teaches, that wisdom comes from God. And that God is eager.

He is eager to teach you wisdom. He wants it. If you try to come up with some other life purpose or mission, and this is the good thing about it, that there's an invitation.

You're invited. You can actually get this. God actually wants to give this to you. Some of us have spent our whole life on other life purposes and other missions, and you're just frustrated because you're just not getting it.

You're not getting what you're looking for. Last month in Toronto, there was a young man who rented a van, struck two dozen, purposely struck two dozen people, killed ten of them in an act of terrorism.

[31 : 51] Why did he do it? Because he couldn't achieve the sexual fulfillment that was his end in life. He wanted to be sexually fulfilled by women.

They wouldn't give him what he was wanting, so he decided to take it out on as many women as he could. It is anger against the women who rejected him. Ultimately, his anger against God who

refused to fulfill that desire, who refused to fulfill that end he was seeking, and he acted as a murderous fool.

That's one of many counterfeit wisdoms that are out there. The false wisdom of sexual fulfillment. That man's chief end is to be sexually fulfilled and enjoy that forever. These counterfeits, and there's so many others, there's money, there's respect.

These counterfeits, they offer ends that may not be possible for you to attain. You might not get what you're looking for. And even if you do, it's probably not gonna, even if you get what you're looking for, that could be the worst thing that happens to you.

You find out it's empty. There's an elitism to worldly wisdom. A lot of people can't get the things that the world says you should have, you ought to have, that you need to have, that are your end in life.

[33 : 20] Here's the good thing about God's wisdom. True wisdom is available to anyone who asks. Do you want it? Are you willing to ask for it?

If so, it's yours. That's amazing. God was eager to give King Solomon wisdom when he simply asked for it.

In the wisdom literature of the New Testament in James chapter 1, here's what we read. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

This is one of those prayers in scripture. If you pray to God for wisdom, if you ask, if you plead, if you day after day say, God, make me wise, make me wise.

If you seek wisdom and ask him for it, and look for his words, and learn as much as you can from his word, from other believers who speak and know his words, if you ask for wisdom, God will teach you.

[34 : 31] God will give generously. He is going to give far more wisdom than you could have ever imagined. And he is not going to reproach you for being a simple and foolish person.

He'll welcome you in. There's an invitation to wisdom. That's the first reality which governs how we can be wise. And the second reality is found as we continue through Proverbs chapter 9, beginning in verse 7.

Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse and he reproves a wicked man and incurs injury. Do not reprove a scoffer or he will hate you.

Reprove a wise man and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man and he will be still wiser. Teach a righteous man and he will increase in learning.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The knowledge of the Holy One is insight. For by me your days will be multiplied and years will be added to your life.

[35 : 34] If you are wise, you are wise for yourself. If you scoff, you alone will bear it. Before we learned, before this, we learned that Lady Wisdom is welcoming everyone.

She is announcing loudly her feast. She is not charging a nickel. but here we learn there are people who will not listen, who aren't going to listen to her summons.

There are people who won't even enter her house. There are scoffers who reject Lady Wisdom and that's why wisdom is not a common thing. If you don't believe wisdom isn't common, stop and think for a moment.

How many people do you know that you would say, she is a wise woman? He is a wise man. How many people?

What percentage of the people you know and have met? Who would you love to just learn wisdom from? You just want to follow them around all the time, hear everything they have to say, see everything they do, learn their habits.

[36 : 42] It's not that many people, is it? The world isn't exactly awash in wisdom. Yeah, I titled the sermon You Can Be Wise.

Lady Wisdom is supposed to be out there at the town gates, at the crossroads, at the heights, beckoning us to come. So how come wisdom seems so rare in this world and even in the church? And the question is answered by the second reality here. The second reality in verses 7 through 12. There is an initiation into wisdom. There is an initiation into wisdom.

You gotta start somewhere. Verse 9 indicates that in order to learn and be wise, you have to be wise already. Give instruction to a wise man and he will be still wiser.

What about the scoffer? Well, he's gonna hate you if you try to give him wisdom. To become more wise, you have to be wise. That's great. But that doesn't help me.

[37 : 47] Where do I start? Well, here's what we see. Verse 10 explains that this isn't a catch-22. This isn't the kind of thing where, you know, if you're not already wise, then you're locked out.

Verse 10 explains what this means. It says, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is in sight. Now, if you remember, at the beginning, we said the best and noblest end at which to aim is the fear of the Lord.

And it turns out that this is also the place where wisdom begins. The end is the beginning. They just circle around back to one another and it builds. It's this upward spiral.

You start with the fear of the Lord, you grow in wisdom, you learn the fear of the Lord, you grow more wisdom, and it just keeps going up and up and up. The fear of the Lord is a necessary condition in order to gain wisdom.

If you don't have it, you can't be wise. You'll reject wisdom. You'll scoff at it. It'll seem ridiculous to you. You cannot enter the home of lady wisdom, remember, unless you've identified as a simple person.

[38 : 51] You can't enter the home of lady wisdom until you've turned from your sinful and foolish way of life, until you've identified as that simple, easily enticed person who needs wisdom, until you have surrendered yourself in worship and reverence to the Lord.

You have to follow the way of Jesus Christ, the wise way of Jesus Christ. God the Son became a man and humbled himself and died in suffering and shame on a Roman cross so that he could bear the punishment for us.

Our punishment for being those foolish scoffers, standing at the feet of the cross, he saved others. Let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, his chosen one.

He saves us from being foolish scoffers who reject the wisdom of God and go our own way instead. The world doesn't see any wisdom in the death of Christ.

But we see that it is the means that God used to glorify himself. In 1 Corinthians 1, the Apostle Paul writes, for the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing.

[40 : 06] But to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

This is that third way of God's wisdom that Packer talked about, the way God redeems. In other words, the cross, the means that God uses to reveal his power and glory through death and suffering.

It looks foolish. It looks ridiculous to the sages and scholars and debaters in this present age.

People from this world, they don't see the cross as a triumph.

They don't respond to the cross in wonder by turning from their sins, by fearing the Lord. They don't understand the wisdom of God. They don't understand the way that God is thinking, what God was doing.

[41 : 17] And Paul goes on to explain, who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person which is in him? Who knows what you're thinking unless it's yourself?

So also, no one comprehends the thoughts of God. No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the spirit of God. Now we have not received, now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit who is from God that we might understand the things freely given us by God. The natural person does not accept the things of the spirit of God, for they are folly to him and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?

But we have the mind of Christ. Christ. So only to those who repent, only those who believe in Jesus Christ, who died and rose again, only to them will be given the Holy Spirit to understand the mind of Christ, to understand the way God is thinking.

So the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. There is an initiation into wisdom. That's the second reality which governs how we can be wise.

[42 : 42] third and final reality. There is an imitation of wisdom. There is an imitation of wisdom. We see there is another lady, I'll put lady in quotes, in Proverbs 9 verses 13 through 18.

There is another one speaking with a loud voice. She too is welcoming the simple to come into her home to eat and drink what she has to offer. King Solomon calls her the woman folly.

She is not a lady. The woman folly is loud. She is seductive and knows nothing. She sits at the door of her house.

She takes a seat on the highest places of the town, calling to those who pass by, who are going straight on their way. Whoever is simple, let him turn in here. And to him who lacks sense, she says, stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.

But he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol. The woman folly is seductive.

[43 : 50] She knows just how to appeal to your desires, just how to entice you and lure you in, just how to portray your foolish decisions as sweet and pleasant, just how to hide the deadly consequences of your foolish and sinful choices.

She knows how to seduce whole cultures, she knows how to seduce the world. If you do not start with the fear of the Lord, then you will not be answering the call of lady wisdom.

You're going to follow one woman or the other. You'll be answering the call of that woman folly. But the woman folly, what does she know? What wisdom does she have? She knows nothing.

She has no wisdom to offer. She tells you, you can make up your own purpose in life. You can discover an end that is better and nobler than the fear of the Lord.

There's better stuff out there. But those who follow that woman folly, they have one and only one end. The dead are there.

[44 : 53] Her guests are in the depths of Sheol, the realm of the dead. Those who pursue an imitation of wisdom will not remain for much longer. longer. They don't tend to stick around very long.

And the reality is what's the longest they're going to stick around and enjoy life? 80 years? 90 years? Then what? Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, among the mature we do impart wisdom. Although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age who are doomed to pass away. Their time is short. The clock is ticking. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

none of the rulers of this age understood this. For if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. It's that imitation of wisdom, the worldview of our culture, the mindset of those who will not bow the knee to God.

It's that wisdom which crucified the Lord of glory. Do not align yourself with the woman folly who nailed your Savior to a cross.

[46 : 17] don't go her way. Do not adopt the mindset of those who will not begin their search for wisdom with the fear of the Lord.

There is an imitation of wisdom. That's the third reality which governs how we can be wise. So to conclude, what is wisdom? It is choosing the fear of the Lord as the best and noblest end at which to aim.

wisdom and learning from God's word, his spirit, his people, the most appropriate and effective means to that end. And why should you be wise?

Because the wise life is the good life. Because there is a rightness, a fruitfulness, a godliness, a blessedness to wisdom. And how can you be wise? By answering God's summons to humble yourself, believe in his son, and fear the Lord.

God. That's how your journey to wisdom begins. How your steps begin to lead you to the great feast of Lady Wisdom. Now this is a journey we're not making alone.

[47 : 27] This is a journey, I've been speaking to us as individuals, but this is a journey we're making together as a church, as a family together. So next week we're going to talk more about that.

We're going to talk about how we can be a wise church. how we can be a wise church, living in wisdom together, the wisdom of the church community.

Because God wants us all together to join him in his wisdom. You can be wise. Paul explains in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined.

what God has prepared for those who love him. These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. Let me pray. God, our Father, we thank you.

[48 : 38] We thank you.