

True Wisdom

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Date: 07 July 2019

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[0 : 00] So Proverbs chapter 8, page 641, starting at verse 1. Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice?

At the highest point along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand. Beside the gate leading into the city, at the entrance, she cries aloud, To you, O people, I call out. I raise my voice to all humanity.

You who are simple, gain prudence. You who are foolish, set your hearts on it. Listen, for I have trustworthy things to say. I open my lips to speak what is right. My mouth speaks what is true. For my lips detest wickedness. All the words of my mouth are just. None of them is crooked or perverse. To the discerning, all of them are right.

They are upright to those who have found knowledge. Choose my instruction instead of silver. Knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is more precious than rubies.

[1 : 18] And nothing you desire can compare with her. I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence. I possess knowledge and discretion. To fear the Lord is to hate evil.

I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. Counsel and sound judgment are mine. I have insight. I have power. By me, kings reign.

And rulers issue decrees that are just. By me, princes govern. And nobles, all who rule on earth. I love those who love me. And those who seek me, find me.

With me are riches and honor. Enduring wealth and prosperity. My fruit is better than fine gold. What I yield surpasses choice silver.

I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, bestowing a rich inheritance on those who love me, and making their treasuries full. The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old.

[2 : 25] I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be. When there were no watery depths, I was given birth. When there were no springs overflowing with water.

Before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth. Before he made the world, or its fields, or any of the dust of the earth. I was there when he set the heavens in place. When he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep. When he established the clouds above, and fixed securely the fountains of the deep. When he gave the sea its boundary, so that the waters would not overstep his command.

And when he marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was constantly at his side. I was filled with delight, day after day. Rejoicing always in his presence.

Rejoicing in his whole world. And delighting in the human race. Now then, my children, listen to me. Blessed are those who keep my ways. Listen to my instruction, and be wise.

[3 : 32] Do not disregard it. Blessed are those who listen to me. Watching daily at my doors. Waiting at my doorway. For those who find me, find life. And receive favor from the Lord.

But those who fail to find me, harm themselves. All who hate me, loathe death. This is the word of the Lord. Good evening.

Thanks for coming. My name is Darren. I'm part of the vestry at St. Silas. And tonight we're going to be looking at wisdom. Which, as Alan said, we're going to be looking at pretty much every week for the whole month. So sometimes when we will talk about some of these subjects, some of us might repeat certain themes.

That is not accidental. That is generally part of a bigger planned idea to reinforce certain things. Because that is primarily what a lot of the book of Proverbs does. It reinforces one simple message, particularly the first nine chapters of wisdom is good.

And you should probably try and practice it. And if you hear nothing else, that's what you should take from tonight. And there's a certain irony always for me when I ask to speak on subjects like this. I have a litany of unwise decisions in my past.

[4 : 36] So you can ask me about that later if you're really interested. But that's not what tonight is going to turn into. Part of the problem when we talk about subjects like this is trying to even define what wisdom is.

Every culture has its own understanding of wisdom. Every culture has its own understanding of what a proverb is. We're going to watch a short video to try and demonstrate that. But I'm not sure how much of you will understand his accent.

But we'll try it anyway. And I can summarize the main theme. Do you want to put it on? Once I made a mental experiment, if you don't believe me.

Let's take, I will say something. I will say, I don't know how to say it. I'm too ironic with all this pathos. You know, why are we running after these miserable earthly pleasures?

Think about eternity. The only satisfaction is eternity. If I were to say it with proper pathos, it would sound a deep thing to say. It sounded dead.

[5 : 37] Now, let's say the opposite. Why run after the specter of eternity? Carpe diem. Grasp what you have here. It sounds wise. Now I will say the third option.

Why be caught in a contrast between eternity and temporary existence? The true wisdom is to see eternity inflicting temporary pleasures.

It is wise. Then I say the fourth variation. We are forever condemned between the two. Wise men accept this. You know, whatever I say, that's my point.

You can sell it as a wisdom. This is a wisdom. Did you understand what you were saying?

Essentially, whatever you say, if you say it in the right tone of voice, it sounds wise. That's part of the problem with wisdom.

Every culture says this is what wisdom is for us. And part of what we are looking at, we're always going to be looking into a culture that is not our own, but is still part of the framework of what it means to be the people of God.

[6 : 34] And we always have to hold that tension when we look at something like Proverbs. So every culture has its own idea of Proverbs. And we will get into these in the future weeks. Actually, most of the first nine chapters are building up, as I said, to that message that is a good thing to pursue.

And it starts to kind of build out what wisdom looks like in the next chapters. But as we head into this is some of the characteristics to the point where it starts to describe wisdom as an actual person, an actual person who exists and calls out to who the people in the streets are.

So I'm going to pray, and then we'll get into this. Father, I thank you that wisdom is something you give as a gift, so that even someone like me can stand here and talk about it, and that we're not left to fumble around in the dark of what it means to understand life.

Yet in the confusion of it, you walk among us in the person of Christ to show what it means to have goodness and truth and beauty. So I pray that that would be some of the things we were able to think about and dwell about tonight.

I ask that in your son's name. Amen. So the Hebrew word for proverb means analogy or comparison. And they are statements that have a bit of a punch.

[7 : 48] They're not supposed to be like scientific fact. This always equals this. It is principles that is held out for each one of us. In the same way that, you know, you use the statement, you can't lead a horse to water.

Generally, no, you can. You can't make a drink. That's the proverb, isn't it? It's not making some scientific rules about how you look after horses. It is making some statement about stubborn people.

And a lot of the things we will look at are caricatures. So when we look at the wisdom personified as a person, it's not talking about an actual person. It's talking about some of the attributes of what it might look like.

So wisdom, I don't know how you would define it. The dictionary defines it as the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment. But some of the things we've been looking at is a kind of fuller definition of word.

It's not not that, but it's a fuller understanding that for Christians, the source of that stuff is God himself. So wisdom is learning God's ways in a world through observation, through reflection, and then through action.

[8 : 48] So wisdom is not purely thinking, and it's not purely doing. It is the reflecting and the thinking and the doing, based on who God has revealed himself to be and the principles he has set out before us.

But wisdom is the skill of the art of godly living in the world today. It's not to be confused with intelligence. I don't know how many people you know who are very smart but not very wise. There was an accusation my father used to make about me. I'm not going to get into my childhood either. There might be a lot of tangents I might get into personal stuff, but I'll try not to. This idea that we can accumulate lots of head knowledge, like some sort of academic ivory towers, but we don't know how to work it out in the world, whereas wisdom is the practice of, like, well, how do you actually connect?

These things you know and the world you see around you is different from the law and the prophets. It has echoes and themes that are similar, but this is not the same thing.

It is not primarily about moral decision-making. It is all about the way we live and the kind of people we are becoming in reflection to who we know God to be and therefore who we know ourselves to be and then how we live in community well with other people in the ways in which it has been outlined for us.

[10 : 02] So, it has this spirit around it. It has this kind of tone around it of, like, a craftsmanship. And actually, in Exodus, when they're talking about the people who are building the tabernacle, they use a word very similar to wisdom.

There's, like, a craftsmanship of the way you do life, the way you do the things you are called to do and the places you find yourself. And as we come into this chapter, we're starting to kind of come to a bit of a head before we actually move into the exact proverbs themselves.

So, it starts, Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice? At the highest point along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand. Beside the gates leading into the city.

At the entrance, she cries aloud, To you, O people, I call out. I raise my voice to all humanity. This idea that wisdom goes out to all humanity.

And that's true, isn't it? Like, we know lots of people who we consider wise. And we might not find them even in this building or in the same faith group that we have. But wisdom is one of those things that when we look at goodness in the world, we know its source.

[11 : 05] We know it comes from goodness of the God who made it all himself. Whereas the truest wisdom is this thing that calls out a response back. And that's part of the character of God, isn't it?

He calls out for a response back. You see this personification of wisdom moving through the streets. And wisdom is, again, while it's this art of how we live in the world, it's not to look at the book of Proverbs as some sort of rule book.

And James was talking about that this morning. It's not formulaic. You know, if you do this, then this will always happen. And the wisdom books sit alongside each other. So the wisdom books of Job and Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

And each one of them are trying to flesh out what wisdom is. So Ecclesiastes is kind of a reflection of the world and it seems chaotic. Nothing seems to make sense. Job is a reflection on in the middle of darkness what is happening.

Whereas Proverbs is kind of saying, actually, there are some rules in which we can observe and we reflect on them and we live it together. So you shouldn't, as James was saying this this morning, you shouldn't take a proverb and say, this is always going to work this way.

[12 : 09] Because if you've read the book of Job, the wisdom doesn't look like that there. And actually, if you read Ecclesiastes, sometimes life feels a bit confusing. But all three books will point to the character of who God is.

Is he good? Is he just? And does he have power? Well, three of them will always push that. If you know that, then the pursuit of that will bring about how we respond well to the situations and the confusion that life often puts in front of us.

So I'm just going to go through in the next 10, 15 minutes some brief reflections of what we see here, of what wisdom looks like in chapter 8.

That first and foremost, wisdom is described as a woman. That wisdom is precious. Wisdom is about the kind of people we're becoming. And that wisdom is ultimately an invitation. And any other things I might think to add as we go on.

So, yeah, to begin with, wisdom is personified as a woman here. And it's not just personified like it says the word she. It goes into quite a fleshed-out detail of what this person is like.

[13:13] She moves through the streets. She despises bad language. She loves good language. When we talk about language, we're not talking about bad words and good words and swear words, but the kind of speech of what characterizes a person and what we talk about and what we dwell on and what we think about.

And I guess we just have to start with saying there's a tension here as well of this is not describing an actual person in the way that if you read the Mr. Men book, it's not saying that Mr. Grumpy is an actual person that walks around out there in the world. It is describing something of a character so that the children can reflect on and go, oh, this is what Mr. Grumpy looks like and Mr. Happy looks like.

It's just a far more advanced version of this. This idea of wisdom as a character and expression of God moving through life and calling people to herself. And that might have been a challenge for a very patriarchal male society that the personification of wisdom is a woman, but it is part of what we understand the Scriptures to affirm.

Just in case you pick up any of the confused things that people can think about when we think about what Christians think about certain subjects, man and woman are both made fully in the image of God and therefore God has just as much of an expression of that.

And so the dignity of holding up a woman as something to look to in this culture would have potentially been quite challenging to a lot of the cultures around about it. It's not trying to say something about the nature of God himself, but it's saying something of the way that God has made and wired the world.

[14:36] Maybe it's purely to say that men need wisdom from women more than the other way around. I don't know, you can think about that yourself. It's probably not saying that. But a lot of the Book of Wisdom have this idea of characters that wander around and are represented.

So we have the fool. The fool is one of the characters in Proverbs. The wise man is one of the characters. The son is one of the characters. And Lady Wisdom is one of the characters that we see moving through the Book of Proverbs.

And she is extolled as this character that we are not just to observe, we're to listen to and follow. It is something that we are to pursue because she is pursuing us. So generally speaking, we see in here that the fool rejects wisdom and pushes it away.

So they even reject just all the kind of stuff that we might read. And as a reader, you're reading this thinking, well, why would you reject this kind of stuff? When you read some of the things about how precious it is and what she is like.

As a reader, you're supposed to read that and go, well, yeah, obviously that's foolish to do that. But it's talking about in contrast to who she is, what we can potentially not be ourselves. So she calls people to herself.

[15:46] And one of the characteristics you see of her is that she calls all people to herself. The simple and the fool in verse five. You who are simple gain prudence. You are foolish.

Set your hearts on it. Listen for I have trustworthy things to say. Yet also later in the passage in 15 and 16, by me kings reign and rulers issue decrees that are just.

By me princes govern and nobles all who rule the earth. Wisdom is not something for the powerful. Wisdom is not supposed to be the purview of those in charge that somehow they're the wise ones and the little people aren't.

Then God's community, that when we talk about wisdom, is something for all people. It extols all people and says, we should all live this way. So that's as individuals. But this is written to a community as well.

And for a community to live well and function well under the way God has designed it, then we all need to be wise. And I guess that kind of again can challenge some of the cultures we find ourselves in that somehow only a certain group of people would call themselves wise and everybody else is foolish.

[16:52] Now of course you can misuse this stuff. But actually the spirit of the way God is moving is that he calls all people to wisdom. And she makes wisdom open to everyone. There's no such

thing as some people can get it and some people can't.

Her plea is to all humankind, it says, to come and receive this good thing. She's described as having a righteous character of her speech. She likes noble things, righteous things, nothing twisted or crooked.

And this will be in contrast with the other character that we see throughout Proverbs of the forbidden women. And those are the words of like, say when it says wickedness, it's often about sowing discontent.

It's about destruction. And again, in a community, if you had some righteous people who are trying to be wise, if it's true for me, it'll be true for all of us. But if you have people in the community who are thinking, well, I'm just doing this for me and I just want what I can get, that would be foolishness because it wouldn't just have an impact on the person, it would have an impact on all of us.

And especially in a culture which would have been farmers, where their livelihood could have totally been ruined by some, as we'll get into the Proverbs later in the coming weeks, some lazy guy who can't be bothered to do what he wants to do.

[18:03] He just wants to do his own thing. Instead, that has an impact on everyone. And so these characters are often set as contrasts to one another. But they have both an individual application, but wider than that too.

And I guess another caveat when we look at Lady Wisdom, she is tall in individuals, but also communities. As we orientate ourselves around what it means to be wise, that has an impact all over the place.

Because that was part of the original tension of the people of God, to be a blessing to those around about them. They are wise, they are all wise, and they live in a wise way. And this idea of living through righteousness and some of the things that she loves, if a community did that, that would be a blessing to the people around about them.

Now we know from the rest of the Bible, and unfortunately from a lot of church history, that is not often the way we have decided to do things. And so when we read the fool in particular, which we will come on to in a minute, it is not supposed to be about people out there.

These are the foolish people out there. It is addressed to the community of God. Proverbs is suggesting the fools could be in the room, thinking they are wise, but actually, in actual fact, they are not. They are not being a blessing at all.

[19:11] And this is held in tension of not, especially as Christians, about, you know, if you do all this, then God's on board with you. It is a fuller expression of what it means to be the light of the world.

When we use that type of language, a place where God's character and what he defines as what good life is, is worked out in the individuals in the community, it will have a blessing.

And that is why I think wisdom is described as precious. So in verses 10 and 11, choose my instructions instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.

And I'll go on to talk later on in verses 18 and 21 about a similar thing. So it's something to be pursued, as I say, both personally and individually, but not also as a community, because it's not about power, it's about this precious thing, which is a connection with God himself.

We live and walk in what God is like. This is what wise living is. He says, there's a benefit to you. There's a benefit to all of you. And this isn't, again, the kind of thing where we're like, well, if I do this, I'll just become absolutely loaded.

[20:18] The Bible talks about blessings in this way. It's not like an affirmation to become upper middle class so you can have amazing stuff. It is not supposed to be about that. It is a nation of people who are living in a certain way that loves the world around the boat, because they have the God of love and power at the center of their community, helping them to walk through the confusion of life because it is very confusing and it's supposed to be like, what's the right or wrong thing to do there?

It is live out who I've asked you to be. Wisdom is an invitation to pursue that, to live out as individuals and as a community. So when we see things, particularly in 18 to 21, riches and honor, and that can happen often when you see a society functioning well, it's something far more greater than just how we define it today, but it's also purely not just about having a good society.

It works well. It's an unspecified kind of enduring wealth and righteousness, verse 18 suggests, where it says, with me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity.

My fruit is better than fine gold. What I yield surpasses choice silver. I walk in the way of the righteous along the paths of justice, bestowing a rich inheritance on all those who love me and making their treasuries full.

This idea of righteousness and justice that endure forever is part of this idea of being blessed. It's an inheritance. It has, and that was a very important thing obviously for the people of God.

[21 : 47] It wasn't just about the moment. It was about what was coming and their inheritance. So while it can include material blessing, it is nowhere near just about that. And that material blessing is probably not what we think of it as today.

It's this idea of communal functioning and blessing that is both for them but a reflection of God's purposes in the world. So wisdom is also character.

It is the kind of people we are becoming. So it's important to remember that whenever we are talking about proverbs, we are not talking about commands. There are a few commands in proverbs but primarily they are not commands.

They are observations on life. It is like when you say there is no salt on the table that is inviting some sort of response of maybe I should go and get the salt. it is like we are listening into a conversation between a wise master father and his son and we are invited to reflect.

And as the passages build the motivation we are supposed to be like well yeah it is probably better to be wise than a fool. And as we look at some of the stuff that is what is going on here. And this takes discernment to know what to do.

[22 : 58] And the discernment is worked out by the God who invented wisdom and in the community together they are held in tension. Now I don't know about you but I find that quite a difficult principle to have. I know for a long time as a Christian I was just obsessed by rules.

Like just tell me what to do that is right or wrong. I don't really have space in my head to figure out the nuances of life. But actually that obsession with right and wrong one it was not very good at actually ever following it through.

But secondly it was a hyper simplistic view of life. Like right was often what I need to do to keep you happy and what's wrong is what's the barrier of what I can get away with.

And I'll create this space in between where I can do what I want. As long as I keep God happy with what's right and don't do whatever is bad and wrong this is my playing field I can do what I want.

And actually it's got this kind of angst and tension I don't know if you have any experience like this maybe or just some of the first eight years of me being a Christian was like it leads to this kind of like anxiety of what have this walls come further in?

[23 : 59] Oh man I'm keeping God happy enough or am I doing enough of the not just wrong stuff? And it's not asking us to think about life like that. There's going to be situations we are all in that are morally grey.

What do you do here? What is the wise thing to do? And that as I said I think that can be tricky for a lot of us because we want the safety of just knowing we're doing the right thing. We want the safety of going well I've not done the wrong thing and I've definitely done the right thing.

And there'll be some of the proverbs where we'll get into in a few weeks where it's like well in this situation you could talk to the fool like this and sometimes you just don't listen to them. And again it's an observation for the people of God to be like oh so what do we do here?

And that's a reflection of God's dignity of mankind. He's not called us all to be little robots who wander around just being like here's command 1, 2, 3 and 4 let's go. But the commands are built upon God's character himself and he asks us to then go and live this out in the world and as we walk with him in his spirit we have to figure that out.

You have to use your mind you have to use your heart you have to talk to people you can't just be here's what you do here and you do it all the time in every situation in all contexts in all cultures everywhere.

[25 : 11] In fact Jesus himself when criticized that the Pharisees have a go at Jesus numerous times but particularly in Luke 7 the religious leaders have a go at Jesus because they're accusing him of being a glutton and a drunkard.

His rebuttal to them is well you have a go at John the Baptist for hanging out in the desert and he's doing none of this stuff you have a go at me for doing the opposite stuff your rules don't make any

sense here and his final rebuttal to them is but righteousness will be wisdom will be known and made righteous through her children.

Jesus pulls some of this stuff from Proverbs and applies it to himself. Actually you've missed the point here of who is good and what your behavior is about what is wise to do here and he says wisdom will be made righteous through her children in Luke 7.

So wisdom is both these things it is precious it is this woman of character who has lots of different attributes it is a character that we are forming in ourself as we have to work it out we work it out with not no principles we're not just left to kind of fumble around in the dark saying well what's the best for me to do here we have the full scope of scripture to reflect on but as we reflect on we're going to be in situations obviously we are not farmers in Israel well if you are you're very welcome but assuming that most of us aren't so we have to work out well what's this look like for us in these situations and I think I don't know about you we don't like to be left in those places because actually what if we get it wrong but if we get it wrong because you have a picture of God behind you who's just about to smack you every time you get it wrong that you've missed the invitational aspect that God is saying come let's figure this out together because I'm with you and for you this is actually it's actually part of God's plan that this stuff works out the justice and mercy reign and so as we work that out together that reflects something of who he is and some of his personal attributes as well and it's just always helpful to remember that that thing that the fool is not somebody out there we can extend that and of course we can look at foolish principles in the world but his first point is when you were reading this as potentially as one of the people of God back in the day is to think am I being foolish do I need to re-seek wisdom do I need to re-engage with the truth of who wisdom is wisdom is ultimately an invitation in our relationship so we see that in this picture of wisdom walking through the streets calling out calling out all people and that wisdom therefore is not about purely knowledge but it's being called to something and this something this wisdom and they really push the personification of wisdom here to the point that it was at the beginning of time it was there in the creation that wisdom is an attribute of God himself it's part of his character and you know the proverb starts with this idea of fear of the Lord and as James is talking about this morning that word Lord is the idea of the personal God as you're invited into a relationship with wisdom itself work this thing out if wisdom just becomes a new set of rules of well here's our moral rules and here's our wisdom rules we've missed the point of what wisdom is about it is about being called into unity with something and ultimately you know as Christians well for us like what does that mean for us well for that thing is Jesus

Paul actually takes some of this language I'm kind of confident about this somebody can correct me after if you think I'm wrong about this idea of wisdom being personified and applies it to the hymn he writes about Jesus in Colossians 1 of reigning over all things but having a deep involvement at the same time so what you see in this earnest invitation of wisdom is for us this when Jesus uses language like well you come you come all you who are heavy laden and weary I'll give you rest it's like come and join with me the ultimate invitation is to come and be part of the family of God and as when we read this we're not reading just purely some nice ideas from the people of God long ago it is a picture of what it meant to be the fullness of the people of God and we get invited into that we get invited to not just make this an idea but as we live this out Proverbs is kind of saying whilst it's an ideal that holds out it's kind of saying this is possible this is possible for communities and people to look like this when God's at the centre that things like justice and mercy are possible that we could live them out we could actually be the kind of people that as we do it reflect something of who God is maybe even be the original intention of why God created a people group in the first place when we read about it in the Old Testament so by embracing this wisdom we're embracing the grace of God who embraces us at the same time it's a whole way of thinking about our character and ourselves as we live in the world as individuals but also as a community as we reflect on who God is who we are who all what is all this for do we just have certain things that we label this is God's bit and then the rest we just kind of figure out by ourselves there's God actually calling us to be a certain type of person in the world as we do that as individuals as communities we change they change and not just purely to make everything nice and better because that's actually part of the heart of who God is he is wisdom himself so we are being taught to live like this not simply to be better people who God might happen to like but because our community lives will really reflect the true nature of the image of God so this is the invitation of grace we talk about words like grace grace is God's unfavored love towards us but it's an invitation into something better and deeper and that's purely more that's far more than just moral behavior it is transformations of people and

cultures based on the dignity of the human race blessed by God to say what do you do here [31 : 06] I've given you the boundaries in the positive sense go and be a blessing to the world and this is the same very same invitation of Jesus that the mercy of God in Christ that comes to us and that it's what is an offer for the whole of mankind we get to be part of the forming and the passing on of a healthy vibrant communities not just for the sake of the communities but because it's part of God's plan it's part of his creation it's headed somewhere it's not something that was bad that's just going to go away one day it was his plan that was good and it will be brought to fulfillment again because Christ the Son has walked among us and showed us not just the possibility but the truth and the reality of what it means so wisdom is totally vibrant it's kind of confusing sometimes and we have books of the Bible that say yeah it is confusing but trust to the God behind it we'll have times when that will feel completely alien I know I actually probably most weeks I have at some point where I reflect in the world and say well this

I'm not really sure how any of this adds up some books like Proverbs and some books like Ecclesiastes will actually say to us in those moments it's not necessarily unfaithful if it's directed to God himself where he says yeah it is do you trust me to continue to try and live like this not because it earns his favour but because it's a part of the expression of what it means to be human so to end wisdom it's the art of living in this world which is very confusing with a God behind it who says well here's some principles embrace them and seek it we can pray for wisdom that's something I've tried to start doing since I've started doing this in a bit more depth actually well if wisdom's a gift I'll try and ask for it you can ask me maybe in a few months if you think I'm any wiser then I don't know how you'd judge that but we can talk about that later if you want but actually we don't just pursue it for individual's sake but for all our sakes and not just for the sake of the people here but the people everywhere wisdom is the root of blessing a lot of times you'll see the word blessing and I don't mean blessing in the sense you get loads of stuff but the blessing that was supposed to be passed on be a blessing

I will bless you so that you will be a blessing to the nations it's the original call of Abraham when this whole idea was starting to flesh itself out and so we are encouraged in Proverbs to be wise people it holds out to us what wisdom looks like but also holds the God behind the wisdom and says seek me and at the same time it kind of holds out wise people it kind of says move further away pursue wise people like look for wise people around about you it's got this tone very simple it's actually very simple don't hang around with foolish people because they'll probably give you bad advice and they're probably quite selfish wise people who are living this kind of wisdom seek them out talk to them this is really what this is is a dialogue between a master and a son here's what wisdom looks like so how do we do that I know I need regularly people to walk into my life and be like not to tell me off sometimes but generally with this is this the wise thing because a lot of life is not simple and it's not about right or wrong but how do we work out our faith in the world today and as we move into the Proverbs sorry if you feel like this is a big long introduction to the book of Proverbs but we see wisdom as this invitation to come and be known by God so I'm going to pray and then Alan what happens next

Alan I'm finished I'm going to pray and then is it okay sorry I've had a lot of communication breakdown Greg's going to come up great okay thanks Father I thank you when we think of wisdom we don't think of well maybe who knows what we think about but we're not led to think about purely ourselves and how we can get the best out of life but actually we're led to see a picture of you inviting us into the heart of wisdom and as we do so we're given the affirmation that you're with us and not against us and as we do that we work that out as a community in order to know what it means to be a blessing to the world around about us so I pray you'd help us to be creative is how we think about doing that I pray you'd help us to pray with faith that we would receive wisdom where we need it and ultimately Lord I pray that as we look at Jesus the personification of wisdom we see that he's invited us into the heart of this picture of what the people of God are and will fully be one day

I ask all that in Jesus name Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen VODY Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen