

Proverbs 9:9-10

August 24 & 25, 2014

⁹ **Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.** ¹⁰ **"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.**

Have you ever had someone try to give you wisdom? This morning, I have several words of wisdom to tell you:

1. Never trust a dog to watch your food.
2. Never tell your mom that her diet is not working.
3. If you want a kitten, start out by asking for a horse.
4. Never pick on your sister when she is holding a bat.
5. Never try to baptize a cat.

Wise words to be sure. Maybe even words we can chuckle at. Yet, those words are probably not going to help you a whole lot as you travel this road that we call life. Where do you start? Where do you find words of wisdom that can really help us through this life? This morning, we begin a new series taking a look at some words of wisdom written by the man who was the wisest this world has ever seen.

He was only about 20 years old. His father had been a great man. His father had wealth and fame. He ruled over the largest nation of the world. But now his father, David, was handing the reigns over to him. David told his young son: **"be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go."** (1 Kings 2:2,3) Can you imagine who Solomon felt? Everyone knew his father. Could he possibly live up to his father's expectations? Where would Solomon find the wisdom to walk in the shadow of his father? Look at David's words. Did you see how his father encourages Solomon to be **a man? Observe, walk and keep.**

Where would Solomon find wisdom for living? To assist Solomon in this task, God said to Solomon: **"Ask for whatever you want me to give you."** (1 Kings 3:5) Talk about a "blank check." However, Solomon doesn't ask for wealth or power, He asks for wisdom. Solomon says to God: **"give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"** (1 Kings 3:9)

Where do we find wisdom for living? As we answer that question over the next weeks, we see that it begins with fear.

What are you afraid of? Are you afraid of spiders? Or snakes? Or heights? Or thunder and lightning? Or injections? Dogs? Cats? Clowns? My greatest fear is probably snakes. How about you? Are you afraid of the dark? Are you afraid of dying? As you stand alongside the bed of someone close to you who is dying, are you afraid that you might say the right thing?

Do you fear God? If not, you should be. **"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."** When we talk about the FEAR of God, there really are two different kinds of fear. Put me on a plane 35,000 feet in the air, and I have no fear at all of heights. Put me on a side of cliff overlooking a 1000 foot drop, it is a whole different kind of story. Look at God. He is a God who says to us: **"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."** (Mt. 5:48) That means that never, never can you do anything wrong. Just mess up just one tiny command of God, and you have completely blown your chances to get to heaven. One little bad word. One little one thought. You want to be afraid of something, think about God demands. There are a whole lot of very "wise" people in this world. There are a whole lot of very "wise" people in this building today. But if we think that we can get to heaven on our own, we are in big time trouble.

Henry Ford once asked electrical genius Charlie Steinmetz to build generators for his factory. One day those generators ground to a halt, and no one could fix the problem beside this electrical genius. Ford called him. He tinkered on the generators for a short while and soon they were running again. Charlie submitted a bill to Ford for \$10,000. Flabbergasted, he asked for an itemized bill. He sent one: \$1 for his labor, \$9,999 to for the knowledge as to HOW to fix it. Ford paid the bill. Whether or not the story is true, we aren't sure. But the point is true. We may know that we need to be perfect. It is a whole different animal to actually do it. We can't do it. But God can, and he did!

Without faith in Jesus, it will be a terrifying to stand before the judgment throne of God. Look at these words of Solomon once again: **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”** That doesn’t say that we are to shake in our shoes before God. What does Solomon mean by those words: **“fear of the Lord.”**

When you stand on the observation sidewalk overlooking the Grand Canyon, you get a whole different picture in your mind than just seeing it on TV. Drive up to the top of Pike’s Peak you have a whole different respect for those who built the road. When you look at God and his promises, you realize just how big they are. The fear of the Lord is the knowledge, trust, awe and confidence that God has taken away our sins, dumped them on his Son, Jesus. Through faith in him, we have eternal life. Suddenly everything that is bad in this world, isn’t so bad, when we realize that our greatest problem in this world was removed by Jesus as he forgives our sin.

The police officer was walking down the street on his beat. He had hardly felt the little girl tugging on his coat. He turned to the little girl and said: “Can I help you?” “My mommy told me that if I needed help, I should find a policeman,” she replied. Suddenly, a little alarmed the policeman asked: “Ok...what’s wrong?” Looking down she put out one of her feet and asked: “Could you tie my shoes?” For the little girl – a big problem. For the police officer – No problem at all. The problem of sin is huge for us – No problem for God.

There are many different people in our lives that will try to give us wisdom. Some of those words of wisdom will be good – some not so good. As we begin to take a look at the wisdom that God gives us in his Word, may we remember that God’s wisdom begins with fear. Amen.