

June 28

Scriptures: Read Proverbs 9 & 10

Key Verse: “The labor of the righteous leads to life, the wages of the wicked to sin.”
(Proverbs 10:16)

Overview

Wisdom graciously sends out her invitation to the simple, asking him to come and feast in her house that is held up by seven pillars. The number seven is symbolic of complete perfection and holiness. She extends her invitation to the simple: those who are naive and can easily be enticed to sin; these are the ones most susceptible to respond positively to her invitation. The foolish woman’s target is this same type of person (9:16), but what a contrast there is between the results of wisdom’s banquet and the fool’s!

Those who agree to enter into wisdom’s banquet first receive nourishment, are filled and satisfied. When we come to Jesus, that is the first thing He does for us; then afterwards we live with Him in His holy household made up of the body of believers; we are able to listen to His words of wisdom and instruction from His Holy Word and upon this we continue to feed daily (John 6:35). In wisdom’s house, one finds joy, life, and understanding. In sharp contrast, the dark banquet of the wicked woman is attended by the dead in the depths of hell.

When those who abide with the Lord try to reprove and change the behaviour of a scoffer (a foolish person who does not fear God, but openly acts in disobedience and defiance of God), they end up being scorned; they have no effect, because the scoffer will not listen to them. The Lord can and has saved this type of person, but only once he has come to Jesus and have received knowledge of Him, “the Holy One”, thereby attaining understanding (9:10); only then can a fellow believer reprove him with love, and with the conviction of the Holy Spirit, he will change his ways to become more like Christ. The second section of the Book of Proverbs begins with chapter ten and continues through 22:16. In this section, entitled “The Proverbs of Solomon”, there are 375 different proverbs that have been inspired by Wisdom.

Interestingly, in the Hebrew language, letters are also used in numbering, and the sum of the letters in the name of Solomon adds up to 375. The compiler likely selected these particular proverbs of Solomon purposefully from a larger collection (cf. 1 Kings 4:32), and, to honour Solomon and attest to his authorship, selected 375. Many of them are related, covering a wide range of topics that deal with practical wisdom. Most of them take the form of contrasts.

In chapter ten, the dominant topic appears to be the contrast between the godly, industrious, and diligent man of understanding who is successful and prosperous, as opposite to the wicked, lazy man who is poor, sinful, and in adversity. The righteous and wise son makes his father glad, but in contrast the sinful (“foolish”) and lazy son brings shame to his parents, and particularly grief to his mother (10:1, 5).

Their respective rewards are likewise opposite. The wise man receives a long list of blessings: riches, honour (even after his death, 10:7), security, fulfilment, an everlasting foundation upon the Solid Rock, prolonged days, hope, gladness, strength, and the greatest reward: life everlasting,

for he will never be removed from his eternal inheritance in God's kingdom (10:16-17, 30; cf. Matt. 5:5, 10; John 3:16). The wicked man, on the other hand, has no part in God's kingdom; he will fall, be impoverished and have a bad reputation; his expectations will perish and he will see destruction and death.

Yet another contrast is shown with regard to the love of the righteous (the wise) and the hate of the wicked (the fool), which is evident in the words of their mouth, as well as their actions. "Hatred stirs up strife", which is the desire of the wicked (cf. 6:14, 19). They speak perverse words, full of lying and slander, which cause violence and discord. What will this bring upon themselves? Their tongue will be cut out and they will be destroyed. The love of the righteous, however, "covers all sins" (10:12; 1 Pet. 4:8; James 5:20; 1 Cor. 13:4-8). Their words are like a "well of life" (10:11). They revive and renew the strength of others. They bring healing, growth, edification, and encouragement. They are words of wisdom, which are fitly chosen like "choice silver" (10:20), unlike the fool who speaks whatever comes into his perverse mind (cf. Eph. 4:29; 5:4; James 3:1-12). Let us, like the psalmist, ask for God's help, strength, and wisdom: "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips" (Ps. 141:3).

Prayer

What great blessings You give, oh God, to the righteous who live in Your wisdom! Put a watch over our mouths this day, that we might speak only that which will bring encouragement, healing, and growth to others.