

The opening reading is from Proverbs. If you read a little bit of the Church Channel Weekly, then you know where we're heading in the future here. As we open up Wisdom Literature and we open up Ecclesiastes in particular, and we're going to take a look, we're going to glance that off of Proverbs every once in a while as we go along. I talked a little bit in the Church Channel Weekly about how Wisdom Literature works together. So we're going to get into Ecclesiastes by way of Proverbs. And so you'll see a lot of the things reflected. Now next week we're into the parables of Jesus and our celebration Sunday, but then you'll see a lot of the things reflected in Ecclesiastes that we talk about right here today. So let's begin at the beginning in chapter one, Proverbs chapter one beginning with verse 20. Wisdom shouts in the streets. She cries out in the public square. She calls to the crowds along the main street to those gathered in front of the city gate. How long, you simpletons, will you insist on being simple minded? How long will you mockers relish your mocking? How long will you fools hate knowledge? Come and listen to my counsel. I'll share my heart with you and make you wise. I called you so often, but you wouldn't come. I reached out to you, but you paid no attention. You ignored my advice and rejected the correction I offered. So I will laugh when you are in trouble. I will mock you when disaster overtakes you, when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster engulfs you like a cyclone and anguish and distress overwhelm you. When they cry for help, I will not answer. Though they anxiously search for me, they will not find me. For they hated knowledge and chose not to fear the Lord. Took that one away because that sounds like a pretty bleak thing for Proverbs, right? But took that away for they chose not to fear the Lord and they hated knowledge. They rejected my advice and paid no attention when I corrected them. Therefore, they must eat the bitter fruit of living their own way, choking on their own schemes. For simpletons turn away from me to death. Fools are destroyed by their own complacency. But all who listen to me will live in peace, untroubled by fear of harm. That's a powerful opening right there. I think you can see where we're going and what wisdom is contingent upon. I hope that throughout the course of the week, songs pop into your head or, you know, whatever you might be doing or a conversation that you might be having or whatever the case may be. And I hope that you demonstrate not only the seriousness of the good news of Jesus Christ, but the joy of the Lord that comes with it. One of the most powerful testimonies that a Christian can have is when somebody says, "Well, didn't this just happen to you? Why are you joyful?" Like that doesn't make any sense. It makes perfect sense. Because my security is not in this circumstance or that circumstance or this happening. My security is in the Lord. I'm good. I always say, you know, and some people are like, "That's pretty serious, but whether this thing lasts another five minutes, this body lasts another five minutes or another fifty years, I'm good. I'm free to live. I'm free to live." And so I hope you feel the same way. Interestingly enough, that's not far off from where the preaching is going today. Because, as always, David, the preaching is about the power of God's Holy Spirit within us and it's made possible by the life and the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is our savior and our Lord. If you believe in your heart and you profess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, Scripture says you will be saved. And when you are saved, you are saved from sin and the power of sin and death and just what we talked about, the power of death. What power of death? Now keep me in the great well that we will be resurrected in our glorified bodies. But the power of death and also the fear of death that the egotistical self-centered human being just clings to so many people and they just they have to cling to everything and they have to try and do everything and they did everything revolves around them and they just have to try to live forever and they can't live at all. Because they're so wrapped up in the lives of the world and everything that this treadmill that we're on and we're grinding away and all of that. Wisdom literature, that's my fan. Wisdom literature is actually about that. When we talk about the application of God's Holy Spirit in our lives, a large percentage or a portion of that, a lot we can learn from wisdom literature. Now, the three wisdom books normally right there in the canon are Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Job. And somebody who looks up a lot of folks and it's very valid look at Proverbs as the positive side of circumstances and Ecclesiastes as the possible negative sides of circumstances. And then Job as God is sovereign. It's for him to

decide anyway. So let it go. And that's kind of a big 10,000 foot view of wisdom literature. Wisdom literature, when we talk about Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, especially Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, it's not law. They're not God's mandates. They're not promises. They are the application of the best case scenarios in this world if you were to apply the principles of godly living or not in your life. So we can't take them as God's law. We can't take them as prophecy. Right. If you raise up a child in the ways of the word, then when he grows old, he will not depart from them. We all know that that's not always true. It's not prophecy. But if you raise up a child in the ways of God, in the ways of the word, then when they grow old, they will not depart. You've got a lot better shot of raising a kid like that if you do raise them in the word. But they're a free moral agent and you can do all that you can do. And we got to pray that God will do the rest. Does that make sense? So it's not a prophecy. It's not a promise. It's a really, really good idea. And when we take them in combination, we learn a lot about this. The power of God in our life can be applied in a positive way for positive circumstances. What happens if we do not apply that power of God in our life? Negative things can happen. Or at the very least, a positive result won't happen. Nothing really will happen. But we get all of this wisdom. And the next place I want to go is what is wisdom? Because, much like love, peace, joy, the world will use its own definition of wisdom and try to teach you wisdom and proclaim that it is wisdom. They will try to show you the ways of business or the ways of whatever you are doing in your life, the wisdom of doing it and how wisely you can do it as a parent, as a teacher, as an attorney, as a whatever. And the world will give you all kinds of self-help books that are professing to make you a wise person in this application. It's not necessarily true. There may be principles that you can glean from there and go, yeah, that makes sense. But let me tell you what wisdom is. Wisdom is God's Holy Spirit. Wisdom is living in God's will. How much more wise can you be than if you are following the ways of the Lord and the direction He is leading you in your life? You can't. We always say that, like there's no safer place that you will ever be than in God's will. You will never be in a more wise condition than being in the Spirit of the Lord. The wisdom that He can provide for you in any circumstance, pre-Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, in any circumstance, the wisdom of His will is what you want to apply in your life. Now, you just sit back and then crack your head open and the Lord pours. No, God, I'm full of cliches today. Today's cliché day. God guide to moving ship. You're putting one foot in front of the other. You're having godly conversations. You're in your prayer life. You've got your prayer journals. You're doing all of those things. You're in the Word and you're asking people about it. And you're studying more. All of those things lead you to be able to discern God's will for you in your life. And there is no wiser way to live. So when we read about lady wisdom, when we read about Solomon's mother Bathsheba and her writing and the portion of wisdom that she writes, and when we talk about the cornerstone of it always, what we opened with, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of understanding. And when we read fear, we talked about that. This is the all the reverence, the worship. Remember when we talked about worship and we talked about the presence of the Lord and all throughout the Old Testament, especially when the presence was of the Lord was felt. What did people do? They felt prostrate on the floor. They fell over face down and they worshiped. It doesn't say that they knelt down. It doesn't say that they bent down and then rolled over on their side. They fell down and they worshiped because the presence and the power of the Lord was so great. That's the fear of the Lord. When we read throughout the Old Testament, right, even Moses having to turn his back in the cleft of the rock and just getting a passing glance of the glory of the Lord. It's the fear of the Lord. It's not fear like you're my big abusive dad and then you're going to come home and beat the snot out of me. Kind of a fear. It's the fear. I like the way Tim Mackey discusses it. Like the sun. Look how good the sun is. You may not be feeling that right now when the heat index is 115. But the sun is a wonderful thing without it nothing on Earth grows. But go ahead and get too close to it and see what happens. There should be a reverent fear of the sun. You're not going to be flying your spaceship into the sun anytime soon, hopefully. But here on Earth, it is such a wonderful good thing. So the fear of the Lord is like that, right? And the fear of the Lord is the beginning of understanding because when this happens, that cornerstone, and you know that God is sovereign and we, beyond the cross, say yes, we profess with our mouth. We believe in our

hearts that Jesus Christ is Lord and we are saved. The beginning, that is the beginning of wisdom, that is the beginning of understanding, true understanding. And so that's where we are today, laying that foundation. We're going to read more about it in Proverbs 2 and then beyond our celebration service, we're going to read more about it in Ecclesiastes. That the cornerstone of all of this is God. For the Christian, the cornerstone of all of this is salvation. There is no Holy Spirit indwelling you if you have not repented and turned and given yourself to the Lord. Conversation this week with an individual saying all of the right things about the Lord, saying all the right things about salvation. And I just wanted to make the point very clear that there is an eternity of difference between saying the right things and believing them. He went, "Huh?" I said, "Yeah, it's the difference between heaven and hell." Saying the right things are quite easy, they're right here. I can repeat them right out of the book. Repenting and turning and trusting in the Lord coincides with something completely different. And when you say that, then as you are in love by God's Holy Spirit, you say these things and you believe these things, that's world changing. That's not just saying them so I can get a pastor off my back. That's not just saying them so I can whatever. It is believing them, it is transformative. If there is no transformation in your life, you better get in front of that mirror because the power of the Lord is transformative. OK, now, wisdom. We understand what it is and what it isn't. Wisdom, we understand what the cornerstone is, although it's written in the Old Testament, the fear of the Lord, at the beginning of understanding. Those who do not fear, Lady Wisdom calls you simpletons. What don't you get about this? You run around, I'm adding modern language, you run around in your businesses doing whatever you want, doing all the things that you want to do. But you have no wisdom because you will not turn and fear the Lord. You're a simpleton. No, I'm not a simpleton, I'm a CEO of one of the world's biggest corporations. You're a simpleton because you're going to die as the CEO of the world's biggest corporations and be tormented in hell for eternity. That's dumb. You're maybe the dumbest, smart person that I've ever met because you're willing to do that. And that's what Lady Wisdom says. You're simpletons, regardless of what you're doing, listen to me. In Proverbs 2, we continue. My child, listen to what I say, treasure my commands. Oh no, we're crying. My child, listen to what I say and treasure my commands. Tune your ears to wisdom and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight and ask for understanding. Search for them as you would for silver and seek them like hidden treasures. Then you will understand what it means to fear the Lord and you will gain knowledge of God. The big thing here that I want to point out are all of the verbs. Remember when I said, you don't just sit down and say, okay, Lord, I'm willing, whatever, fill me with wisdom. I'll pick out what I like and what I don't like. I'll do what I want. I won't do what I don't like. That doesn't happen. Read all of the verbs in that. You are seeking, you are knocking, you are looking, you are desiring, you are willing. You want to be in a relationship. Why? Because it's like the first example of the child raising the way of the Word. They're a free moral being. They're an autonomous moral agent. They're going to make their own decisions. And so are you. Listen, treasure, tune, concentrate, cry out, ask, search, seek, understand, fear. That's a relationship. That's not just sitting and waiting. That's not just praying for something to be given to you. You're in the Word. You're in your prayer life. You're in congregation. You're all of those things. If you're seeking the Word, the wisdom of the Lord. You can read Proverbs all you want. You can read. You say, oh, I understand the wisdom literature. I'll read Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and I'll do all those things. Great. Wonderful. But are you doing it by the power of God's Holy Spirit, who is then imparting wisdom into you as it is this sort of point, counterpoint, point, counterpoint, living with God? What if I don't live with God? Possible outcome of living with God? Possible outcome for my children, for my marriage? Possible outcome, etc. I hope that that makes sense because you can read it like a self-help book, but you can go to Wal-Mart and the shelves are lined with self-help books. Go read them all. But with the power of God's Holy Spirit, there's zero wisdom in there. Maybe some good ideas. Most self-help books, even Christian books, are like something that works for someone. And so they wrote a book about it and that someone's not you. So there might be a good idea in there, but usually after the first chapter, you're like, OK, guys. And anyway, that's a little separate. For the Lord, verse six, the Lord grants wisdom from his mouth, some

knowledge and understanding. The Lord grants wisdom from his mouth, comes knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. He guards the path of the just and protects those who are faithful to him. You see how the first part was all verbs for you. The second part of this relationship is all verbs that God does. Sounds like you're doing OK. You're seeking and finding. He is instilling and leading. That's what we want. It's not going to happen without you seeking and finding and being willing to do that. It's not going to happen without his will to save you and want to impart to you his Holy Spirit and his wisdom. Now he's doing all of the verbs. You were doing them. Now he's doing them. And it sounds like we are working together with the Lord as his vessel here on Earth. The Lord grants. Grants is a shield, guards, protects. Then you will understand what is just and fair and you will find the right way to go. When the Lord is with you, when the Lord is in you, beginning with the fear of the Lord, beginning with turning and repenting, beginning with salvation and the impartation of God's Holy Spirit in you. Then you will understand what is right, just and fair. Not the worldly definition of those. God knows, and I'm not using his name in vain, God knows how messed up those definitions are today and how messed up human beings have made the definition of what is right and just and fair. He knows. Why do you think we're being judged so harshly? You, however, find the right way to go as an individual who is in relationship with him, as an individual whose life is founded on the fear of the Lord. You. Even though you might turn on that television set and see, oh my goodness, their definition of what is right and good and just and fair. I can't even comprehend this. It's insane. You. What can you do? Turn that off. Get into the word and get into prayer and let him lead you in your life so that you can be the best. Mom, dad, husband, wife, grandparent, fill in the blank. That you can possibly be with his wisdom and his God. What can you do for him? This is what will happen. Now you've done your part. He's doing his part. You're working together. Wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will fill you with joy. We talked about wise choices will watch over you. Understanding will keep you safe. Wisdom will save you from evil people, from those whose words are twisted. Lots of teaching, false teaching, understanding, not understanding. How do I maintain my Christianity and my faith during the work? No. God is teaching you the word and you know, and when somebody comes across and say, you know, you really think Jesus died with her? Come on. It's impossible. People can't come back from the dead. Now, that's an easy example. Red flags, red flags. Because you know the word. You only know it and can repeat it. You believe it and you are convicted of it. So understanding will keep you safe. Wisdom will save you from evil people, from those whose words are twisted. These men turn from the right way to walk down dark paths. They take pleasure in doing wrong and they enjoy the twisted ways of evil. Their actions are crooked and their ways are wrong. Wisdom, this is your relationship with God through Jesus Christ, wisdom will save you from the immoral woman, from the seductive words of the promiscuous woman. She has abandoned her husband and ignores the covenant she made before God. Now before you get that like woman, woman. One, ostensibly, she's writing, he's speaking to his son. So there's point one. That's why he's using woman. It's very metaphoric in terms of save you from that immoral person, save you from that wicked person, save you from that person, regardless, who would like to take you and lead you astray and teach you wrong things. Because that wicked person who's being demonically driven by the evil of the world knows, right? The wisdom underlying that evil action is the wisdom of the satan that says, I don't care if you missed the cross by a millimeter or by a mile. All I care is that you miss it so I can see you in hell. And so the representation here is that the lack of wisdom and the calling of temptation will lead you down the paths of temptation, whether it's sexual immorality or embezzlement or whatever the case may be that you are choosing to go against God's will. Entering her house leads to death. It is the road to the grave. We just talked about the man who visits her is doomed. He will never reach the path of life, giving in to the temptation, male or female, giving in to the temptation. I feel like I'm the only Christian in the world. I feel like I'm the only Christian in my family. I feel like I'm the only Christian. This small community that we have, what can we do in this whole gigantic world that is quite literally going to hell? I feel so defeated. And the saint says, "You are. You are defeated. So give up. You should give up. You

should turn your back on Christ. Turn your back on the church." So little dissension and all that. Teach them the fact. All these Bible believers, teach them the fact that it's all a bunch of garbage. Come on! Give in to that temptation. Maybe you're at work and maybe you have opportunities to do this or that or the other thing. Maybe there's someone at work or maybe there's an opportunity at work that's unscrupulous that you could make a few extra bucks. You know, but I work so hard. I deserve it. You see, a lot of cop movies are like that, like bad cop movies. I work so hard and my pension is only \$28,000 a year. I deserve to steal all these drugs and big ol' things. There you go. You gave in to the temptation to do the wrong thing. And there is no right reason to do the wrong thing. So follow the steps of the good and stay on the path which we know is narrow of righteousness. For only the godly will live in the land and those with integrity will remain in it. But the wicked will be removed from the land and the treacherous will be uprooted. As is the case with an awful lot of scripture and an awful lot of passages that speak directly to salvation and your relationship with God. And I don't know if you ever thought Proverbs speaks directly to salvation, but it does, as most of scripture does. Right? But here it is. It lays out all of the information that you need to make the decision. And it talks about your actions. It talks about God's actions. It talks about the actions of the wicked person. It talks about the actions of the good person who is tempted by the wicked person. All in Proverbs 2, you can wrap up a lot of your life relationship-wise, relationship with the Lord, relationship with believers and non-believers, relationships in the church, what you believe, what you don't believe and why. All the problems do. And we've all lived through all of that. And at the very end it says, only, only, only the godly will live in the land and those with integrity will remain in it. The wicked will be removed from the land and the treacherous will be approved. There's a choice. You don't get to not choose. That's where we bring up that old Rush song, right? If you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice. That is your choice. I choose not to believe any of this. I will be my own island. And that's what Jesus would say, enjoy yourself now, because that is guaranteed all the pleasure you will ever have as a conscious being. The rest will be torture. Proverbs 2. Who knew? It's like reading from the gospel. It's like reading Jesus and his life and his promises. It's like reading from the book of Acts and hearing about God's Holy Spirit indwelling us. It's like hearing about all the Acts of the Apostles. Those are verbs, things that they do, things that God does through them. All in Proverbs 2. The temptation is there. What do we do with the temptation? How do we overcome temptation? Well, let's go into some of the epistles and find out how we overcome temptation. We know how to overcome temptation. There's only one way. Trust in the Lord. Now, he trusts in the Lord. He also tells us to flee. He says, trust in me, trust in me and you will not go wrong. But I know you, Brian Orner, you're weak, so you better run. You turn around and run. You have thoughts about that person? Turn around and one goes the other way. That's good advice. Whatever that temptation may be, violence, sexual, or whatever the case may be. Alright, you can trust in the Lord. I'm with you, I'm meeting you, I've got you. But you are a weak vessel. You always have been. Turn around and run. Old man Proverbs 2. The godly will live in the land. I forgot a really important word. For only the godly will live in the land and those with integrity will remain in it. But the wicked will be removed from the land and the treacherous will be uprooted. Choose this day whom you will serve. We've heard it. You hear it dozens of times in scripture. Choose. Do you believe? Do you believe this, Mary? I am the way and the truth and the blood. Do you believe this? I am the resurrection. Do you believe this, Mary? You say I am. Constantly our decision is based on the information that we have from the word.