

Wisdom

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Preacher: Jonathan Worthington

[0 : 00] in your Bibles to Proverbs. Proverbs, and you can just start right at the beginning of Proverbs.

We're going to be reading a number of passages in this book over the next number of minutes. What do you think the two passages that we've already read this evening have in common?

We read about Solomon asking God for wisdom, discernment to make proper decisions, and we read in 1 Corinthians, a very different scripture, about Paul preaching God's wisdom.

What do you think those two have in common? One way we could further that is by asking, what is wisdom? How would you define it? Think for a second.

What exactly is wisdom? One of my, well, the Bible talks about being wise in a lot of different ways. It even talks about being wise sowers, sowing in a wise way.

[1 : 12] That's a strange way to talk about wisdom, and there are a lot of other instances like that. Wisdom is a skill. That's pretty much what it is. It's being skilled in something.

So when the Bible talks about wisdom most of the time, it's in its broadest way, skill for living. That's what being wise is. And that's what being wise is. Or wisdom is skill for living practically.

So if that's the case, what is God's wisdom? The Bible talks all over the place of God's wisdom. Well, I think one way we can put it is that, simply to point out that God is the most skilled at living.

There is no one greater. He knows every situation. He understands the complexities of everything at their utmost depth. He knows everything, and He always chooses to do what is right.

God knows what He's doing. He has the greatest skill for living. I think that's a good way to summarize what God's wisdom is.

[2 : 13] He knows what He's doing. And God is a gracious God who gives His wisdom, His skill in living wisely. He gives that to people.

And I think you'd probably all be in agreement with me that we need His wisdom. Think about life. It's difficult.

Life is very complex. If you're anything like me, you get confused quite a lot. You don't know how to handle a situation. Often, it's after the fact. You think, why did I have that attitude with my child?

That was very insensitive of me. Or, why did I say that? I really should not have said that. That was damaging. Or, why did I do that when I went out with my friends?

It's simply embarrassing, or maybe even harmful. We have so many questions in so many parts of life. Personally, in our family, at work, in our studies, at church.

[3 : 14] So many situations where we desperately need skill for handling ourselves. So, where would you look for wisdom? For practical skills in life?

Probably most of you sitting here, if not all of you, would say, well, you turn to the Bible. Well, where in the Bible? Where would you probably turn first? And I would bet it's a safe guess to say Proverbs.

Proverbs is a book that is full of wisdom, skill for practical living. In fact, which is why we turn to Proverbs here. Proverbs, you could say, it's about how to govern yourself.

Govern your speech. Govern your desires. Govern what drives you. Govern your actions, your values. Governing all these things in all of life.

Or looking from a slightly different perspective. Proverbs is really about receiving God's wisdom. Receiving God's skills for living and putting that into practice in all of these different facets of life.

[4 : 24] Proverbs mentions so many different situations. We're going to read some Proverbs now. Because we need to get a grasp on how to live in God's world in its confusion.

We need God's wisdom. And so, to do this, we're going to ask two questions. One of the questions is fairly basic. How attractive is God's wisdom?

Do you want it? Why should you want it? So, how attractive is God's wisdom? Proverbs addresses that. The second question, which we're going to spend more time on, is, what is God's wisdom?

What exactly is it? What does it look like? Or you could ask that a different way. What is the pinnacle of God's wisdom? What is the most desirable form of God's knowledge about things?

What does God's wisdom look like that we should be searching for in every situation in life? So, those are the two questions. How attractive is God's wisdom? And then, what is it?

[5 : 30] So, if you would turn to Proverbs chapter 3, this is, we're going to look at how attractive his wisdom really is. Proverbs 3, verse 13 to 15.

Let's read this together. Proverbs 3, verse 13 to 15. Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding.

For she, wisdom, she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies. Nothing you desire can compare with her.

Another way to put that last phrase, nothing you desire can compare with wisdom. Another way to put it is, all pleasures are not comparable with her. So, think for a second about those moments that you know about, the moments in your life where you're not sure that what feels right at that moment actually is right.

It's the most pleasurable thing you can think of for the moment. It feels right, but you're not sure that it is. Well, in those moments when you're faced with pleasure, whatever form that takes, pause for a second.

[6 : 50] And maybe we can remember this, that there's no pleasure in this world that compares, that is even comparable to God's wisdom. Proverbs 8 says something similar.

Look over at Proverbs 8, verses 10 and 11. Proverbs 8, verse 10. Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold.

For wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her. Let me read to you Proverbs 15, 16. You don't need to turn there. I'll read it to you. It is better to have a little with the fear of the Lord, which we're about to talk about in a moment.

Better to have only a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil. Wisdom is more attractive than anything. It's more attractive than any riches we can possibly think of, and it's more attractive than any pleasure that we can think of.

Now, why is that? Well, let's read a few more verses from Proverbs. Again, in Proverbs 3 and in Proverbs 8. Look at Proverbs 3, starting in verse 18.

[8 : 05] Wisdom, God's wisdom is not just more attractive than money and pleasure. It's more attractive than anything in the entire created order. Proverbs 3, verses 18 to 20.

She, wisdom, is a tree of life to those who embrace her. Those who lay hold of her will be blessed. By wisdom, the Lord laid the earth's foundations.

By understanding, he set the heavens in place. By his knowledge, the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew. So think about those moments when you find yourself frustrated in creation.

In any situation in creation. Frustrated, confused. Remember that it's by God's knowledge, God's wisdom, that any of those things in creation were created in the first place.

There's nothing that can happen to you in creation that God's wisdom does not reign over. God knows its ins and outs. There's no situation you can face where God's wisdom is not more powerful.

[9 : 14] Because he created everything by his wisdom. Let's read another verse that is even more stark. Proverbs 8. Proverbs 8, verses 22 to 31.

This is wisdom talking now. Proverbs 8, starting in verse 22.

The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old. I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began. Let me pause for a second.

That's very good Hebrew. That's translated very well. Now, there's, let me point out to you how the Greek translation puts it. And I do that because when we shift to the New Testament, which we're going to do, they typically, the New Testament authors typically quote the Greek of the Old Testament rather than the Hebrew.

So let me read to you what the Greek says so that later your ear will remember something. So the Hebrew is translated for you in verse 23. I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began.

[10 : 25] The Greek says, before the age I was founded. In the beginning, before the creation of the earth. It's the same point. It's a great translation. Before the age I was founded.

In the beginning, before the creation of the earth. Just keep that in the back of your mind. That'll come back to us. Let's continue. Verse 24. Wisdom says, When there were no oceans, I was given birth.

When there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled in place. Before the hills, I was given birth. Before God made the earth or its fields or any of the dust of the world.

I was there. When he set the heavens in place. When he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep. When God established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep.

When he gave the sea its boundary. So the waters would not overstep his command. And when he marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was the craftsman at his side.

[11 : 26] I was filled with delight. Day after day. Rejoicing always in his presence. Rejoicing in his whole world. And delighting in mankind.

Somewhat of a side note. Do you see that it should never be said about Christianity. That it has nothing to do with pleasure. That it tries to simply stifle pleasure.

Did you catch what God's wisdom was doing. Since before the beginning. And in creation. And after. Verse 30. The second half.

I was filled with delight. Day after day. Rejoicing always in God's presence. Rejoicing in his whole world. And delighting in mankind. The amazing thing about that.

Delighting in mankind. Is that literally the Hebrew says. The sons of humans. The sons of men. It's plural. This is not a picture of God.

[12 : 28] Delighting in only Adam and Eve. Before they sinned. And then he has no delight in humankind. God delights. And he's wise to delight. To take pleasure in humans.

Sinful humans. Simply because he made us. That's incredible. Maybe we should take lessons from this God. In how to relate to his creation. In how to live in his world.

With pleasure. Delight. Being at the core of who we are. Delight. Rejoicing in God's world. Even delighting in other humans. Despite our sinfulness.

Delighting even more. In God's own presence. Rejoicing in that. Being filled with pleasure. At God's wisdom. Which was there before creation anyway. Now this is how.

Attractive. God's wisdom is. It's more attractive than anything. You can possibly think about. Because our minds can only conceive. What is in this creation. All the pleasures and riches.

[13 : 28] And everything. All the beauty in this creation. It doesn't compare. To what God knows. To what God. Understands. That's far better. Because it's by that.

That everything was created. Before the ages. God's wisdom. Was established. So the question then is. Do you want it? Do you crave God's wisdom.

In your life? When you think about. The situations. You find yourself in. Do you want this wisdom? God's understanding. About things. Proverbs 8.

If you continue in verse 32. Proverbs 8 says. Or wisdom says. Now then my sons. Listen to me.

Blessed are those who keep my ways. Listen to my instruction. And be wise. Do not ignore it. Blessed is the one who listens to me. Watching daily at my doors.

[14 : 22] Waiting at my doorway. For whoever finds me. Finds life. And receives favor from the Lord. But whoever fails to find me. Harms himself.

All who hate me. Love death. Solomon who penned this. We saw already in 1 Kings. How Solomon. Craved wisdom.

And God blessed him. With it. By giving it to him. So that he could. Make proper decisions. In the difficulties of life. Do you search for wisdom? Do you try to find. God's understanding of things?

We have a promise in James. In the New Testament. James says. In chapter 1 verse 5. If any of you lacks wisdom. He should ask. The God who gives to all generously.

And who does not insult. And it will be given to him. That's a great God. Proverbs 2. 1 to 6. Says.

[15 : 19] My son. If you accept my words. And store up my commands within you. Turning your ear to wisdom. And applying your heart to understanding.

And if you call out for insight. And cry aloud for understanding. And if you look for it as for silver. And search for it as for hidden treasure. Then you will understand the fear of the Lord.

And find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom. And from his mouth come knowledge. And understanding. If you look for it.

God's going to give it to you. In those difficulties of life. So then God's wisdom. Is more attractive. Than anything. You can possibly imagine in creation.

And God's wisdom can help you. In any situation you find in this creation. Because it was there. Before the ages. Before creation itself. Before creation.

[16 : 18] God knew what he was doing. And that continues. And he can give that to you. In your life. That's how attractive God's wisdom is. So what is God's wisdom?

Hopefully you want it. By this point. Hopefully you wanted it before this. But even more now that we see how beautiful it is. Eternally beautiful. But what is it? What does it look like? What shape does it take?

What should we be searching for? We're going to try and answer this. By looking at what a few different types of people say. About what this wisdom looks like.

We're first going to look in Proverbs. I'm going to try to show you what Solomon envisioned. Inspired by God. Then we're going to look at what God's wisdom looked like.

In some early Jewish thinking. Leading right up to Jesus' time. What were people thinking? The Jews in particular. About God's wisdom. And we're going to look at what some Greeks.

[17 : 16] In Jesus' time thought about it. And then we're going to finally look at what Paul says about it. In inspired word of God. So let's look first at what is God's wisdom.

What does it look like in Proverbs? And we just received a hint in the verses that we read in Proverbs 2. The fear of the Lord. We're told throughout Proverbs that.

As I'll read in chapter 9 verse 10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. That's how Solomon, Proverbs, over and over and over.

This is a refrain throughout the whole book. Constantly defines wisdom. The spark that initiates wisdom in your life. The spark that gives you skill for living practically.

The beginning of that is fearing the Lord. What does that mean? You've probably heard many people talk about it. Much better than I'll be able to. I'm going to draw your attention to a few things that hopefully will help you think about what it means to fear the Lord.

[18 : 27] Because that's the beginning of wisdom for our lives. One of my professors said that the fear of the Lord is an awe that leads to obedience. Seems to be a very good definition of it.

We're going to explore this from some different angles. The fear of the Lord. One of the angles, think about Narnia. C.S. Lewis created a fantasy world.

That was trying to portray some truths of Christianity. And I thought portrayed them very, very well. So think about Narnia, this fantasy land where the king of Narnia is Aslan, the lion, the great lion.

He's the son of the great creator. Now, one of the children, one of the sons, or one of the daughters of Eve, asks Mr. and Mrs. Beaver about Aslan, the lion.

And the way C.S. Lewis put it, put the words in Mr. and Mrs. Beaver's mouths, listen to, see if it captures the fear of the Lord in some measure. So, Lucy asks if the lion, Aslan, is safe.

[19 : 40] Mrs. Beaver says, if there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than me or else just silly. Then he isn't safe?

Lucy asked. Safe, said Mr. Beaver. Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? Of course he isn't safe, but he's good.

He's the king, I tell you. That captures something about the fear of the Lord. He's not safe, but he's really good. Think about how God himself reveals himself in a lot of different passages.

Let me mention some things that fear involves. This type of fear, the fear of the Lord. Respecting God. Think about Uzzah, who put his hand out and touched the Ark of the Covenant a long time ago.

God had said very, very clearly, do not touch the Ark of the Covenant. It's holy because it bears my presence. You are not holy. If you touch it, you'll die.

[20 : 51] Well, they were already transporting the Ark in a bad way, something that God had said not to do. And it stumbles, or it gets knocked, and it starts to fall off of the cart.

And Uzzah stretches out his hand against what God said very clearly, and he tries to stop the Ark, and God does what he says he'd do. And he kills Uzzah for abusing God's holiness.

That's not a safe God. Yet, respecting God is not all that fear of the Lord involves. Trusting God, because this God is one who keeps his word, both to punish and to bless.

All the promises that God has made, he has been keeping them all. He's a faithful God, and so trusting God is involved in fearing him. Think about honoring God.

Picture Isaiah 6, if you would. I saw the Lord seated on the throne, high and exalted. The seraphim, these heavenly beings, are crying out, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.

[21 : 56] This is a glorious God, honoring him as the glorious one. Part of what it means to fear the Lord. Listening to God. He's the creator who made life by his word.

Listening to God. Following God. He's the great commander. Following what he says. Knowing God. Knowing God's character. Let me read you a passage that many of you might be familiar with, but there's something in it that might strike you.

Exodus chapter 33, verses 18 to 23. See if you can catch something funny in this passage, if I can use that word.

Exodus 33, starting in verse 18. Moses said to the Lord, Now show me your glory. And the Lord said, I will cause all of my goodness to pass in front of you.

And I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy. And I will have compassion on whomever I have compassion. But, he said, You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.

[23 : 09] Then the Lord said, There's a place near me where you may stand on a rock, and when my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.

Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back, but my face must not be seen. Know the character of God. No one can see him and live.

He's not safe. But did you catch what he said? Moses said, I want to see your glory. And God says, All right, I'll cause my glory to pass in front of you. I'll cause my goodness to pass in front of you.

And then God protects Moses so that he can see something about the Lord. That's how good God is. Knowing God, that he's not safe, but he's very good and trustworthy, compassionate, merciful.

This is part of fearing the Lord. The beginning of skill in living. And one other thing I'll draw your attention to. Delighting in the Lord. We've already seen delight a bit.

[24 : 11] Think about Psalm 130. I'll read it to you. Psalm 130, verse 4. This might be another one that catches you off guard.

It's not what I would expect anyway. Psalm 130, verses 3 and 4. If you, O Lord, keep a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

But with you there is forgiveness. Therefore, you are feared. You see this. Delight in this God. With you there's forgiveness of our sins.

And therefore, we fear you. So all of these things are involved in fearing the Lord. And that is the spark that initiates wisdom in life.

The way that Proverbs presents it. If you're going to be wise in life, you need to listen to the fear of the Lord.

[25 : 14] So the question still is, what is God's wisdom? What is the pinnacle of it? What is the perfect picture of God's wisdom that I can search for?

And Solomon says, well, the beginning of it is the fear of the Lord. What do some other people say? What did God's wisdom look like for early Jews?

Those still living in the Old Testament period, before Christ, but those coming right up to his time frame. It's interesting that most of the Jews that we have writings for turned their listeners to Proverbs 8, verses 22 to 31, which we read about.

Wisdom says, I was there with you. You founded me before the ages, before creation. Most of the Jewish authors turn their listeners to that in a way to say, this is how attractive wisdom is.

God's wisdom, it was there before creation. Before the ages, it was there. I won't read off the list of all of these Jewish authors, but you can certainly ask if you're interested in reading some.

[26 : 26] It's sort of like reading pastors or commentators of that era. They commentated on Scripture. They're not Scripture. They make errors, but they also have some helpful insights.

But one thing that all of them do, when they turn people to the attractiveness of God's wisdom, because it was before the ages, when you ask, what is it?

They all say, it's the law of Moses and your obedience to it. That's the clearest picture of God's wisdom. He gave it to Israel, put it in the law, that's his wisdom, skills for living, do it.

That's what they all, that's what most of them do, I should say. So how do I know God's wisdom for living? Well, read the law and do it. That's what, very simplistically put, that's what a lot of early Jewish thinking was about.

Proverbs 8 and doing the law. What about in some early Greeks? Now this one, you might not think is very applicable, but I'm going to point out that I think we're a lot more like the Greeks than we think we are.

[27 : 38] And that's not necessarily a good thing. What is God's wisdom? What does it look like for early Gentile or early Greek thinking? That in the time of Christ. The Greeks loved their philosophy.

There were a lot of types of philosophy. People followed Plato and Aristotle. There were Stoic philosophers, Epicurean philosophers. Paul came into contact with some Stoic and Epicurean philosophers in Athens.

We read about in Acts 17. Almost it didn't depend what type of philosophy they were in. One of the key thoughts of that day was that eloquence and clever argumentation were very crucial.

That's how you define a wise person. Now it's of course more complex than that, but a person who is wise is one who is influential because their words are eloquent and they know how to argue something.

Now some of them didn't care as much about truth as about how well you argued it. Some of them cared about truth. But listen to what Luke says in Acts 17 about when Paul arrived in Athens, one of the hotbeds of Greek philosophy.

[28 : 51] All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there had a good time doing nothing other than speaking something or hearing something newer. They just wanted to think and reason and listen to people argue and a wise person was very eloquent, very clever with arguing.

Now, these two things, eloquence and clever argumentation, they have their place. This is not to throw them out. They have their place.

We should want to speak the truth clearly, persuasively. Actually this morning, David talked about that. He mentioned teaching truth in a creative way, in appropriate ways, in interesting ways.

Don't bore people out of an inheritance. There's a place for eloquence and clever argumentation. God has blessed the church with people who have been eloquent, able to argue.

Think about Apollos in Corinth. He was, the Bible tells us he was very clever, if you could say that. He was very eloquent. He could reason very well and that was a gift. In our own day, Kenny Stewart is one of great speakers.

[29 : 56] He's so good with words. God has blessed his church in many different times with people who are eloquent and clever in their arguments. However, it can easily grow out of control into almost an obsession.

It did in Corinth. They were saying, well, I follow Apollos. I follow Peter. I follow Paul. I follow Christ. They were beginning to be divided and a lot of it was about who's the most eloquent?

Who's the best preacher? That was Corinth. And like I mentioned, we might be a little more like the ancient Greeks. than we think. I might step on some toes here, but I'm going to go for it anyway because I'm compelled by what God's word says.

You can pick up on this in our culture here as well as in the States. Broadly, one of the things a few years ago when President Obama, then Barack Obama, when he was running for president, one of the things that I heard over and over here, in the midst of excitement about Barack Obama was they really liked him because he's a really good speaker.

Some of them were so bold to say, and he's so not Bush, mainly thinking about his speaking ability. Yeah, probably other things too. But that was the focus.

[31 : 13] They loved him running for president because he was a great speaker. And that's what some opinions of people in this church were as well as broader. What? That's highlighting or raising up eloquence perhaps to a place it shouldn't have.

Or think more closely to home. When we're looking for a pastor, not just Bon Accord, but Bon Accord fits into this as well. Looking for a pastor, what is the highest thing on our list of traits that a pastor should have?

Well, a lot of the places in Scripture that talk about the traits of a pastor, they don't even mention teaching. They mention character qualities. But, it's also true that preaching the word is very central to the Bible.

And so, we look for somebody who can preach. Yet often, and if you're honest with yourselves, you'll probably find the same fault that I have. We often cloak in godly language about able to teach or something like that.

What we're cloaking is we want somebody who's eloquent. We want somebody who can stimulate our ears, who's thought-provoking. All of these things are about eloquence and clever argumentation.

[32 : 33] In fact, we're so quick to criticize a pastor, which is a very dangerous thing to do anyway, to place ourselves in a judgment seat over God's anointed leader of his flock.

We're so quick to criticize a pastor if our ears are not stimulated by eloquence. I think we're a bit more like the Greeks than we'd like to think we are.

We also might be a little more like some of the ancient Jews than we think we are. We value God's law. That's good. It's God's word. It's to be valued.

Paul says that God's law is holy, righteous, good. How quickly, however, do we tend towards legalism? Do we put the law into the wrong place?

Some people in the free church and other places, but we're in the free church now, some people refuse to fully commit to Christ until they have prepared themselves properly.

[33 : 38] getting themselves into this firm place where then they can fully commit to Christ. Well, that's putting God's law at the wrong place of the Christian life.

God's wisdom, his skill in living is more beautiful than anything in creation. It existed before the ages, before creation.

But what is the pinnacle of God's wisdom? What is the clearest presentation of God's knowledge and wisdom? What form should we be seeking in our lives?

What does Paul say as an example of Christian thinking about this? Did you know that Paul alludes to Proverbs 8, verse 23? That one that all the other Jewish writers were alluding to.

God's wisdom was established before the ages, before creation. Paul alludes to that in 1 Corinthians. So turn to 1 Corinthians if you will. 1 Corinthians chapter 2.

[34 : 45] We've already read it, but we're going to read this portion again. 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verses 6 to 10. Because Paul was not using eloquent speech in Corinth purposefully, people were accusing him of having nothing to do with wisdom.

He doesn't care about wisdom, and so he says in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 6, we do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or the rulers of this age who are coming to nothing.

No, we speak God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. Pause at that phrase.

Now, literally, what it says, I mean, that's a great translation, but literally, the wording is a wisdom that God predestined before the ages for our glory.

Paul's entering in the entire flow of Jewish thought when everybody's talking about Proverbs 8, wisdom existing before creation, before the ages, and he says, we preach wisdom, a wisdom that God predestined before the ages for our glory.

[36 : 08] Well, what is it, though? What is God's wisdom that He predestined before creation for your glory and for mine? If you read on in 1 Corinthians 2, you won't find out what it is.

He doesn't define it further. So, how do we know? What does He mean by God's predestined wisdom for our glory? Well, He doesn't clarify it later because He's already expressed what it is.

So that by this point, we should know what is God's wisdom that is for our glory. So we can ask the question, for Paul, in Scripture, is God's eternal wisdom for our lives, is it eloquence and persuasive speech?

Obviously not. That's not going to be it. Is God's eternal wisdom the clearest picture for us to follow? Is it the law that was revealed to Moses?

Is that what Paul is going to say? No. Now, of anybody, Paul valued the law, especially before he was a Christian.

[37 : 21] He highlighted the law so much and then he met Christ. Now let's listen to what he says about God's wisdom. What is the pinnacle of God's wisdom?

Its most intense and perfect form for Paul. 1 Corinthians chapter 1, look just before the passage we read. 1 Corinthians 1, verses 17 to 31.

Now I'm going to read this passage, but I'm going to pause a few places and make a few comments as we go through the passage. 1 Corinthians 1, 17. Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it, the cross, is the power of God.

For it is written, quote, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate. Where is the wise person? Paul says, where is the scholar?

[38 : 31] Now that word scholar, it's actually the word scribe or person of the letter. That's probably referring to the Jewish wise person.

He says, where is the wise person? Where is the scribe? The person of the letter of the law. Where is he? And then he goes, where is the philosopher? Well, that word technically is debater.

Probably talking about the Greek wise person, the clever debater of the age. So where are these people? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

For since in the wisdom of God, the world, through its wisdom, did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

Jews demanded miraculous signs and Greeks looked for wisdom. Let's pause for a second. Do you remember what we've already looked at? Jews looked for powerful signs like the ones Moses did.

[39 : 34] When Moses got the law and gave it to them, he did very miraculous signs and they looked for this. So their wisdom was not to follow somebody if it didn't strike them as powerful.

It's not going to overthrow Moses. They're looking for these powerful signs and what's more, the law says, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree. So when Paul preaches Christ crucified, they say, the law says he's cursed.

I'm not going to follow him. What they don't realize is he's cursed for us. And then he was raised from the dead triumphant. But the Jews look for miraculous signs. What about the Greeks?

What have we seen? Well, Greeks look for wisdom. They look to follow things that appeared wise, that sounded good, that made immediate sense to them. If it was presented with wise words of eloquence and persuasion.

And what wisdom is there in following a man executed by Rome? Jews demand miraculous signs. Look at verse 22. And Greeks look for wisdom.

[40 : 39] But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews, and foolishness to Gentiles. But to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and what?

the wisdom of God. Christ crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God. It's precisely by Christ's cross, followed by His resurrection, that God triumphed over the guilt of sin, the power of sin in our lives.

It's precisely by the cross and Christ's resurrection that God triumphed over the curse that was hanging over our heads, that the law demanded.

That's how He saved us from the curse. The foolishness, verse 25, the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards. Not many were influential. Not many were of noble birth.

- [41 : 52] But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. God chose the weak things of this world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world, the despised things, the things that are not, to nullify the things that are.

Listen to this, verse 29, so that no one may boast before God. Whether because of law observance or because of cleverness, no one can boast before God because of how He chose to be wise.

Christ crucified for our glory. Verse 30, it was because of Him, because of God, that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God.

that is, our righteousness, holiness, redemption. Therefore, as it is written, let him who boasts, boast in the Lord. I'm going to begin drawing things to a close now.

wisdom, wisdom, skills for practical living.

- [43 : 06] It begins in your life and my life with the fear of the Lord. what kind of wisdom in life can we possibly think that we can have?

Think about in family, personally, in work, in church, whatever the situation, what kind of wisdom can we possibly seek to attain if we're boasting in Moses' law?

which is good, but it's impotent to save us. It's impotent to fix our lives. Or what kind of wisdom can we possibly hope to have if we are boasting in Apollos' eloquence, which can be helpful, but can also cover errors?

If we're boasting in those things more than we are boasting in God's most awesome, most fearful gift that He predestined before creation for our glory, Christ Jesus and Him crucified for our glory.

So do you strive to attain God's preeminent form of wisdom in each situation of your life, in practical living?

- [44 : 23] Before we can hope to work out all of the practicalities in our life, the how-tos in each of these important areas of life, before we attempt to do that, we've got to orientate our eyes in the right direction.

We've got to fix them on the proper point. We've got to gain the correct bearing. Proverbs does this by pointing us to the fear of the Lord.

Paul does this even more clearly, even more fully, by talking about the beginning of our skills for living practically, for living practically, is boasting in God, boasting in the God whose predestined wise plan was Christ crucified for us.

Paul, the former lover of the law, who thought that the law was the pinnacle of God's eternal wisdom, who used to think that, who still values the law, but listen to what he says, Romans 8, verses 2 to 4, verses 3 to 4, what the law was powerless to do, in that it was weakened by our flesh.

God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering, and so God condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.

- [46 : 04] If we focus on the law, we miss God's son. If we focus on the son of God, who has crucifixion marks for us, if we focus on him, we get the law too, because his spirit fully meets the requirements of the law in us.

Point our eyes. We need to point our eyes at the crucified, but the risen Lord of glory. We need to form our life in every situation, form our life in a cruciform way, cruciform wisdom, self-sacrificing ourselves for the sake of benefiting others.

And when we do that, when we fix our eyes on God's eternal wisdom, Christ crucified, and act like that, I think we're going to be surprised. We'll discover that suddenly, practically, we're making better decisions in our life.

we're acting more skillfully to God's glory. Now please turn with me to God in prayer.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.