

Family Service

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 March 2014

Preacher: David MacPherson

[0 : 0 0] Okay, so we've read the first few verses of Proverbs, and what I said was that in those first few verses we have some really good answers to some important questions about the whole book. So let's just think about what some of those questions are, and especially what the answers are. Now the first question is easy-peasy, okay, but we have the answer at the very beginning. And the first question is, who wrote the book of Proverbs? Or certainly who was the main author of the book? And what does it say? Well, you tell me, who wrote the book of Proverbs? Solomon, that's right. And what does it say? Sure enough, verse 1 of the book, the Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel. Now I want us just to think a little bit about this man who wrote the book of Proverbs, and just think about what it tells us here in this first verse. It tells us really three things about him.

It says that his name was Solomon. Well, that's fine. But then it says, son of David, king of Israel. And it says that he wrote these Proverbs. So let's just think a little bit about that information that we're given about Solomon, that he was the son of David. Now we all know about David, don't we? King David. He was one of the great kings of Israel, and a man who, like all of us, made mistakes and let God down, but a man who loved God and was loved by God. And he was a great king, and he tried to serve God faithfully. So that was a great thing for Solomon to have, a father who loved God and who instructed him in the ways of God. So he was the son of King David. But you know, the very first thing that we're told about Solomon is really very interesting. It's not here in our chapter, but it's in a book of the Bible that tells us about David and Solomon and the kings, and tells us some interesting things. And listen to the very first thing, the very first thing we're told about Solomon. And we find that in a book called 2 Samuel, and it's in chapter 12. And just listen to what it tells us. It's the very first thing we learn about him. And it says this,

Bathsheba, David's wife, had a baby, and they called his name Solomon. And then listen to what the Bible says, and the Lord loved him. Isn't that special? The very first thing we're told about Solomon is that God loved him. And we're especially told that, and the Lord loved him. In fact, just so that we would remember that, and that we wouldn't just think, oh yeah, that's important, but wow, that's something we can easily forget. We're told that God told David to give Solomon another name. So not just Solomon, but another name. We sometimes don't know much about that name, and it's a little bit of an unusual name. He was also called Jedediah.

And why was he given that strange name? Well, because in Hebrew, it means loved by the Lord. So even in his name, at the very start of his life, we are told that he was loved by God. And that's something very special. And we learn more about Solomon, what a great king he was, and how wise he was, and how wealthy he was, and we are very impressed. But much more important is what we're told at the very, very beginning, that the Lord loved him. That is what is very special.

So he's the son of David. But then, coming back to these verses we've read in Proverbs, the Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel. So his father was the king, but then he became king. And Solomon wasn't just like any king. In the Bible, we hear about lots of kings. We read about lots of kings. But Solomon was one of the most powerful kings of Israel. He was very wealthy.

[3 : 55] The Bible tells us about all his wealth, and he was one of the most important kings, together with his father David, that Israel ever had. So he was the son of David. He was the king of Israel. And then, of course, and we know this because of the Proverbs, he was very wise. And he wrote all these proverbs. Now, I'm sure you know this, but we'll just, we'll talk about it for a wee moment, again, just to remind others who maybe have forgotten. How is it that Solomon became so wise?

Does somebody know how he became wise? Was he just born wise? Yoshi, what do you think? Mm-hmm. Excellent. That's a very good summary. That's exactly what happened. When he became king, God appeared to him in a dream, just like Yoshi's told us. And God said to him, I'll give you whatever you want. Now, I wonder if we were told that by somebody, and if we were just being very honest.

And of course, now that I've just, you've just heard what Yoshi said about Solomon, you'll be thinking, oh, I suppose I should say what Solomon said. But if you were really honest, and somebody said you can have whatever you want, I wonder what you would say. I wonder what any of us would say.

But Solomon said, I want to have an understanding mind. I want to be wise so I can govern well. I'm going to be king, and I want to do it well. And so Solomon asked for wisdom. And he was given wisdom, and he was given much more than just wisdom, but wisdom especially. In fact, let me just read some of what the Bible says about the wisdom of Solomon. Just listen to this. It says lots of things about how he was wise in lots of different ways. So just listen to the, it's almost like a list of all the things that he was wise in. We read this, and God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure. It's like, that means you can't measure it. You can't say, well, it was this much or this much. It was so much you couldn't measure it. Breadth of mind or wisdom like the sand on the seashore. Now, there's a lot of sand on the seashore. Well, that was what Solomon's wisdom was like. So that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. He wrote lots of songs as well, over 1,000 songs. But then listen to this. He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts and of birds and of reptiles and of fish. And then it says, and people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of

Solomon and from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom. So it wasn't just proverbs that he wrote. He wrote songs, and he was an expert on animals and plants. You see documentaries where they tell you all about animals or insects or birds. You think, well, they're very clever. They know an awful lot. Well, Solomon was like that. He could have done documentaries on plants and animals and birds because he knew all about these things. And people found out and were told that even the kings of the earth heard about Solomon, they came to hear what he had to say because he was so wise.

[7 : 27] So, he's the man who wrote this book. So, that's the first answer we get to the question, who wrote the book? Well, it was Solomon. But the next answer, or the next question, is what are the proverbs useful for? Well, let's look for an answer because we'll just read the next two verses, and they tell us what proverbs are useful for. And it says this. Listen to what it says. It says, for attaining wisdom and discipline, for understanding words of insight, for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair. So, there it tells us what proverbs are for. It's not that they're just nice things to remember or learn off by heart. No, they have a purpose. And the purpose is that we could become wise as well, that we could get wisdom. We're not born with wisdom. We need to get wisdom. And proverbs help us become wise. But it's interesting that in what we read there at the very beginning of the book is that it's not just about learning things off by heart and being able to give clever answers when people ask us questions. That's good.

But it's about how we live. That's what's very clear for attaining wisdom and discipline. Now, discipline is about how we live day by day on Monday and Tuesday, about how we do our homework, how we go to school, all of these things. So, wisdom is not just about what you have up here, but it's about how you live every day of your life. And it's also about living in a way that pleases God.

It's about how you treat others. Notice what it said here, for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair, doing what's fair. We all know how it's not nice when people don't behave fairly. Maybe you're playing a game and somebody cheats or doesn't follow the rules and they win by not being fair. And that's not nice. And sometimes we do that. Well, wisdom is about how we live, how we treat others, treating other people fairly and justly and doing what is right. So, that's what Proverbs are for. They're very useful, very practical for everyday life and how we live. So, that's another thing we learn here at the very beginning of the book. But let's move on to one other thing. And let's ask the question, who did Solomon write these Proverbs for? Now, he was a king.

He was very important. What do you think? Who do you think he wrote the Proverbs for? Any ideas? We'll get somebody who hasn't spoken. Ryan, who do you think? For everyone. That is a good answer. It really is. I couldn't really get a better answer than that. You know, some people might think, well, Solomon, he was so important. He was a king. And we read in the Bible how the kings came to listen to Solomon. And we might think, well, Solomon was a special person for special people. But what does the Bible say? Let's see in these first verses, and they're very important for us and for you especially, because listen to what it says about who the Proverbs are for. We'll just go on to the next verse. In verse 4, it says, For giving prudence, wisdom to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young. So, that's interesting, isn't it, that the Proverbs especially, they're for everyone, but maybe especially for the young, for children and young people, as you're growing up and becoming the man or woman that you're going to be. And as you learn and acquire wisdom, that will make you the person that God wants you to be. And so, they're very especially for the young. And I might think, oh, that's not so good because I'm not young. But they're also for the simple. So, that makes me feel good. So, they're for me as well. Okay? So, for the young and for the simple. And I think that includes pretty much everybody here. And if it doesn't, well, I'm sorry, you can take Ryan's answer that they're for everyone. Okay? So, who are they for? They're for the simple, for the young, especially, but also, well, actually, listen to what it says on, for some people who feel left out. It then says, let the wise listen and add to their understanding. So, if you think you're already wise, well, that's okay. You need to add to your understanding. So, they're for you as well. So, we found out who wrote them. It was Solomon. We found out a little bit about him. We found out a little bit about why he wrote them. He wrote them so that we could learn to be wise and prudent and disciplined and do what is right and just and fair. Treat other people in a way that pleases God. And I've got another question. I have two more questions. Okay? The next question I have is, what do we need to do?

Okay? So, we've got the book. We've got all these proverbs. We know what they're for. We know who wrote them. What do we need to do? Well, listen to verse 5. Listen to verse 5. I jumped ahead and read it already, but listen to it again. Let the wise listen and add to their understanding and let the discerning get guidance. We need to listen. We need to listen and read the proverbs and work out what they're saying and what they're teaching us so that we can get wisdom. We need to listen very carefully to what God is telling us in these proverbs. And as we do, then we'll learn the lessons and that will change the way that we behave and live. But then there's one final question. That's a very important question.

[13 : 06] And the question is, where does it all start, this business of becoming wise? What I want for all of you is that you would be wise. Wise children, and then you would grow up to be wise teenagers, and wise young people, and wise adults. That's what we want. And the book of Proverbs is helpful in that.

But where does it all start? Well, it's interesting. In verse 7, and we've already heard Ross give us this verse, and I read it as well, we have a word that has something to do with the start, doesn't it? I'm saying, where does it all start? Well, listen to verse 7. The feet of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline. So, that gives you a little of an answer, a clue as to where it all starts. Solomon says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, or the beginning of knowledge. What does that mean? That sounds a bit weird in a way, the fear of the Lord. What does that mean? Does that mean that we should be very frightened of God?

Is He very scary? And that's why we need to fear Him. Well, that's not what it means at all. Well, to fear God means to honor God, to respect God, to take God seriously, so that when God speaks, we listen. So, a boy or a girl, or a man or a woman who fear God, take God seriously. And when we know that the Bible is God's Word, and when we open the book of Proverbs and we read what it says there, we say, well, this is important. This is serious because this is God's Word. It's not just what Solomon thought was good or special. This is what God is telling us. And to fear God is to take God seriously and respect what He says. And so, that's where it begins, you see, because if we don't fear God, if we say, well, I don't really think God's that important, and I'm not really interested in what God says, well, we're certainly not going to be interested in the Proverbs. We'll say, oh, that's not important. But if we fear God, if we know and honor and respect God and take Him seriously, then that's what it begins. That's what it all starts.

But there's one final thing I want to say to you that I think is also very important. It is good for us to learn from Solomon and his Proverbs. They're in the Bible because this is God's Word, and we can learn a great deal from them. And we were listening to some of them today, and even in listening to one or two, we think, well, that is important. That's something I need to learn and need to take on board. But the Bible tells us that Solomon, wise though he was, and a great king though he was, Solomon was pointing forward to someone much wiser, even than Solomon. He was pointing forward to a king much more important than Solomon, to the king of kings, to the wisdom of God. Jesus, we're told, is the wisdom of God. He is the king of kings. And listen to what Jesus says about himself, and he compares himself to Solomon.

Isn't that interesting? And listen to what he says. He said to the disciples when he came, and he was speaking to them, he said this, now one greater than Solomon is here. They thought Solomon was very wise and very special, and he was. But Jesus said, one greater than Solomon is here. And he was speaking about himself. He said, I am greater than Solomon. That might sound quite proud that somebody would say that, but not when it's true. He knew who he was, the eternal Son of God, God's Messiah, God's Savior, the King of kings and Lord of lords. And so he could say honestly and truthfully and importantly, one greater than Solomon is here, and that is Jesus. So when we read that the beginning of the matter, the start of the matter, the heart of the matter is the feet of the Lord, the way we can do that is by following Jesus and knowing Jesus and trusting in Jesus. And when we do that, then we've got the heart of the matter, and we will become wise and live lives that are pleasing to God and of blessing and help to others. So there's a few important truths about the book of Proverbs and a few answers that we get at the very beginning in these first few verses. So let's just bow our heads and we'll pray for one moment. Heavenly Father, we do thank you for your Word. We thank you for the wisdom that it contains. We pray that we would know what it is to fear you, that we would know what it is to honor you, and to respect you, and to take you seriously. We pray that you would help us to become wise.

[18:12] We recognize that we are simple, that we are often foolish, that we often behave in ways that hurt others and damage ourselves. We recognize that we can be very stubborn, and we want to do our own thing and get our own way. But Lord, we pray that we would listen to you as you speak to us in your Word. We thank you very especially for the Word of God that is your Son, Jesus. We thank you that he is the wisdom of God. We thank you that he is far greater than Solomon. And we thank you that he is the one who we can know and love and trust and follow, that we might also be wise and live lives that are pleasing to you and of help and blessing to others. And all of these things we pray in his name, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Well, let's sing again. We're going to sing now.