

Proverbs

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[0 : 01] Seeking the Lord's help, I direct your attention this evening to the book of the Proverbs, chapter 8, verses 34 and 35.

The book of the Proverbs, chapter 8, verses 34 and 35. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. This book of the Proverbs speaks to us of wisdom, and essentially it speaks to us of Christ.

There is that which blends together in simplicity.

[1 : 26] All true knowledge, all true wisdom, all true grace, is from the Word.

that Word which the Scripture speaks of, the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

And as we have read this chapter tonight, we see something of the blessedness of that. When we read this Word, when He appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by Him, was one brought up with Him, I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, and so on.

We read there of the Lord Jesus Christ. The wisdom of God revealed in this world, in all its purity, in the person of Jesus.

And you know, it is the divine work of God's Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of those whom He has eternally loved, to give them that grace, to receive this inestimable wisdom.

[3 : 00] Here in these chapters of the book of the Proverbs, we read again and again, the blessedness of this, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

And in the book of Job, we read of it again. And unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord.

That is wisdom. And to depart from evil is understanding. We are not then talking here about that wisdom of man.

We are talking about something so vastly different. In the opening chapter of the letter of the apostle to the church at Corinth, there the apostle speaks of this.

After that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

[4 : 09] And then we hear what this wisdom is. We preach Christ crucified. Unto the Jews, a stumbling block. Unto the Greeks, foolishness.

But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. And here is the wisdom that is spoken of in our chapter tonight.

And we would desire as the word which has rested upon our minds and to attempt to enter into something of the blessedness that is contained here.

So we read, blessed is the man that heareth me. That is Christ, the fountains of all wisdom. Oh what a mighty work that is.

I fear, you know, today there is much religion about. In our own midst it doesn't contain this wisdom. It doesn't contain this tender fear of God.

[5 : 30] It doesn't contain this divine grace. You see, I think of those words of the disciples. Is it I? Is it I? Is it I? You know, there was one in their midst and they couldn't detect it.

They were so solemn. But he had no wisdom. But they couldn't see that. He was a solemn character.

and he was there at the table. But they didn't know. And we read in the scriptures that if it were possible they would deceive the very elect.

David had a hithophore. And what a solemn, awful character he was. But we read of him that they'd been together to the house of God and had sweet counsel together.

[6 : 39] King Saul prophesied. What characters these were. And we read equally that many shall say in that day, have we not done many mighty works in thy name?

Have we not preached in thy name? Have we not done miracles? No, I never knew you. Oh dear friend, one of the most solemn things today is the lack of judgment and discernment.

And it comes very, very close. It's not what a man says he believes, or what he does. As regards baptism and the Lord's table, it's the manifest fruits.

of the tender fear of God in his life and in his walk and in his God-fearing godly separation from this world.

And even there there's a solemn danger of illegality. For separation from this world, as the poor monk and nun perform it, is not salvation.

[7 : 50] And there are many, I fear, in our own midst today, in the churches who have a view that if they dress correctly and look sober and behave soberly and go to the house of God and regularly attend, it is acceptable.

But the fruits of the Spirit are manifest. The gracious fruits of the Spirit are manifest in love, humility, humility, not a mock humility, not an hypocrisy, but something so vastly different.

It's God who searches every heart and distinguishes an empty professor from one of his dear children. But how solemn it is.

This separation exists. The sheep and the goats are known to him. He knows the heart. He knows who his children are.

He knows where they are. Poor and afflicted, Lord and I, and they are. They're his children. Now I come to this, blessed is the man that heareth.

[9 : 10] Oh, what a distinguishing mark that he, that heareth me. He me. You see, my sheep hear my voice, said Christ.

And I know them, and they follow me. They won't have one foot in the world and one in the chapel. They won't indeed. And we shan't need to tell them what they ought not to do.

God will show them that. that's the work of the Spirit to bring out. There's no legality with him. There is a divine commandment that calls his people out of the world that lies in wickedness.

They hear his voice. Have you heard it? Do you know that commandment that has separated you from the world that lies in wickedness so that you are in possession of this fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom.

And that fear of the Lord will lead you away from the city of destruction. Let me say this, he may not do it all at once. And the Lord called me out of the world.

[10 : 39] I've been deep in the world, in dance halls and public houses and theatres and concerts, things like the Messiah and all sorts of things I had gone into, still going to the chapel of course.

I never left the house of God, but I managed to find myself in a dance hall and at the bar on a Saturday night and sitting in the house of God on a Sunday morning. But you know when the Lord called me out, I never forget that night and the threefold call that I had come out from among them, be ye separate, touch not the unclean thing, I didn't have to ask him what had to be left behind.

I didn't take half of it with me. But you know, there's one thing I clung to, I played hockey for the university. And I argued in my mind that I could keep that, that wasn't quite so bad, that was fairly harmless.

I didn't want to get, it took some months, six or eight months for that to be stopped. But it was stopped. I was shown it wasn't as harmless as it appeared to be in the company of godless, blaspheming young men.

And I had to come out. And the way it came about was that I was dropped from the team. And you know, I was thankful when that happened.

[12 : 15] What I found difficult to do was done for me. And I was relieved, brought out of it all. I've never had to ask the Lord. Nor can I go, I shudder when I hear of those who are in the midst of all this and in the churches.

I really shudder. all have solemn it is. We need a clean separation to hear his voice.

Bless him. Favourite characters who are called out of the world that lies in wickedness. They don't want anything as it were hidden under the tent floor.

And the wrath and judgment of God to come upon you. To be brought out to clean the air, clear the air, separate it.

You see, I watch some and it may be a young mother.

[13 : 27] she finds a company of the world, even her neighbors, in and out their home. I've watched this over the years, but you see, where there's a work of God, there's a separation even from that.

There's a teaching, there's a work of the Spirit, there's a hearing of the voice of God, there's a clean cut coming out and being separate.

There can't be a mingling. There cannot be. there is a work that the Lord will perform. He'll speak.

There'll be an exercise, there'll be a conscience, there'll be a voice that is heard, and there'll be a clear cut separation. That doesn't mean a censoriousness to the world that lies in wickedness.

But it may well mean this, that if you're asked for reason, why you're separate, you'll be faced with doing what the Scripture says, being ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you and why you've been brought out.

[14 : 48] It won't be a legality, it'll be something vastly different. It'll be that the Lord has called you out. On numerous occasions in my life, in the world of work, I was faced with being asked why I was separate, and sometimes tormented in being asked again and again.

I'll give you some examples. school, in school, always there was drama and plays, the school play every year. Why didn't I go? What was wrong with it?

I had to give a good reason. The school secretary used to ask me again and again and constantly offer me a ticket to the school play whenever I entered office.

He changed his mind to coming and mocked. On other occasions I was asked to go to conferences, union meetings, sometimes on a Sunday afternoon.

On one occasion I was shouted at and shouted at by the senior physics master in the staff room one night after school because I wouldn't go on a Sunday afternoon. The word he used was you bigot.

[16:06] You bigot. My dear friends, when we hear his voice and we're brought out, we're told in God's word that he that will live guardly must suffer persecution.

Easy enough to hide our light or make an excuse or pass it all over. But you know when the Lord, the tender fear of God is implanted in the heart, then what a mercy when we're enabled to speak humbly before our God and to make a stand in the world perhaps there will be somebody who will mark it and be touched by it.

There came a time in my school life when I was asked to take assemblies. Oh, I thought, however can I do that? I shuddered, I was full of fear. I evaded it.

But there came a time when I was so exercised about it, it was before I went to pray, that I vowed before the Lord. If I was asked again, I'd say yes.

And do you know that very night at a staff meeting, the head asked again, he said, if anyone's got enough courage to take assembly, they come and see me. I had to go. I went home, but I had to ring him up. And the first assembly I took, I spoke on the fear of the Lord.

[17:30] I said to the whole school of boys, it was the old grammar school, I said, you boys may wonder why I haven't taken them before. I said, I'll be honest, because I was afraid. And I spoke of the fear of the Lord.

And I went on to take eight assemblies after that on John 3.16, God so loved the world. And the late Mr. Kinderman said to me, you'll get into terrible trouble when you come to Paris, you'll never be faithful, or have he put me on my metal?

And I remember getting one of the school prefects to read that solemn passage where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched. I can truly say before God not with any pride, I came off that platform clear in my conscience in speaking about hell.

One of those staff that heard me only died last week, godless man. But I thought, well, he heard those addresses. And you know, the Lord does bring us not to hide our life under a bushel, but to let it stand on a hill.

And there's all the difference in the world between being religious and going from door to door and being brought to give a reason of the hope that is in us. There are those of you in this village, you're known for attending this sanctuary of God.

[19:00] Are you ever asked what you believe? I remember when I went in the army to do my national service, I had to get down in front of sixty men in a billet that first night by my bed to pray.

All the exercise. I can't tell you the mountain it was, but I was unable to do it. I waited for the first boot to hit me on the hip, but it never came.

The whole of that rowdy billet of sixty men went into complete silence. You could have heard a pin drop. But in the week that followed, six came to me and asked me what I believed.

several told me that they prayed every night before they went to bed secretly. And all the difference in the world, you know, blessed is the man that heareth, that he's brought to this blessed knowledge of the Lord that heareth me, that knows the commandment of God in his heart, and is brought to possess the tender fear of God.

Let me speak to you like this. It comes to my mind, I don't know why, but what about your business in the market, buying and selling your cattle? What about your business in the business world?

[20 : 33] Are you known for your honesty? your absolute honesty? When I pointed out to someone some years ago, something that wasn't entirely dishonest, but was devious, I never forget the words they said to me, never known anyone as honest as you.

My dear friends, when it comes to honesty, there's a standard, nothing to do with me, before God, a right standard.

There's a right and a wrong. There's truth, all truth. We look at the awful politics of the land in which we live, and there's no truth anywhere.

words don't mean anything, and I fear it creeps into our churches. Blessed is the man that here is me.

He's brought into the possession of this fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom. It doesn't allow him to wander in dishonesty and intrigue, and it brings him to a straightness before his God in his heart.

[22 : 01] It convinces him of sin. It brings him down before his God. He's under a light and he feels it. God's holy law speaks in his soul.

And when God works in his heart and churns up the muck and mire that is there, as life goes on in many a crucifying sorrow, he gets such a sight of the corruption that is there.

Things he never thought were there appear. And his experience is as life goes on that the journey is one of an ever increasing knowledge of his own corruption and varnish.

iniquity as it is churned up in his soul. You may think in your youth that you're not too bad to put it mildly. But you're thinking in your older years there's not much good anywhere.

In fact there's none. It is utter corruption that is in your heart. but is this character blessed that hears the voice of God speaking into his soul showing him what he is and bringing him into a knowledge of himself.

[23 : 28] I believe he is blessed because it has a gracious effect on him. it causes him to watch daily at the mercy scene.

What's he doing there? Why? He's praying. Behold, says the scripture, he prayed. He was a sinner. He was God's apostle.

apostle. And he had started on that lovely course of activity watching daily at his gates.

When did you start there? How many years ago did you start at his gates and bend your knee and have his word open before you?

and perhaps knew what it was for some precious portion of his holy word to be applied to your heart in the reading of it while you were on your knees and to enter your soul with glorious power.

[24 : 43] What a lovely expression this is of a Christian and what it tells us about his wisdom. You see there is in us an innate dislike to prayer.

It's not in the heart of fallen man to go to prayer. It's in the heart of fallen man to put prayer off as long as he can and it requires pressure, sorrow, burden, suffering, trials, the bitter cup to bring him to prayer.

He doesn't go until he can't manage it and then he goes. And when things are easy, easily is worse this regards watching daily at the Lord's gate.

But when his path is difficult and heated seven times hotter like the furnace into which Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego went then, they enter the children of God into the experience of the 107th Psalm.

What an experience that is of watching daily at the Lord's gate. But it's a precious place. I find today in these years of my life it's one of the spots of my greatest comfort.

[26 : 22] To take everything to him in prayer and to lay it there. There's nowhere like the throne of grace. You see, we have friends.

Sometimes they cause us sorrow, sometimes they're taken from us. sometimes they don't stand by us when we need them. The Lord's disciples forsook him and fled.

They all did it. John included. But Jesus knew that path. one of the words the Lord spoke to me when I was a student in an hour of great darkness and it came with immense sweetness and power was this when when most we need his helping hand this friend is always near.

And I prove that through life. Watching daily at his gates in our hours of darkness, hours of sorrow and trial and temptation is a good place, blessed place.

I can recommend it to you. There is there one who is touched with the feeling of our infirmity.

[27 : 53] There is before that throne as we read in the fourth of the revelation an open door, a mercy seat. And as I heard a dear old Dutch minister say it's for young and old, that mercy seat.

Touched my heart when he said it that night in Holland, it's for young and old. He knew something about it and I could tell he did. He knew the mercy seat. He'd been there.

He preached to one who knew that mercy seat. Do you know it? Well, it's wisdom to come there and there we shall meet with one who understands our case.

And less in mercy if we know what it is in life's journey to wait daily. at his gain. Daniel prayed at morning and at midday and at even time to his God.

And we read of God's dear servant Jacob when he came into his fierce conflict, brought about by his own sin, went to prayer alone and wrestled with his creator.

[29 : 10] Came away bearing the marks as he halted upon his thigh of that glorious hour in his experience as he blessed him there.

Blessed is the man that waiteth daily at my gain. You see, it's useless to take your troubles anywhere else.

Our propensity is to seek for a human ear. Pour out our tale of woe to others and get their sympathy.

But you see, that's no help to anybody. that is the exact opposite. There's only one comforter that can give you any true comfort.

And that's one who is touched with the feeling of your infirmities. And in fact, patting the government upon his shoulders is the one who is aware of your tribulation because it's been permitted by him with a purpose of which the scriptures are so clear.

[30 : 38] No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous. Nevertheless, after all, it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

Or again, tribulation work is patience. God knows that and he sends it. It comes suddenly often. Just like the storms we've seen in the past few days, they sweep in as great storms, buffeting winds, torrential rain.

So were the storms of life pathway. He raises the stormy wind, says the dear psalmist regarding tribulation. we lose sight of this. We look at the secondary causes.

The psalmist didn't look at secondary causes. He saw the primary cause of his affliction, his tribulation. It was God. And the very reason it was sent with its intensity by him was and is to bring you to prayer to the mercy seat to wait daily at his gates, which otherwise you won't do.

I find in my pathway and experience that it requires a storm to make me pray. And it tells me something about my heart.

[32 : 07] Perhaps it's told you something about yours. Then you pray as you've never prayed before. It requires an affliction, a hospital bed, a deep bitter cup.

Then, then, you begin to find a nearness and access at the throne of grace such as you never felt for years. There is a coming to the Lord.

But the Lord speaks here not of coming to him only in great trials. He speaks of waiting daily at his gates. And he speaks equally here of waiting, watching daily at his gates and waiting at the posts of my door.

people. I remember many years ago, I don't know how old I was. I often used to travel with my late father on his preaching engagement.

I look back on those years now and I think, well, I hardly ever listened to him preaching.

[33 : 21] I used to daydream while he was preaching. Be miles away. Couldn't have told you hardly what the text was. And yet sometimes the texts have remained.

I always remember him preaching from continuing prayer, watching the same with thanksgiving. It left a mark as to the reality of that pathway.

And you know, as I've grown older, I've grown to understand it. I remember him saying about things which he learned and heard in his youth in the chapels.

He used to speak of Farnborough Cove where he was born and brought up as a boy and the old deacon giving out the hymn, my preachers of the law are his and his obedience mine. He used to say he was totally mystified as a young boy there, whatever that meant.

But he said in years to come, oh, how he understood the religion of that dear old man. came to feel a love to him years later when he entered into those truths.

[34 : 42] And do you know, continue in prayer, all how we need, tribulation, to make us watch daily in his going. To wait there with all our troubles and to be constantly rolling our burdens upon him.

there's nowhere else to take them that you'll ever get any real help. What the writer of the Proverbs calls substance, there will be all your help and all your strength.

You see, our propensities are different, but one of my propensities is to churn things over and go over them and over and over them, some of the burdens of life and some of the sorrows, some of the cutting things.

I will talk them as it were out of my system, but that's no help. They don't go, they come back again. Oh, to be still and watch.

You know, it's a path where we need prayer, to be given grace to be still and to lay every care at his dear feet, every sorrow, every burden and wait for him to appear.

[36 : 13] I thought only today of waiting and watching for the fulfillment of his promises, what a trial it is. But my mind went to Joseph, and that lovely word, until the time that his word came, the word of the Lord tried him.

Oh, how God's dear church need that wisdom to wait and to watch the fulfillment of his word.

Carnal reason says no, never be fulfilled, never come to question. But you see, two full years, what a time, what a wait.

But when it came, the fulfillment of that promise at seventeen, and it came twenty years afterwards, when he was thirty-seven, then there was a rush to shave and to get to the court of Pharaoh.

the Lord. But oh, the patience, the dear man of God, needy. The Lord had spoken, he had given him a gracious intimation, it had become totally impossible to foresee in any way how his brethren could possibly bow down to him, or the vision could be fulfilled.

[37 : 45] but it was the Lord's word, and in his heart it was a divine exercise, and all that had to be passed through, and he watched, and he tried to hasten it with his own hand, but he failed miserably.

What a solemn warning that is to us, not to look to an arm of flesh to fulfill the Lord's word in our heart, his promise as spoken to us.

No, he'll fulfill it himself as we wait and watch at his gaze. Bring it to pass. And bring it to pass, he did. And you know, I looked at the blessedness of that, when it was come to pass, and they bowed before him there, and he saw the fulfillment of God's word, of his youth, he broke down.

Dear, man of God, went. He had a sight of the glory of God. It wasn't the emotion of his brethren coming, it was the fulfillment of what, 20 years of trial until the time that his word came, then it came, and it was fulfilled and done in a moment, and he wept.

Have you ever seen anything in your life like it? Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching, daily, at my gates, waiting, at the posts of my door, for whoso findeth me findeth life.

[39 : 33] You know, the truth of that is this, eternal life. God, to commune with the Lord here, watching and waiting, at the posts of his door, at the mercy seat, will be to enter into eternal life hereafter.

he has promised that he will come again and receive his dear children himself, go on to prepare a place for them, and he will come and gather them safely home when the trials of life's pathway are over, and when they're finished.

I just say this, you know, that the religion of Babylon, our denomination today, that's a very solemn one, a very awful one, a very terrible one, deceptive, that it's easy to find crime.

I don't say it unkindly, but it's there, it's all apparent, it goes under the name of Calvinism, but in fact it's free will, it's Arminianism. It's not easy to find crime.

Men have said in our pulpits that it's as easy to come to Christ as it is to walk up these pulpits steps. It's not true. It's not true. It's solemn to lead the young into such false conclusions.

[41 : 14] It's carnal. You see, the Lord reveals himself with divine power in the hearts of his dear children. It brings them into deep trial, soul trial.

You follow Bunyan's experience out in his progress. Deep soul trial brought him into this way, to wait, watch, plead, and pray.

He did find Christ. He was led to the cross. The pardoning blood of Christ was revealed to his soul.

His sins were washed away. He did hear the words, thy sins are forgiven me. He was given a sacred robe of righteousness. He did have the scroll, the sealing of the spirit.

It was all given to him. Nothing of his own doing. He was led in sovereign grace to Calvary. And there is a sinner under a load of sin, bowed down in godly sorrow and repentance.

[42 : 19] He came to know the blood of Christ. It doesn't, it's not all you've got to do is believe and then we'll baptize you.

It doesn't matter how worldly you are, whether you've still got your earrings on or whether you are still going to wear your jeans and wander in the world and go to the theatre. I know all of that in gospel standard Baptist churches.

I'm not speaking out of clothes. I have chapter and verse for that and from one of our ministers. Don't be surprised how far we've sunk.

Dear friends, there's a way to glory and it's a solemn way. It's here in divine wisdom, the fear of God, the knowledge of Christ, of being led into a sacred experience who so findeth me.

Not easy. Jesus reveals himself in the heart of a sinner according to sovereign grace, like we read of Queen Esther going in unto the king and waiting for the scepter to be extended.

[43 : 30] And I can tell you this, I'm in touch with young people today in this country and in other lands who are lost, bowed under a sense of their lost condition and darkness, are waiting for the Lord to reveal himself to them.

I'd have led from one over Christmas from Holland, been waiting and waiting for months. What obeyed this easy way to Christ, all you've got to do is believe.

Well, there are many who are taught by the Spirit, who know that's not true. They know divine sovereignty is a weight for the Lord Jesus to apply his precious blood through the operations of the Spirit to their heart and conscience.

The same gospel, I was looking in the engagements of ministers in the last century and I discovered an interesting engagement, connected with this chapel that John Warburton went on one occasion to preach at Grove and then came into this pulpit to preach on his way home to Trowbridge.

But I thought then, I know the gospel that that dear man John Warburton preached. He says in his mercies, no offers of grace. Oh, how he knew it himself.

[44 : 56] If you read his mercies, you'll get the most remarkable experience of a man under conviction of sin, going to hear Mr. Robey in Manchester for the last time, feeling such darkness and death, there to hear the glorious gospel and know the mighty deliverance to such an extent that he went into a field and shouted with rejoicing to his God.

But that was reality of course. that was glorious reality. And this is what we want today. Whoso findeth me findeth life.

Not a form of religion, not an empty husk, but the glorious reality of life. And whoso findeth me findeth life and shall obtain favour of the Lord.

What a conclusion. Divine favour. You know that when you receive it. You'll truly know when the Lord is favourable to you.

When you feel his approbation in your heart, ever felt, his peace. It centres on his atonement, reconciliation, his blood.

[46 : 20] And you'll know his favour. Oh, it's not the worldly religion of the day, something vastly different. It's the religion of the heart.

It's blessed, and it'll get you to heaven, dear friends. It won't fail you at the last. And simply for one reason alone, and that is this, because it's his workmanship.

Ye are his workmanship, and that's what's in this text tonight. God, oh, to be his workmanship, and have a living religion. It won't be an easy one.

The days of darkness will be many. You'll walk much in the last two verses of the 50th of Isaiah, that him that walketh in darkness hath no life.

Dear Phil partner, when he preached that lovely sermon, the air of heaven, I remember reading it as a student when I was 18 or 19, and I was moved by the truth.

[47 : 21] I thought, ah, here's a man that knows something. The air of heaven walking in darkness, and the air of hell walking in light. One waiting upon his God, and the other sitting down in his sorrow, with the sparks of his own kindling.

And I fear as much of that about today, sparks of our own kindling. We need another Philpot in our churches today. The fallow ground needs breaking up.

It's very solemn. The Lord add his blessing. Amen.