



Bethel Sonrise Sermon Notes – “*Wisdom the Invitation*”

Speaker: Ps Preston Dobbins

Series: Standalone sermon [no series]

Scripture: Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 3:13–18; Proverbs 9:1–18; James 1:5

Main Idea:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but wisdom is more than simply knowing what is right. **True wisdom is putting God's Word into practice.** God generously offers His wisdom to those who pursue it, humble themselves, and acknowledge their complete dependence on Him.

Wisdom Is About Doing, Not Just Knowing

Proverbs teaches us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. As we grow in reverence for God, the natural next step is learning to live according to His wisdom.

Christian philosopher Gerhard von Rad described wisdom as becoming competent in the realities of life—understanding how things really are and knowing what to do about them.

Wisdom isn't simply the accumulation of information. It is knowing how to live.

Our culture places tremendous value on knowledge. We can spend years learning, studying Scripture, and developing correct theology without allowing any of it to change the way we live.

But knowing what the Bible says and actually obeying it are two different things.

Scripture warns that knowledge can make us prideful and that knowing the right thing to do without doing it is sin.

You cannot build a godly life on correct theology alone. You must put God's Word into practice.

Our lives are ultimately shaped by what we consistently do, not merely by what we know.

Wisdom Is a Priceless Treasure

Proverbs describes wisdom as something more valuable than silver, gold, or precious jewels.

It offers benefits that money cannot purchase, including long life, honor, peace, and satisfaction.

But something this valuable must be intentionally pursued.

Wisdom doesn't automatically develop with age, experience, or biblical knowledge. We must recognize its value and actively seek it.

If wisdom is more valuable than riches, we should pursue it with greater intentionality than anything money can buy.

The Invitation of Wisdom

In Proverbs 9, wisdom is pictured as a woman who has prepared a magnificent banquet.

She has built her house, prepared her food, and set her table. Then she calls out from the highest point in the city, inviting those who lack understanding to come and eat.

Wisdom isn't hiding from us.

God has made His wisdom available, and He invites us to receive it.

But we have to respond to the invitation.

Repeatedly ignoring wisdom can eventually lead to painful consequences. We don't want to wait until our lives are falling apart before we begin seeking God's direction.

The time to pursue wisdom is before the storm, not after our lives have been shipwrecked.

Don't Waste the Pain of Foolishness

One of the dangers of ignoring wisdom is assuming that God's grace will always protect us from the consequences of our decisions.

But **no condemnation does not mean no consequences.**

God forgives us, but He may still allow us to experience the consequences of foolish choices.

Sometimes those consequences become the very things He uses to teach us, correct us, and develop our character.

When we experience difficulties caused by our own decisions, we shouldn't automatically blame God.

Instead, we should humble ourselves and ask what He wants us to learn.

Pain can either produce bitterness or become an opportunity for growth.

Don't waste the pain in your life. Allow God to use it to develop wisdom and maturity.

Two Competing Voices: Wisdom and Folly

Proverbs 9 presents two competing invitations.

Wisdom prepares a banquet and calls people toward understanding and life.

But across the street, folly is also calling out.

Folly offers immediate gratification, appealing to our appetites, emotions, and desire for an easier path.

Its invitation may seem attractive, but its destination is destruction.

Every day, we face choices between these two voices.

In our marriages, relationships, careers, finances, and everyday decisions, we must decide whether to follow wisdom or satisfy our immediate desires.

Wisdom asks us to consider what is right and where our decisions will ultimately lead.

Folly encourages us to pursue what feels good right now without considering the consequences.

The voice you consistently listen to will determine the direction of your life.

How Do We Get Wisdom?

James 1:5 gives us a simple answer:

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." (NIV)

God doesn't withhold wisdom from those who sincerely seek Him.

He gives generously, without rebuking us for asking.

The challenge isn't God's willingness to give us wisdom. Often, the challenge is our unwillingness to admit that we need it.

We have become so accustomed to relying on our own intelligence, experience, and abilities that asking God becomes our last resort instead of our first response.

The beginning of wisdom is recognizing that we aren't wise enough on our own.

Break Your Addiction to Self-Reliance

One of the greatest obstacles to receiving God's wisdom is self-reliance.

We naturally want to manage our circumstances, solve our problems, and maintain control.

But relying entirely on our own strength limits our dependence on God.

A helpful change in perspective is to stop describing our challenges as merely hard and begin recognizing that, apart from God, they are impossible.

When something is hard, we assume we can accomplish it if we work harder, become smarter, or try a different strategy.

But when we recognize that living the Christian life is impossible through our own strength, we are forced to depend on God.

Loving our spouses as Christ loves us, raising our children in godliness, and representing Jesus in everything we do require more than human effort.

They require God's wisdom and grace.

The wisest thing you can do is admit that you don't have what it takes without God.

Our limitations should lead us toward dependence rather than discouragement.

Make Asking for Wisdom a Daily Practice

Pursuing wisdom should become part of our everyday relationship with God.

We don't have to wait for a crisis or an important decision to ask for His direction.

We can seek His wisdom in ordinary moments, allowing Him to shape our thoughts, conversations, relationships, and decisions.

Make it a daily habit to acknowledge your dependence on God.

Set a reminder if necessary. Begin your day by asking Him for wisdom before you begin trying to manage everything yourself.

Then be willing to act on what He shows you.

Wisdom isn't just receiving God's direction. It's obeying it.

Final Challenge

Take an honest look at your life.

Are you pursuing wisdom or simply accumulating knowledge? Are you listening to God's direction or allowing your feelings and immediate desires to make your decisions?

Where have you been relying on your own strength instead of depending on Him?

God is inviting you to His table. His wisdom is available, and He promises to give it generously to those who ask.

Stop making excuses, surrender your self-reliance, and begin asking God for wisdom every day.

Don't simply learn more about God's Word. Put it into practice.

The wisest thing you can do is recognize your need for God and depend on His wisdom in every area of your life.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the difference between having biblical knowledge and actually living with biblical wisdom? Where have you experienced that distinction in your own life?
2. Proverbs describes wisdom and folly as two competing invitations. What are some practical ways these two voices compete for your attention in everyday decisions?
3. How should we respond when we experience painful consequences from our own foolish decisions? What does it look like to allow God to use those experiences to develop wisdom?
4. The sermon challenges us to recognize that living the Christian life is impossible through our own strength. In what area of your life are you currently relying too heavily on yourself instead of depending on God?
5. James 1:5 promises that God generously gives wisdom to those who ask. What practical habits could help you consistently seek His wisdom and put it into practice this week?