THE PRECIOUSNESS OF WISDOM

**DATE: 4/19/2015 pm**

**TEXT: Proverbs 3:13-18**

**INTRODUCTION**

In our last message we looked at the Rewards of Wisdom by looking at its Commands and Compensations

More Compensations are given here of Wisdom

But they are not attached to Commands

In this section, the emphasis is upon The Great ‘Value’ of Wisdom

We are told that it’s **“*precious”***in **v.15**

The word ***“precious”*** speaks of *something valuable, and not to be wasted*

**I Corinthians 1:24 –** ***“Christ [is] the Wisdom of God”***

And surely He is ***Precious***

**I Peter 1:19 – *“… the precious blood of Christ”***

**I Peter 2:7 – *“Unto you therefore which believe He is precious:”***

I want to look at 3 general categories of …

**“The Preciousness of Wisdom”**

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**I. THE “BLISS” OF WISDOM – vs. 13a, 17a, 18b**

**Bliss [Encarta] –** the state of spiritual joy, happiness

***“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom … Her ways are ways of pleasantness … happy is every one that retaineth her”***

3 Conditions regarding Wisdom will bring happiness

When I use the word Conditions, I’m talking about *something necessary* …

*Something that must exist for something else to happen*

The world looks for happiness but doesn’t think that wisdom is the way to find it

The first Condition is …

 **A. ‘Finding’ Wisdom – v.13a**

***"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom"***

***“Happy”*** speaks of the joy of receiving something of great value

Illustrate … a gift of value,

**Matthew 13:44 – *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; …***

***… the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field”***

***“finding wisdom”*** does not mean that it’s lost

Wisdom isn’t something you will stumble upon

It doesn’t come to us by accident

Wisdom is discovered as we pursue it

Wisdom is discovered in the study of God’s Word

**II Timothy 2:15a –** ***“Study to shew thyself approved unto God …”***

***“Approved”*** means to receive someone’s favor

Wisdom is also the gift of God as a result of prayer

**James 1:5 - *“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him”***

To find it you must look for it

That’s why this church as 4 services a week, beside all the opportunities to exercise prayer

But most folks are not looking for Wisdom

They don’t want to do what it takes to find Wisdom;

They would rather have …

-- Attention – we want people to like us

-- Affection – we want people to delight in us

-- Affirmation – we want to be valued, important

-- Acceptance – we long to belong

-- Satisfaction – we crave to be emotionally whole

-- Significance – we want to know we matter

-- Security – we long to feel safe

But not wisdom

True Happiness will avoid such people

The first Condition regarding Wisdom that will bring happiness is …

**‘Finding’ Wisdom**

We must do what it takes to find it

**B. ‘Following’ Wisdom – v.17a**

Once we’ve Found it, we then need to Follow it

***“Her ways are ways of pleasantness,”***

***“Her”*** - Hebrew words are usually found in either the masculine or feminine gender, often without regard to a personality

It is not unlike someone (in our society) referring to something they own (like a car) as *she* or *her*

The point being developed here is Wisdom has an identity

Solomon is setting Wisdom apart as being something unique

The word just happens to be in the feminine gender in

The Hebrew

The key word here is ***“ways”***

The word ***“ways”*** speaks of a well worn road

The idea conveyed here is that of walking on her roads

All roads lead somewhere

And Wisdom’s road will bring you to …

***“pleasantness”*** - *Pleasing; agreeable; grateful to the mind or to the senses*

There is so much emphasis placed on being happy

And there are all kinds of ways to try and do that

But only those who walk in the Ways of Wisdom will find true happiness

**‘Finding’ Wisdom**

**‘Following’ Wisdom**

**C. ‘Faithfulness’ to Wisdom – v.18b**

Not only are we to Look for and then Follow after Wisdom

But once we find it, we must ***“retain”*** it –

… keep possession of it

***“Happy is everyone that retaineth her”***

Holding onto that which you have Found

*Repetition* is the key to retention

Clinging to wisdom tenaciously, in spite of it’s often unpopularity, will result in true happiness

**Proverbs 20:6 *– “Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?”***

**THE “BLISS” OF WISDOM**

**II. THE “BEST” OF WISDOM – vs. 14, 15**

***“For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold” “She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her”***

**A. Wisdom is Better than ‘Gain’ – v.14**

***“For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold”***

***“merchandise”*** – is *goods bought and sold for profit*

No business transaction will gain for you what Wisdom gains

No stock portfolio will give the returns that Wisdom will give

You may gain a profit by merchandising,

But you will never gain more than what you gain from Wisdom

**II Peter 1:4 – *“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature …”***

**Ephesians 3:8 – *“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;”***

**Revelation 3:18 – *“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see”***

**Ill.** When the stock market crashed in 1929, J.C. Penney lost almost all of his material wealth. Worry and anxiety set in. So much so, that he became physically ill and deeply depressed.

As a result, he had to be hospitalized. His earthly treasure had consumed him and distracted Him from the right kind of treasure. J.C. Penny became so ill that at one particular point he thought he would surely dye. As he walked down the hospital corridor one day, he heard singing coming from the hospital chapel.

The words were *“God will take care of you, through every day, o’re all the way.”* That was the day he gave his heart to the Lord.

He truly found that ***“… the merchandise of wisdom was better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold”***

**Wisdom is Better than ‘Gain’**

**B. Wisdom is Better than ‘Glamour’ – v.15a**

***“She is more precious than rubies:”***

Rubies and other jewels are used to bring glamour to the wearer

Glamour is highly esteemed by some, but it is not comparable to wisdom

**I Peter 3:3, 4 *– “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;” “But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price”***

There is so much emphasis on the out ward today

**C. Wisdom is Better than ‘Gratification’ – v.15b**

***“…and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her”***

If you could have every fleshly desire gratified but lacked wisdom, you would come out short in the deal

Wisdom is better than having our fleshly desires gratified

**THE “BLISS” OF WISDOM**

**THE “BEST” OF WISDOM**

**III. THE “BENEFITS” OF WISDOM – vs. 16-18**

 4 things here

**A. Time – v.16a**

***“Length of days is in her right hand”***

Using the analogy of one’s hands, Solomon describes how that Wisdom on the one hand brings Longevity of life

In short, Wisdom brings Quality

Quality = Excellence

Wise people will not only live longer, but Better

Because they avoid the dangers of foolish living

**B. Treasures – v.16b**

***“In her left hand riches and honour”***

Not only are your hands full with the Blessings of God

But there is a Double blessing in this hand to those who will pursue Wisdom

In this hand, we see both Prosperity (***“riches”***)

And Reputation (***“Honour”***)

This is the Quantityof Life

Wisdom brings a higher standard of living to someone

Quantity = Numeric value – **v.10**

Wisdom duly rewards those who Honor Wisdom

***“Riches and honour”*** may be rewards you will collect in heaven more than on earth though

For this world does not have the riches and honor to give that is deserving of wisdom

**C. Tranquility – v.17**

**Tranquility –** is freedom from anxiety and agitation

***“Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace”***

The beauty that comes from Wisdom displayed in one’s life is that it keeps us amiable, pleasant

We enjoy the peace that passes all understanding

**Philippians 4:7 *– “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”***

**D. Tree of Life – v.18**

***“She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her”***

On 10 occasions, ***“the tree of life”*** is found in the Bible

Here the application is clearly allegorical

The tree of life in Eden brought health and longevity

The same is true of Wisdom

It brings sweet blessings to our life

Happy or blessed are those who hold onto wisdom

Through-out their lives

Other trees bear fruit seasonably but the fruit of this tree is always in season

The fruit of other trees satisfies hunger for a little while

But the fruit of this tree brings lasting satisfaction

However, the provision is only to ***“them that lay hold upon her”***

The fruit has to be picked and held with a strong grip

Those who are happiest are those who harvest her fruit

**CONCLUSION**

One sad exception to this promise was Solomon himself

His later life was a departure from godly wisdom

He was the man who wrote over and again:

***“vanity of vanities, all is vanity”***

Because Solomon did not retain Wisdom in the latter portion of life, he faced years of emptiness and frustration

Clearly implied is that wisdom once obtained can also fly away like a bird

The retention of godly wisdom is found in **v. 1** of this chapter

***“My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments”***

**THE “BLISS”**

**THE “BEST”**

**THE “BENEFITS”**