

**Hear The Words Of The Wise**  
Proverbs 22:17-19, Easter Sunday II  
April 30, 2006

Beloved of the Lord.....There is a common view in the world today that knowledge and education will one day create a utopia in which all mankind's problems will go away. Supposedly, by the increase of knowledge, man will evolve into his highest form. This is the wisdom which the world daily preaches in one form or another. Indeed, knowledge itself has become a god in our culture, an elixir to alleviate all of man's problems. To illustrate this point, consider the popular actress Angelina Jolie, who is well known for her humanitarian efforts in Africa. Just this week in an interview on the *Today Show*, she remarked how we not only need to help the refugees of Africa, but we also need to work toward giving the children of Africa knowledge and schooling, so the suffering in Africa will end. Her belief is that through knowledge and education, Africa's problems can be alleviated.

But knowledge is no savior. Knowledge cannot solve the problems of our world today, nor can knowledge solve the poverty in Africa. Regarding the poor Jesus said, "For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always." Mt. 26:11 In one brief sentence Jesus not only tells us that there will always be poor and starving people in this world, but he also identifies Himself as the key to the real problems in this world. Spiritually speaking it is Jesus who has the power to end world hunger, for Jesus is the "Bread of Life." His knowledge is true Godly wisdom that has the power to save. If therefore we desire knowledge, it should be the knowledge that comes by way of the Scriptures and Christ Jesus. That is the true knowledge which opens the doors of heaven before us.

But let us look at another passage in order to understand what the Bible teaches about the knowledge this world offers, and the wisdom which comes through Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul writes, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." I Cor. 1 We see in these words several principles. First, not many smart or intellectual people come to the faith of the Gospel. Not many Einsteins or Rocket Scientists believe the Bible to be true, nor do they accept God's wisdom! Secondly, God confounds the wise, that is He frustrates them by the weak things of the world such as the foolishness of preaching. The Bible says, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." God chose to save the world through the preaching of His Word, the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! To this intellectually superior

world, such preaching is foolishness! "Oh you silly Christians" they say, "you are duped into believing a Bible which is filled with fairy tales!" In this way, the wise of the world despise the preaching of God's sacred Word. They cannot see Christ in the light of true faith, because their intelligence and pride hide the Gospel from them! But on the other hand, The True Church, that Invisible congregation of the world, is made up of simple folk, the common man, who humble themselves before God's Word with repentance and sorrow over sin. The Holy Scriptures are written, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

This morning therefore, let us hear the words of the wise by hearing the words of our most merciful Lord. May He help us to understand that there is a great difference between what this world holds to be wise, and what God declares to be true wisdom.

I. Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest God's Word. In our Proverb this morning, our Triune God is speaking to us in the first person saying, "Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge." God says this is MY knowledge. True wisdom comes from God and He gives this wisdom to us in the Bible. Wisdom cannot be found anywhere else, nor should we look for it anywhere else. If we want to be wise, we should "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" God's Holy Word. Of course these words are familiar to us. They are taken from *The Lutheran Hymnal*, namely the prayer that is entitled *The Collect for the Word* found on page 14 in the front of your hymnal. A few minutes after this sermon our congregation will pray this prayer. We will pray that God help us not only to hear His Word, but also read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest His Word.

But how do we do this? First, we "bow down" our ear. This means we humble ourselves before the Lord and cast out our pride. For the Gospel Word cannot penetrate the heart that is hardened in sin refusing to repent. That is why the Lord has given us His Law, His Ten Commandments, so that we see the ugliness of our own sin. We cannot hide our sin from God. Man's sins which he commits in the darkness are as open and clear to God as if they were committed in broad daylight. Neither can we run from God as Jonah did. God always knows where we are, and what we are doing. And so the Lord uses His Word in the Bible to expose our sin, to lay it bare before our eyes so that we see the nakedness of our own soul. The Bible says, "All things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him." Heb. 4:12, 13 God sees everything. Just like Adam and Eve who realized their own nakedness after falling into sin, so we realize our own nakedness in sin before the Lord. Nothing can be hid from God. Therefore brethren, let us repent of our sin and bow down before the Lord with sincere confession. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us

our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I Jn 1:9

Our Triune God does indeed cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Not only has He washed us clean through the holy waters of baptism, but He continually absolves us of all sin even today by the Holy Gospel, His Means of Grace. "With the LORD *there is* mercy, and with him *is* plenteous redemption." Ps. 130 He binds up our wounds and makes us whole, sanctifying us with own blood, removing every sin and transgression. He forgives "all thine iniquities; [He] healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies." Ps 103

Once this gift of faith is received in the heart, then we are clay for the Potter. The Bible says, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10 Where there is faith, there will also be good works. And so our Proverb says, "hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge." Hence our Lord wants us to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" His Word. Morning, noon, and night, open your Bibles for a few passages or quality study time. The greatest waste of good paper is a Bible which sits on a shelf! What a crime that is! Open your Bibles daily and let the Holy Spirit talk to you through the Living Word found there on every page. If you want advice on how to live your life, if you want to be wise for the sake of your children and loved ones, get busy and study God's precious Word! In your Bibles are the words of eternal life. True wisdom from above. God's Word can lead you and your loved ones to heaven. It can strengthen you weak and timid heart making you as bold as a lion! It can help you fight against sin. It can lift you up when you are feeling down. Let God comfort your soul. Read your Bible. "Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" His Word. Inwardly digest God's Word by receiving it in the heart of faith. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved!

## II. If you submit to God's Word, there will be blessings.

If you apply your heart unto God's word, "It is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips." Thus if we follow God's Word, there will be blessings upon us. Truly God has attached His blessings to those who keep His commandments. In Deuteronomy we see such an attachment of blessings. God says to the children of Israel, "If ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, That I will give *you* the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain." Deut. 11 Those who follow God's commands in faith will receive His blessings. Indeed our own nation today, at least compared to others, is a Christian nation. For the moment we are the most

powerful country in the world. We will continue to be so if the Lord is merciful to us. God can easily preserve any nation for the sake of the few Christians that are in it. However, if as a nation we continue down our present immoral and wayward path, great calamities may befall us. In any case let us always remember that God showers His blessings upon us through the merits of Jesus Christ. Therefore in all we do, may God alone be glorified. It is His grace which saves us and not we ourselves.

III. Wisdom from God teaches us to trust in God. Our final Proverb for this morning teaches us the ultimate purpose of God's wisdom is trust. "That thy trust may be in the LORD." God teaches us heavenly wisdom so we can TRUST in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost above all things. For what good is learning the Bible, studying His Word, if we do not learn to trust in Him above all things? Indeed "We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things." Whatever our problems may be in life, whatever turmoil we may find ourselves in, do not only take it to the Lord in prayer, but TRUST IN HIM above all things. His grace and mercy for you is immense. The Bible says, "For as the heaven is high above the earth, *so* great is his mercy toward them that fear him." Ps. 103 His mercy for you is from everlasting to everlasting.

We've all heard the expression, "Think outside the box." But what we should be doing is having the faith that God will help us out of that box. As long as we continually try in our minds to think our way out of a situation, we will continually fail. But when we put our trust in God above all things, when we LET GO AND LET GOD, then we will happily yield to the Lord and His will and everything will be OK. "All things work together for good to them that love God." God is far better equipped and able to solve our problems, than we are ourselves. Therefore if you have wisdom from the Lord, you will learn to stop trying to think your way out of your own problems, and you will gladly give your problems over to the Lord, "Casting all your cares upon Him, for He careth for you."

Therefore brethren, let us hear the words of the wise this morning by heeding the words of our Heavenly Father. Do not vainly follow after the god of knowledge which this world places before you as a savior. The knowledge of this world does not have the power to save, nor can it deliver one soul from hell. Rather seek after the wisdom and knowledge of the Lord which is contained in His Word. "Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" God's Word. For it will be a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path. Ultimately God's Word will lead you to heaven through the merits of Jesus Christ your Lord. Therefore "fear, love, and trust in God above all things." Amen.