

Friday, February 8, 2019

Wisdom

Proverbs 7-8

"Now then, my sons, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not ignore it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the LORD. But whoever fails to find me harms himself; all who hate me love death." Proverbs 8:32-36

God was very pleased with Solomon when it was wisdom that Solomon sought from the LORD. He was granted that and much more. Wisdom is to be pursued. It seems almost to be personified in these verses, and yet it is not to be considered a person. Rather, it is wisdom that allows correct choices to be made. However, it does not make the choices *for* me. Solomon discovered that as well. Yet it is wisdom that will make me wise. It is the pursuit of wisdom that will keep me on a path of righteousness. How many of the things that I do throughout the day help me pursue wisdom? How many of those things I pursue just make me more foolish? If I watch or read or ponder sinful things, it is not wise. If I choose as my entertainment things that are vile, I cannot expect to be listening to the instruction of wisdom. Instead, I am listening to the instruction of wickedness, sin, and death. Choosing not to pursue wisdom is choosing to harm myself and pull myself away from life and the favor of God. I choose to be one who is blessed by God, watching and waiting for His word and His truth to wash over my life.

Dear God, please let wisdom wash over me. Cause me to seek it with all my heart and to find my instruction there. Help me rid myself of all the detestable things that block my pursuit of wisdom. I have allowed so many other things to instruct me. Please help me forget what I learned from the wicked. Let me not find those things entertaining in my life. I seek Your blessing. Amen.

Saturday, February 9, 2019

Nourish

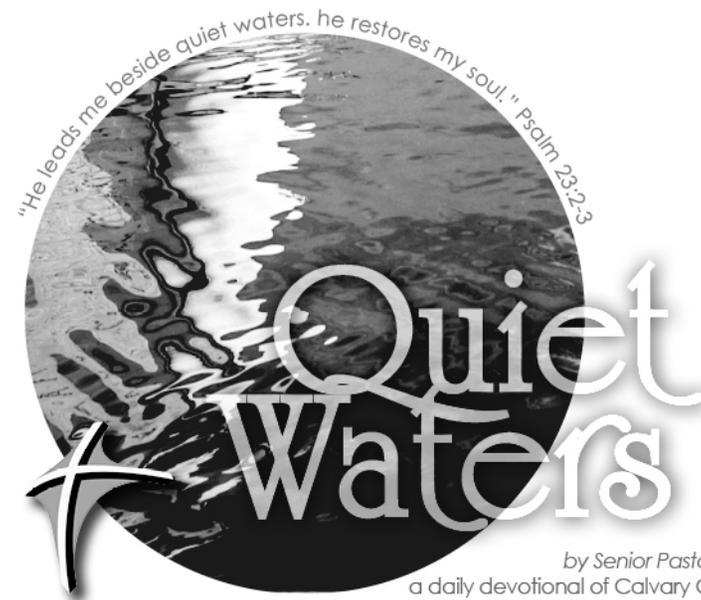
Proverbs 9-10

The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value. The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of judgment. The lips of the righteous know what is fitting, but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse. Proverbs 10:20-21,32

What are the words that comes out of my mouth? Do they nourish people? I think of Ephesians 4:29, *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.* That word "benefit" relates well to the word "nourishing." I am righteous because of Jesus in my life. I have repented of my sin—my foolishness, my wickedness—and have been forgiven and accepted as a child of God. I know the language of the wicked. I know it all too well. I used it readily for so many years. But the language of the righteous is different. It seeks to be of value to all who listen. There is no room for perverseness on the lips of the righteous. The righteous are the wise and the wicked are the fools. I choose not to use the language of fools. I choose to use the language of the righteous. I long for my words to be of value to everyone who listens because they are words that are shaped by a heart that pursues the wisdom that comes from righteousness. It is not hard to use the language of fools. It is the vernacular of this world. It takes effort and intentionality to speak the language of righteousness. I learn this language by listening to the right things.

Dear God, please change my words. Take over my tongue and my lips so that the words I speak may be of great value and may nourish others. Speak through me, please. Amen.

February 4 - 9, 2019



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, February 4, 2019

His people

Psalms 149-150

For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation. Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds.

Psalm 149:4-5

You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21b

It is so interesting to look at these two verses that speak about salvation and put them together. His people. Obviously, all people are made by God. In that regard, all people are His people. Yet, some are His people differently. Some are His people who have been crowned with salvation. Those are the ones who have seen Jesus as God come into the world to rescue us from sin. These are the children of God who have been adopted by Him into His family (John 1:12). These are the saints who rejoice in the fact that this honor has been bestowed upon them.

I have not made myself worthy of this honor. I do not deserve this honor. I am a child of God—adopted by Him—accepted by Him, chosen by Him. What a privilege! It humbles me to know that Jesus would come to save me from my sin. I rejoice in this honor. I sing for joy. I am so amazed at the outrageous love of an outrageous Father for His people.

Dear God, thank You for my salvation. May I always be humbled by Your acceptance of me as Your child. I rejoice that I am one of Your people. I sing for joy at the honor. Thank You for delighting in me. Help me always delight in You. Amen.

Tuesday, February 5, 2019

Fear, fool

Proverbs 1-2

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

Proverbs 1:7

The wise and the fool. These will be set in juxtaposition all throughout Proverbs. The verses will contain the actions of a fool set against the actions of the wise. All too often, I play the fool. Although it seems to happen less and less as I come to know God more. I come to have knowledge of God as I learn what it means to fear Him. This is a productive fear—not a paralyzing fear. It is productive in that it allows me to come near to God on His terms and, in so doing, to discover who He is. The fear of the LORD allows me to see His righteousness and His unconditional love in a way that will not take advantage of it. I begin to grasp His great, terrifying awesome power and, at the same time, reverently recognize that He has made Himself approachable on His terms. I come to know Him so that I can come near Him. I choose to place disciplines in my life that allow me to love the wisdom I find in Him. Not so the fool. The fool chooses to live as if there is no God, pleasing himself and living outside of the purpose for which he has been designed. He does not fear God because he does not know God and he despises the opportunity that wisdom would afford. The best advice for the fool is that he should begin to learn what it means to fear the LORD.

O, dear LORD, teach me to embrace the fear of the LORD. Keep me in reverent awe of You and Your magnificence, as well as the fact that You have made Yourself approachable and knowable! It is amazing to consider. Keep me from being the fool I try so hard to be. Amen.

Wednesday, February 6, 2019

Brighter

Proverbs 3-4

The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of the dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.

Proverbs 4:18-19

The path that the righteous people choose is one that becomes brighter and brighter as they journey on that path. The path of the wicked is a dark trail indeed. Darkness and light remind me of the difference between what is good and what is sin. Sin needs the darkness for a covering. Righteousness comes into the light. The deeper the sin, the greater the darkness. It gets darker and darker until the person doesn't even realize it is the sin that makes them stumble. This is the foolish person. It is a deep darkness. I know this darkness. I have felt the need for the darkness so that I could cover my sins. I know what it is to stumble. It is not a pleasant place. I have been set free from that darkness. Now I know the joy of the bright path. I know the Light. He has become Light for me and I know that as I seek the path of righteousness I am growing brighter each moment of every day. It is His Light within me. It shines as I allow myself to remain in the Light.

O LORD, I want to be in the light. I know the despair of the darkness and the bondage to sin. I know what it is to stumble and to not even know what I stumbled over. Thank You for rescuing me and bringing me into the marvelous light. I abide in You. Please allow Your Light to shine from me and through me as a beacon of hope for those trapped in wickedness and darkness. Amen.

Thursday, February 7, 2019

Detestable

Proverbs 5-6

There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.

Proverbs 6:16-19

The numeric ladder that parallels six things to seven allows me to see that this list is not meant to be exhaustive. Rather it is an example of the attitudes that are detestable to the LORD. I have come to know that the opposite of these attitudes, character traits, and behaviors are those in which God delights. The list starts with proud eyes, Truthfully, it is pride that puts me in such direct opposition to my Father. This list allows me an opportunity to see where I am. It is good to reconsider this list. Am I one who stirs up dissension or loves peace? Am I humble or proud? Am I honest in how I recount stories and situations or do I bear false witness (even if it is telling the story with a bias)? My heart is desperately wicked, but do I allow God to have my heart so that it can become a soft heart that seeks the best in and for others? Am I quick to sin or do I have healthy boundaries that make me careful of how I live? Am I quick to lie or is my voice filled with truth? Do I exaggerate? I love my Lord. The last thing I want is to be doing things that are detestable to Him. I do not want Him to feel sickened by the sin in my life. I want to live blameless before my God whom I love.

Dear God, come to my aid. I do not want to have any part of these detestable things. Please work in my life to have them become as detestable to me as they are to You. Father, You know the areas that are my greatest challenge. I turn to You, O my Strength. Amen.