

Sermon Series: "Facing Life's Problems with God's Hope"—Lord of Life, Westfield, IN—1/2/2005

Title: "Wisdom: An Essential in Handling Problems"

Text: Proverbs 1: 1-7, 20-32

Intro.: *Ills.: A Whole New Perspective on Problems*

Theme: Approaching life's problems through God's perspective, promise, and power will give us the wisdom to not only survive the crises but to grow through them as well.

*God's perspective on our problems*

- Becoming a believing Christian will not solve all your problems but connects you to the One who can
  1. Your problems are a result of a sin-broken world
    1. *This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives. Afterwards they go to the dead. Eccles. 9:3*
  2. Your problems are not unique to you
    1. *There isn't any temptation that you have experienced which is unusual for humans. God, who faithfully keeps his promises, will not allow you to be tempted beyond your power to resist. But when you are tempted, he will also give you the ability to endure the temptation as your way of escape. 1 Cor. 10: 13*
  3. God has redeemed not only your life but will also redeem your problems
    1. *"My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." 2 Cor. 12: 9*
    2. **Ills.: Waiting for final redemption**
    3. *And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. Rom 8: 23*
- Reading the Bible will not give you ready-made steps to undo your problems but principles for dealing with them
  4. The Bible does speak to far more issues than we think and fail to seek guidance but is silent on many others
    1. Counsel on money management; avoiding dead end relationship; dealing with employer persecution; handling death
    2. No definitive word on surviving sexual abuse; terrorism's purpose; why babies die; destructive natural disasters
    3. Yet, real life stories of God's people and their application to many if not most of what we daily experience
  5. Mining from Scripture God's promises, which are not negated by your problems
    1. **A current promise** *Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom8:39*
    2. **A future deliverance** – *And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."Rev.21:4*
    3. **A lasting security deposit** – *For as many as are the promises of God, in Christ they are yes 2 Cor 1: 20*

*God's wisdom for the problem times of your life (Proverbs 1)*

- Receiving wisdom must be ongoing to handle life's ongoing problems (**Print Proverbs 1: 1-6**)
  1. **Ills.: Trying to use an owner's manual in the dark, in the rain, on a lonely highway**
  2. *Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Mat 7: 24-25*
  3. Making sense out of life's problems comes from constantly looking at life from God's viewpoint (discernment – v. 2)
  4. Making wise choices leading to beneficial results comes from a disciplined approach to God's will (prudent life – v.3)

5. Making up your mind that you are never too old (too young, either) to learn from God's Word (vs. 4-6)
- Wisdom is available (**Print Proverbs 1: 20-23**)
  6. God and his wisdom are always seeking us out (vss. 20-21)
  7. God's wisdom is revealed not acquired (vs. 22-23)--"*pour out his spirit*" and "*make his words known to us*" (vs. 23)
    1. **Ills.: Child-like faith —not! (Display cartoon)**
- Wisdom can be spurned (**Print Proverbs 1: 24-32**)
  8. When we don't humble ourselves *to listen* to God's invitation, counsel, reproof (vss. 24-25)
  9. We shut down our access of prayer to God's storehouse through Christ
    1. When there is no respect (fear) of God (vs. 29), there will be no respect back from him in our calamity (26-27)
    2. Prayer's will go unanswered because we are not going through Christ (vs. 28)
  10. Compounding trouble's calamity when it arise and the consequences of our reactions to it (vs.31,32)
- Wisdom begins with a relationship (**Print Proverbs 1: 7, 33**)
  11. Developing a healthy respect for God's holiness, power, and grace (*fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*)
  12. Listening for God brings a peace-filled life despite the storms swirling around you (*live securely . . .be at ease*)

## A Whole New Perspective on Life's Problems

A man stopped to watch a Little League baseball game. He asked one of the youngsters what the score was. "We're losing 18-0," was the answer.

"Well," said the man. "I must say you don't look discouraged."

"Discouraged?" the boy said, puzzled. "Why should we be discouraged? We haven't come to bat yet." *Citation: Stan Toler, God Has Never Failed Me, but He's Sure Scared Me to Death a Few Times (Honor Books, 1995)*

## Waiting for Final Redemption

Two days have earned names on the church calendar: Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Yet in a real sense we live on Saturday, the day with no name. What the disciples experienced in small scale—three days in grief over one man who had died on a cross—we now live through on cosmic scale. Human history grinds on, between the time of promise and fulfillment. Can we trust that God can make something holy and beautiful and good out of a world that includes Bosnia and Rwanda and inner-city ghettos and jammed prisons in the richest nation on earth? It's Saturday on planet earth. Will Sunday ever come? That dark, Golgothan Friday can only be called Good because of what happened on Easter Sunday, a day which gives a tantalizing clue to the riddle of the universe. Easter opened up a crack in a universe winding down toward entropy and decay, sealing the promise that someday God will enlarge the miracle of Easter to cosmic scale. It is a good thing to remember that in the cosmic drama, we live out our days on Saturday, the in-between day with no name. I know a woman whose grandmother lies buried under 150 year old live oak trees in the cemetery of an Episcopal church in rural Louisiana. In accordance with the grandmother's instructions, only one word is carved on the tombstone: "Waiting." Though Jesus cast a vision for a better kingdom now and in the future, as long as it is Saturday, the fulfillment of that vision still awaits until Sunday dawns. *Citation: Philip Yancey, The Jesus I Never Knew (Zondervan, 1995)*

## Child-like faith—not!



"I'm attempting to work this into my belief system."

## Proverbs 1:1-33

The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: <sup>2</sup>To know wisdom and instruction, to discern the sayings of understanding, <sup>3</sup>To receive instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice and equity; <sup>4</sup>To give prudence to the naive, to the youth knowledge and discretion, <sup>5</sup>A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel, <sup>6</sup>To understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles.

<sup>20</sup>Wisdom shouts in the street, She lifts her voice in the square; <sup>21</sup>At the head of the noisy *streets* she cries out; at the entrance of the gates in the city she utters her sayings: <sup>22</sup>"How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing and fools hate knowledge? <sup>23</sup>"Turn to my reproof, Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you.

<sup>24</sup>"Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention; <sup>25</sup>And you neglected all my counsel and did not want my reproof; <sup>26</sup>I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, <sup>27</sup>When your dread comes like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. <sup>28</sup>"Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently but they will not find me, <sup>29</sup>Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD. <sup>30</sup>"They would not accept my counsel; They spurned all my reproof. <sup>31</sup>"So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way and be satiated with their own devices. <sup>32</sup>"For the waywardness of the naive will kill them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them.

<sup>7</sup>The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction. . . <sup>33</sup>"But he who listens to me shall live securely and will be at ease from the dread of evil." [NASB]