

Proverbs 3, 13 through 35.

Good morning, church family.

Blessed is the one who finds wisdom and the one who gets understanding.

For the gain from her is better than gain from silver.

and her profit better than gold.

She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her.

Long life is in her right hand.

In her left hand are riches and honor.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her.

Those who hold her fast are called blessed.

The Lord by wisdom founded the earth.

By understanding, he established the heavens.

By his knowledge, the deeps broke open and the clouds dropped down the dew.

My son, do not lose sight of these.

Keep sound wisdom and discretion, and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck.

Then you will walk on your way securely, and your foot will not stumble.

If you lie down, you will not be afraid.

When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

Do not be afraid of sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked when it comes.

For the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your feet from being cut.

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in your power to do it.

Do not say to your neighbor, go and come again.

Tomorrow I will give it when you have it with you.

Do not plan evil against your neighbor who dwells trustingly beside you.

Do not contend with a man for no reason when he has done you no harm.

Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways, for the devious person is an abomination to the Lord, but the upright are in his confidence."

The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous.

Towards the scornors he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor.

The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace.

Thank you, Kathy.

Before we jump into the passage this morning, I just want to lift up VBS one more time in prayer.

Really appreciate Liz heading up VBS and Barb overseeing CE and coming alongside her and a number of other ladies that I'm not going to try to name this morning.

Also really appreciate Susan heading up decorations.

I know that's always a big

a big task and kind of like herding cats, trying to get all of the material in and everything made in time and all that stuff.

And Susan just, this is the second year I think she's been doing it and she's done a great job.

Really appreciate her putting in some extra hours and serving our kids.

I think that we want to reach kids with the gospel.

We want to reach into the community and help share the gospel with kids in the community.

That's definitely one of our

our major concerns with VBS and one of our major aims.

But also, I think one of our major aims with VBS, you know, Jesus said when he was here that whoever receives one of these little ones in my name receives me, right?

And I think that how we care for the next generation and how we care for those who have nothing to offer us by way of, you know, as an organization,

matters, matters a lot.

And I think we'll talk about that a little bit today out of this passage.

But how we serve our kids and how we demonstrate Christ's love to our kids matters not just for our kids, but it matters for us, right?

Our hearts and our growth in walking with the Lord and knowing him because they mattered to him, right?

They mattered to him immensely.

it would be a scary place to be to slip in to that mindset and that position that the disciples were in and neglecting the kids and even keeping them from Jesus, right?

So VBS is an important part of our church life.

I think it's important again for the stuff that we're aiming at, but there's other things going on that the Lord's doing as we serve our kids and the kids of our community that are tremendously important as well.

So let's just lift up VBS today before we jump into the sermon.

Heavenly Father, we do ask that you would give us your heart for those around us, especially for those that are vulnerable and don't come with a lot to offer us in return for our service to them.

Lord, we ask that you would just give us a heart for other people.

Lord, would you give us your eyes and your heart for others?

Lord, we do ask that many of these kids would grow in their walk with you and their knowledge of you and their love for you this week as a result of the lessons and the songs.

But more importantly, Lord, we ask that you would...

reach in and work through the service of your people or that you would work in our hearts as we serve and that you would work in the kids' hearts as they're served and that you would, uh, just make your grace and your love known to, to all of us.

Uh, Lord, we pray for a smooth week and pray for a week without distractions.

Um, or we ask that the details would continue to come together and that we would work hard in, in serving these kids.

Um, but Lord, um,

Most of all, we just ask that your presence through your Holy Spirit that's indwelling us as we serve would be felt and known and that these kids would just feel loved and they would feel your hands and your feet of your body, Lord, just caring for them and reaching out to them.

Lord, as we open your word today, I ask for your help as I unpack

what you've given to us here in Proverbs.

And Lord, I ask for your help for those who are hearing to listen attentively and to not only be hearers of the word, but doers as well.

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

There's an ancient curse.

I always attributed it to being a Chinese curse, but apparently that's not the case.

We have no idea where it came from.

It may not even really be ancient.

I'm just using the word ancient this morning because it sounds good.

Might just be a saying that has been around for a little while.

But it goes something like this.

May you get exactly what you wish for.

May you get exactly what you wish for.

You know, we're all aware that our desires are more often than not out of whack and misplaced.

We talked about that in a little more detail than I'm going to talk about it today.

Last week, we looked at

how some of our desires need wisdom to help guide and prioritize them.

And yet, knowing this, we know our desires are out of whack in this place.

And yet, even though we know this, when was the last time that we've slowed down to evaluate what it is that we're chasing, that we're pursuing on a day-to-day basis?

I'm not talking about what we think we're pursuing or what we tell ourselves that we're valuing and prioritizing.

I mean really considering what we're actually chasing and pursuing on a daily basis.

When was the last time you sat down quietly and considered the last week, just the last seven days, and really thought about how you spent your time, how you spent your money,

really thought about what occupied your thoughts and what your hope was throughout the week, like what were you looking forward to to get you through that week?

When was the last time you just sat down and took stock of your life in that way?

What were you valuing?

What were you looking to most and pursuing?

If it's been a while or if you've never spent time doing that sort of reflection or reflecting on your life in that way,

I would just like to challenge you that this morning, this passage is for you.

So listen up, right?

Listen and hear what God is saying through this passage.

I know it was definitely for me as I was reading this passage and reflecting on it.

I needed to hear it and I trust that you need to hear it this morning as well.

Solomon in this passage is telling us that wisdom, which is the most distilled,

personified in the person of Jesus, so wisdom being concentrated in the person and work of Jesus, has to be at the top of the list of the things that we're pursuing.

It has to be at the top of the list of the things that we are looking to get, that we have to be actively engaging

intentionally pursuing Christ and the wisdom that he embodies above all else.

And he puts it this way in our passage in particular.

He tells us that we need to see the value of wisdom, but also we need to have kind of a sense of what it looks like when wisdom is valued, right?

So he's going to tell us why we ought to value wisdom and prioritize it highly.

And he also gives us a few things to diagnose our life with or to take stock of our life to see if we're actually valuing wisdom.

He tells us what it looks like when wisdom is valued.

I also just want to point out, this is not in the notes, but I'm just going to give it to you briefly as I was reflecting on it this morning as well.

I think a lot of times when we think about values, priorities,

Like, what do I need in my life to be more spiritual?

What do I need in my relationships for my relationships to be more healthy?

I think we gravitate first to like the heart, right?

We gravitate first to, I need to get a clearer feeling, a deeper feeling of love.

God's love for me or I need to address you know how I'm feeling first and then all these other things will like fall into place when actually throughout the book of Proverbs we see Solomon getting at the heart through the head right that he gets he gets at how we're feeling and what we're um prioritizing with our will through what we know to be true right and what what uh

we see to be true around us as well.

So that's a freebie.

Jot that down.

Meditate on that a little bit in light of what we're sharing this morning as well.

We're just going to break this down.

Wisdom's value and then wisdom valued.

This address, so we had one address at the beginning of chapter three.

We got a second address here at the end of chapter three.

This address, remember there's nine addresses that make up the intro of Proverbs.

This address is made up of four poems.

These poems were written elsewhere for another purpose and Solomon brings them together and compiles them in the order that they're in to communicate something to us.

So he's taken four poems from another source, putting them together in one address to communicate something about wisdom.

So in the first three poems that are squished together, we see wisdom's value.

He's communicating how valuable wisdom is.

In the first poem, he communicates wisdom's value to man or mankind, like people in general.

Look at verses 13 to 18.

Blessed is the one who finds wisdom,

This poem begins and ends with a pronouncement of blessing.

Blessing is really important.

Being blessed is to have God's favor.

It's to know that God is for you, that he's working for you on your behalf, that he's doing good stuff for you, that he's not destroying you.

It's where you wanna be, right?

Being blessed is like the ideal state.

That's where you wanna be living.

You wanna be living blessed.

not cursed.

So to find and get wisdom here, right?

So the one who's blessed is the one who's finding and getting wisdom.

And finding and getting wisdom here is to not, it's not to stumble upon it haphazardly.

It's not like, oh, I found some wisdom as I was walking through my day, right?

It involves pursuing and earnestly searching for wisdom and understanding.

There's an intentionality and there's an effort into finding and getting wisdom here.

You can really feel this in verse 15, can't you?

He says, and nothing you desire can compare with her, right?

Look for wisdom, search for wisdom.

Nothing you desire can compare with her.

We need to just let that sink in for a second.

Nothing you desire that you're pursuing can compare with wisdom, right?

whatever you think you want, whatever you think is going to bring you happiness, satisfaction, relief, comfort, Solomon says you don't really want that.

What you really want is wisdom, right?

Those desires, those cravings, those things that are driving this pursuit, they're not ultimately fulfilled in that thing that you think is gonna fulfill them.

They're ultimately fulfilled in wisdom.

And one of the reasons I think that this is true, right?

Solomon, richest guy.

why is this guy in the world ought to be able to know and tell us why this is or whatever.

But one of the reasons I think this is true is that without wisdom, you can't really enjoy the things that you're pursuing.

Without wisdom, you can't really enjoy the good things of life in their proper place.

In other words, you could get all you want, but if you don't have wisdom, you won't be able to or know how to enjoy those things.

We've seen this, and you've seen it, right?

Folks that have everything, they've got everything in the world, access to everything in the world, but are still miserable and dissatisfied.

They got it all, but they got it all at the expense and neglect of wisdom.

It's like, is the stuff not good?

Is all that stuff that you've accumulated, is it not good now for some reason?

Or did you not get all that you wanted?

Ray Ortlund puts it this way.

Wisdom is skill at living life well.

Money is not.

Money can put food on the table, but wisdom puts laughter around the table.

Money can buy a house, but wisdom makes it a home.

Money can buy a woman jewelry, but wisdom wins her heart.

All the ways of wisdom are pleasantness.

You cannot say that about money.

So that's one reason.

Wisdom allows us, gives us the ability, shows us how to enjoy the things that we're actually pursuing, the things that we think will bring us satisfaction.

Wisdom shows us how to enjoy those things.

But that's not the reason that Solomon gives explicitly here.

He says in verse 14 that the profit from wisdom is better than money.

So the reason that Solomon gives here explicitly in this chapter is that what you get from wisdom is better than what you get from money.

What you gain from wisdom is better than what you gain from money or anything that money can buy.

So what kind of gain, so this is a really important question here, if wisdom can bring me better stuff than money, than even money, then what does wisdom bring me?

Like what does the prophet bring?

that comes from gaining wisdom or getting wisdom.

He says it in 16, right?

Verses 16 and 17.

Long life is in her right hand.

In her left hand are riches and honor.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace.

So pursuing money and a career in financial stability often gets in the way of pursuing wisdom, right?

We just, I've got a one-track mind.



I got this goal, I want to obtain this thing, this material thing,

I wanna get, or this certain status and amount of security.

And I'm going after that at the expense of gaining wisdom.

We'll talk about wisdom in a second, like this relational knowledge and knowledge of the world around us.

And yet, again, Solomon, wisest guy ever, one of the richest, is telling us plainly that if you get wisdom, it's gonna be better, right?

If you pursue wisdom, you'll have all the money that you need

And you also have so much more.

It's tempting, I think as parents especially, to zero in on making sure that our kids get a good job, that they achieve financial stability.

But I would encourage you from this passage to not overemphasize that.

Emphasize wisdom and the pursuit of God, harp on that and the money will follow.

Do you notice in verse 16, in verse 16, he counts riches and money as one of the things that are in wisdom's right hand, right?

So Solomon's saying, if you really want riches, get wisdom, pursue wisdom, pursue God and how he created the world and that stuff will follow.

You'll have all that you should have, right?

You'll have all of the wealth and stuff

that you should have.

So parents, encourage your kids to pursue God and to pursue his wisdom.

Entrust them to him, right?

He's a much better provider than you are for them.

Encourage them to go after him and he will provide all that they need, not just financially, but spiritually and personally as well.

All right, so, oh yeah, one more thing before we move on.

Almost moving on too quick.

Solomon tells us exactly what he means by long life, right?

He refers to the tree of life here, which is not just a Genesis reference.

It's a reference to kind of all Eastern religions.

They have like a tree of life that indicates eternal life or life for forever.

And we know, right?

We know through the wisdom of the cross and the good news of the gospel, the precise path to that eternal life and how it was won on our behalf, right?

The wisdom of the cross is,

is what brings us the good news of the gospel.

So wisdom is supremely valuable to mankind in general, right?

It's how we get right with God.

And it's what makes us like God and his character.

So, and it profits, as Solomon says here, more than gold, more than jewels,  
brings us to life, even eternal life.

But wisdom isn't just, oh, sorry, one too far.

Wisdom isn't just valuable to mankind.

Solomon goes so far as to say that wisdom is valuable to God.

Look at verses 19 to 20.

The Lord by wisdom founded the earth.

By understanding, he established the heavens.

By his knowledge, the deeps broke open and the clouds dropped down  
to do.

Wisdom is what God used to create the heavens and the earth.

But not only that, not only was she there, was wisdom there as a tool and a blueprint of sorts for creation, but she's also there guiding God's providence and in his hand,  
making the world run on a day-to-day basis.

She's actively involved in the providential work of God on a daily basis.

Verse 20 says, That's present tense.

That means God's wisdom is active on a regular basis, even in the rain and in the dew.

John Piper helps us meditate just on this concept a little bit in an address he gave at a Thanksgiving service.

He says this,

Picture yourself as a farmer in the Near East, far from any lake or stream.

A few wells keep the family and animals supplied with water.

But if the crops are to grow and the family is to be fed from month to month, water has to come on the fields from another source.

From where?

Well, the sky.

The sky?

Water will come out of the clear blue sky?

Well, not exactly.

Water will have to be carried in the sky from the Mediterranean Sea, over several hundred miles, and then be poured out from the sky onto the fields.

Carried?

How much does it weigh?

Well, if one inch of rain falls on a square mile of farmland during the night, that would be 27,878,400 cubic feet of water, which is 206,300,160 gallons, which is 1,650,501,280 pounds of water.

That's heavy.

So how does it get up in the sky and stay up there if it's so heavy?

Well, it gets up there by evaporation.

Really?

That's a nice word.

What's it mean?

It means the water sort of stops being water for a while so it can go up and not down.

Oh, I see.

Then how does it get down?

Well, condensation happens.

What's that?

The water starts becoming water again by gathering around little dust particles between 0.00001 and 0.00001 centimeters wide.

That's small.

Well, what about the salt?

Salt?

Yes, the Mediterranean Sea is salt water.

That would kill the crops.

What about the salt?

Well, the salt has to be taken out.

Oh, so the sky picks up a billion pounds of water from the sea and takes out the salt and then carries it for 300 miles and then dumps it on the farm.

Well, it doesn't dump it.

If it dumped a billion pounds of water on the farm, the wheat would be crushed.

So the sky dribbles the billion pounds of water down in little drops.

And I mean, we could go on and on, right?

Describing rain.

It's...

The point is clear, right?

If you just take some time to look around you, at the world around you, and consider the awesome nature of God's creation, that's his wisdom, right?

That's his wisdom.

He invented that.

He came up with that idea.

We think we're great because we can explain it, right?

Because we came up with words like evaporation and condensation.

And we're like, oh, look at us.

We understand how the world works.

He invented how the world works.

He thought up those concepts and makes them tick on a daily basis.

Natural laws are laws because God upholds them and he makes them regular and happen according to those laws.

This is God's wisdom at work.

And if we want to live, if we want to live in tune with the world around us, we've got to live in light of God's wisdom, right?

We've got to live in light of how he's made it and with the grain of how he's created things.

All right, but wisdom isn't just valuable for mankind and for God.

Solomon gives us one more and a third poem here.

And he shows us that God's wisdom is valuable to the son or to his people.

All right, to believers in 21 to 26.

He says, my son, do not lose sight of these.

Keep sound wisdom and discretion and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck.

Then you will walk on your way securely and your foot will not stumble.

If you lie down, you will not be afraid.

When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

Do not be afraid of sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked when it comes for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught.

Wisdom provides security to God's people.

It provides security first and foremost from ourselves because wisdom keeps us from doing stupid and foolish things, right?

I'm my own worst enemy at times.

I see this in my son.

I love him, but he's still learning how the world works, right?

I say the safest place for Jude, well, the safest place for

things around Jude is the woods, right?

Just turn them loose because he learns a lot of life lessons really quick out in the woods, right?

It's kind of what a man can do and what a man can't do out in the woods.

And those are lessons he needs to learn.

We're all kind of like that, right?

Not just in the, you know, figuring out how the world works around us, but also relationally and how we interact with one another.

So

God keeps us from doing stupid and foolish things.

He protects us from ourselves.

But also, he...

is with the wise, right?

He's there with the wise.

Verse 26 is a beautiful verse.

He says, for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught.

Another way to translate be your confidence there is that he's at your side, like literally, and I think they've translated it this way because there's a lot of body parts in this passage.

He's at your hip, right?

He's right there at your side.

Paul says in 2 Timothy 4, 16 to 17, at my first offense, no one came to stand by me,

but all deserted me, may not be charged against them, but the Lord stood by me and strengthened me.

Paul gives testimony to the Lord standing by him, giving him strength through his word and in the calling that he had given Paul to fulfill.

So God stands with the wise through present danger and difficulty, but he also stands with the wise through final judgment.

Verse 25, he says, do not be afraid of sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked when it comes.

The ruin of the wicked will come if not in this life

then certainly in the next.

And the wise don't need to fear.

The Lord will keep us.

And we know even at great expense to himself, he will keep us, right?

To get the loss and the sacrifice of his only son.

So these first three poems, they help us to see wisdom's value.

But the last poem shows us what it looks like when wisdom is valued.

Wisdom isn't cultivated on your own.

Wisdom is a relational thing.

It's lived out together.

It's lived out in community.

It bears fruit in community.

And it's teased out and it's clarified when we rub shoulders with one another.

Listen, we wanna be a church that fosters life, even eternal life, and that it is in tune with God's word.

We wanna be a church that's a safe and secure place for God's people.

In essence, we want all of the things

that we just saw that were valuable about wisdom.

I mean, I want to be a part of a church like that.

And what will that look like?

Like, how do we diagnose that?

How do we know if we're valuing wisdom properly and if that's manifesting itself like it's supposed to be among us?

What do we need to look for to evaluate if we're that kind of church, if you and I are those kind of people?

So basically, Solomon's given us a heart check here.

He's saying, hey, this is what it looks like when wisdom is valued.

Is this you, right?

Is this you?

First thing he says in verses 27 to 28 is that when wisdom is valued, you help your needy neighbor.

Look at verses 27 to 28.

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in your power to do it.

Do not say to your neighbor, go and come again.

Tomorrow I will give it when you have it with you.

The first line of verse 27 is a euphemism for giving to the needy.

Literally, it reads, do not withhold good from those to whom it belongs.

The point is that you are morally obligated to help when you can.

This does not mean that those who are in need have a right to demand your time or stuff.

The Old Testament never allows for that, nor does the New Testament.

They don't have the right to come into your house and just start taking your stuff and demanding your stuff.

But it does mean that you're obligated to give it, that you are morally obligated to give it.

Both commands in the Old Testament are true.

Thou shalt not steal and do not withhold, right?

Both are equally true commands in the Old Testament.

Do not withhold doing good, acts of service.

Do not withhold giving money and stuff away.

So let me just ask,

Have you known to do good recently and chosen not to do it?

Have you withheld something good that the Holy Spirit was prompting you to do or to give to another person?

If so,

You may not be valuing wisdom and you may not be pursuing God as much as you think they are.

Remember, these are diagnostic questions.

I'm not saying giving stuff away is equal with pursuing God and wisdom.

I'm just saying if you're not bearing that fruit, then there might be a problem.

So first, help your needy neighbor.

Second, when wisdom's valued, you protect your peaceful neighbor.

Look at verses 29 to 30.

Do not plan evil against your neighbor who dwells trustingly beside you.

Do not contend with a man for no reason when he has done you no harm.



Solomon here is talking about both taking advantage of an unsuspecting friend or neighbor, but he's also talking about

and kind of an ongoing desire to see people fail and crash and burn.

You hate to see people succeed.

You love to see people fail and crash and burn.

The planning evil kind of has a sense of that you're looking to gain from them at their expense.

You're looking to use them to advance yourself.

And there's a lot of little ways we do this.

And they all kind of begin with this attitude toward others of like, what can I get from this relationship?

Like, what does that person deserve?

have to offer me.

So you walk into a party or a gathering and you're looking around for the people that you can get something from.

And you may not even be doing this consciously.

You might just naturally gravitate to those who have something to offer you or who can move you ahead in your social standing,

who maybe can reciprocate some good or service.

You like to do this, they like to do that.

They've got the duck hunting equipment, you've got the great deer spot, so you just get to know each other and everything's gravy, right?

So it shows up in those little ways, it begins there.

But verse 30 has a sense also of a critical spirit that's always finding fault, especially in

I shouldn't say especially, I think it goes both ways.

At first I said especially when you're not in charge, you know, like no harm's been done here, but you wouldn't do it that way, so I'm going to take issue with that.

I think you can also do it when you're in charge, right?

You see, you start nitpicking the people that are underneath you, you know, like actually they're getting the job done fine, but I wouldn't do it that way and it really bugs me, so I'm going to start finding fault and create an issue where there was no issue, right?

So you kind of get this adversarial spirit where you're just kind of always criticizing and going after, even when there's already peace, right?

When there's peace and you got to go and make a critical remark and stir things up.

So I guess how I would...

help you diagnose this and help me diagnose this, is are you looking to protect people and their reputations, right?

When you're in a relationship, whether it be a work relationship or a relationship here at church or a family relationship, are you looking to protect people and their reputations, assuming the best, right?

Love assumes all things, assuming the best.

Or are you critically looking to advance and benefit yourself in relationships?

Now, again, you could just sit here and you could say,

No, I don't do that, right?

I never do that.

But go home and look at the last week, right?

The objective things that you said and did last week.

I would venture to guess that in these two categories so far, that we've come up short, right?

That we've come up short in both of these categories.

Last one is where wisdom is valued, that we are to discourage

our violent neighbors, or where wisdom is valued generally, we discourage our violent neighbors.

Look at verses 31 to 35.

"Do not envy a man of violence "and do not choose any of his ways.

"For the devious person is an abomination to the Lord, "but the upright are in his confidence.

"The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, "but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous.

"Toward the scorners he is scornful, "but to the humble he gives favor.

"The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace."

How, we don't have time to pick apart these verses.

Let me just ask you though, how are you defining success?

What impresses you?

Like what turns your head?

How you read verse 35 says everything about you spiritually.

The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace.

Who's being honored in your eyes?

Who are the wise?

Who are you considering to be wise?

Who do you really think gets honor?

But fools get disgrace.

Who's disgraced in your eyes?

Who are you really considering to be the fools?

How are we gonna define success as a church?

What impresses us as a church?

I mean, if we could personalize this too, like when you're considering churches, what impresses you about a church or how do you talk about a successful church or an unsuccessful church?

Is it slick and entertaining services?

Is it impressive facilities?

Is it big crowds?

Is it management structures that rival corporate businesses?

Is it a large social media footprint?

Is it good looking and engaging leadership?

At least we got one of those, right?

None of those things are bad things.

None of those things are necessarily evil.

But what impresses you?

Like what turns your head about a local iteration of God's people?

We need to be moved and impressed when good is not withheld from the needy.

We need to be moved and impressed when people and their reputations are protected and cared for.

We need to be moved and impressed when a church values wisdom more than money and stuff that go along with the body.

We need to be impressed when a church lives in tune with the way that God has ordered his world.

We need to be impressed when a church believes

is truly a safe place for his people to confess sin and to reveal who they really are as they are growing with the Lord, as he changes them from one degree of glory to the next.

That's the kind of community we want to be, a community that knows and experiences the true value of wisdom.

And it starts with you and me.

We can talk, you and I can talk and complain about the big picture and us together

but it starts with you and me correctly valuing and living in light of those values, wisdom, and the Lord.

We see that wisdom again in God's eternal plan for us, condensed and culminating in the cross.

And I'm just pleading with you as your pastor this morning to take some time to really evaluate and take stock of your life.

Like I said,

We can go out of here and just be thinking big categories, broad categories, and assuming we're all doing okay.

But if you and I go out of here and really look at what we did this last week, this last month, this last year, what we did, what we said, I think that we'll be a little more convicted about what we find in this passage and where we're at in our pursuit

What are you valuing?

What are you pursuing?

Listen, nothing, here's the promise.

It's a promise and a command.

Nothing you desire can compare with her or with him.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, so many things glitter and sparkle and vie for our attention.

Or would you help us to see

and to know and to value you and your wisdom above all else.

And Lord, would that manifest itself in our life with real fruit, fruit of pursuing through reading and prayer and fellowship with your people and fruit of living wisely in community with one another.

caring for one another, living wisely in your world, caring for it.

Lord, we know that one day we'll be like that with you forever, but we want more of it now for your glory and our good.

We pray all this in Jesus' name, amen.

We're gonna sing one more song, so would you stand with us, please?