

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

04.14.2023 | The Blessing of Wisdom | Proverbs 3:13-35 | Ben Day, Senior Pastor

If you have a Bible with you, I want to invite you to turn with me to Proverbs chapter 12. Like we've done the last few weeks, we're going to be jumping around Proverbs a good bit, reading from different chapters and verses of Proverbs. What we're doing in the book of Proverbs is we spent the first few weeks of this study considering kind of the foundation that Proverbs has of the way to approach wisdom, the way to approach a wise life. And then the month of May, we really looked at different areas of life that Proverbs has wisdom for, particularly in different relationships and interpersonal connections. Then there is, as we move into June, we see that there is also wisdom for really more personally, not just in our relationships, but how does Proverbs affect each one of us? How does it speak wisdom for ourselves? And so today, as we kind of begin this new focus within the book, we are considering the wisdom that Proverbs offers for our emotions.

I was telling my wife this week, taking these different areas of life in Proverbs, we're entering into some interesting topics at times, but I told her, as much as we've entered into different and difficult topics, maybe throughout the series, I may be most nervous about preaching on emotions. Anytime I take a personality test, I find myself to be more of a thinker than a feeler. I don't know if anybody else can relate to that. I'm married to probably more of a feeler. I find myself sometimes probably being, it might be difficult at times to speak or relate to people about emotions. I was just thinking as I was preparing this week, I probably should have pushed the sermon back a couple of weeks to at least inside out two was out, and then I could at least reference that and what it teaches us about the more complex emotions. You're not laughing, you may not have kids. Inside out, the first one, I thought was really great for thinking about emotions, processing seasons of life. I'm looking forward to the second one, but the Proverbs has, I think, wisdom for really the inner self.

Proverbs has a lot of wisdom for the ways that we act and behave, but Proverbs also speaks to the inner person, speaks a lot about the heart, as we'll see today, and a lot of that, I think, speaks to our emotions. And so I want to read from different Proverbs that you'll see up on the screen, and you can follow along, starting in Proverbs chapter 12, starting in verse 25. Solomon says, "Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad." You go over a couple of chapters to chapter 14, verse 29. It says, "Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly." The next chapter, chapter 15, verse 30, "See that the light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and good news refreshes the bones." Go all the way to chapter 24, Proverbs 24 verses 19 and 20. "Fret not yourself because of evildoers. Be not envious of the wicked, for the evil man has no future. The lamp of the wicked will be put out." Chapter 27 verse 4, "Rath is cruel, anger is overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?" Just a little bit later in that chapter, chapter 27 verse 19, "As in water, face reflects faith, so the heart of man reflects the man." And then chapter 29 verse 22, "A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression."

What I'd like to do is to kind of put these together as we are trying to get a picture of what Proverbs has, wisdom for our emotions, and see how it speaks to the way that we are to live in a way that is wise and that honors God. My wife teaches at a Christian school, it's the same school that our boys go to, and the school has what they call the heart of their school. Heart is an acronym. It stands for healthy bodies, engaged minds, appropriate emotions, relational focus, and transformed lives. They use this acronym of heart to try to kind of give a focus to what do they wanna see in their students? Not just merely maybe imparting information, but seeing healthy bodies, engaged minds, appropriate emotions, relational focus, and transformed lives. Now I found this acronym to be pretty helpful in speaking to our kids about what they're learning at school and the ways that they should be growing, particularly like this middle one of appropriate emotions. There are times, I don't know if you've ever been around kids, but there'd be times when I think that my kids have what I might call inappropriate emotions. There are times when our kids seem to overreact to a situation that maybe we put the ketchup in the wrong part of the plate, and now it's too close to a particular item of food that it should not be touching, and there is this reaction that comes. And sometimes my wife and I will tell them, listen, these are inappropriate emotions. This is an overreaction. What is happening in this circumstance is not warranting this type of response that you are giving us right now. Now you might not agree with our parenting style of telling our kids they have inappropriate emotions. That's fine, we don't always agree with ourselves.

But I do think that Proverbs has something to say about appropriate emotions. I do think that Proverbs is actually guiding us to what we might call appropriate emotions. One thing I want to make clear is I don't think Proverbs or the rest of the Bible is doing is calling us to suppress or push down or ignore our emotions. I think it's important to make clear, because I think at times in the Christian faith and the church, there has been this communication at times that emotions or feelings are somewhat inferior or invalid, that the best Christian is one who could kind of push down or ignore those emotions and just do what they know is right or act in a way that they know that they should and believe. But I don't think that's quite right. I mean, and some people say maybe it came because of Greek philosophy and stoicism, that it kind of came into the Christian church, especially the Western church, and we began to adopt those philosophies of thinking that that's the best way to live. I think maybe it has to do with the fact that throughout church history, many false teachers rise up and many false doctrines get taught. And so at times the church can really put an emphasis on saying, we got to make sure we have the right answers. It can't always be about what we're just feeling in the moment. And so at times we could start to maybe elevate what we know to be true and not always giving space to emotions and feelings. And even in recent times, I think that maybe sometimes the church has at times wrongly communicated that emotions are somewhat invalid because they're trying to guard against what you might call emotionalism. What is the manipulation of emotions that people would kind of be moved to make a decision or to have a relationship with God that is based more on a feeling than something that is true. And it does speak to maybe the other side of the error that people can fall into.

While many in the Christian church might under-emphasize the importance of emotions, there are many times when people will, I think, over-emphasize the importance of emotions, about following your heart, about being kind of true to your desires. And there can be this language that I think is unhelpful. And I think the Bible actually is more complex and guides us in a better path than either one of those. See, what the Bible says is that God created us with emotions, that God created us to be emotional beings, that we are made in God's image. And one thing that we'll find throughout Scripture is that emotions are attributed to God. And probably what we see most clearly is that when God took on flesh and dwelt among us in the person of Jesus, Jesus had emotions. Jesus was not a stoic who just kind of walked around, never being moved or changing his feeling about a circumstance. But Jesus had emotions, he expressed emotions. And what we would say is the perfect and unique way is also the way that we should strive to express and walk through our emotions. So the Bible is not saying that you need to ignore or suppress your emotions or to be kind of overwhelmed or maybe guided by your emotions, but rather I think what the Bible is saying is God has created us to honor him with every aspect of our lives. And when God is at work in our lives and when our sinful nature is being changed and transformed by God and our lives are being transformed by God, it will show up in emotionally healthy ways.

I love the way that Ray Ortland described it in his commentary on Proverbs. He was talking about the way that many of us maybe struggle with emotions that are not honoring to God or we struggle to express them in the right way. But he said this, he said the gospel remedy is not zero emotion. Christ finds us and receives us as emotional jungles, but he does not turn us into emotional deserts. He cultivates us as emotional gardens with life and color and order, where our drivenness and compulsiveness and all the rest are redeemed into a holy and beautiful freedom and intensity. I like this imagery that he gives, that we might come to Jesus as emotional gardens. Things are overgrown, things are out of control. But the whole point is not to turn us into emotional deserts, kind of free from emotion, but rather to be able to cultivate us into emotional gardens. And I'm thankful for the ways that I think the church is growing in this. Just this past fall, we had a couple of opportunities for people to connect, to learn more about emotionally healthy spirituality. Our community group leaders have been walking through emotionally healthy discipleship by Pete Scazzero. There's ways that I think the church is growing in this, and Proverbs has some things that they want to teach us about how do we walk in wisdom for our emotions.

So this is just kind of the beginning, there's so much more to discuss, but one of the things that I think is helpful for us to remember is that our emotions should serve as a gauge. So if you like to follow along, I think this is an important place to begin, that as we think about our emotions and what God wants to cultivate us, and one of the things that Proverbs presents to us is that our emotions should really serve as a gauge, as a reading of kind of what's going on in our lives. So the problem with kind of trying to just suppress your emotions or push them down would be that you don't actually stop to consider what your emotions are telling you. Now there is a danger I think in maybe letting your emotions be your guide, in always just doing what you feel like doing or responding as if your emotions are always leading you in the right way, but it is important I think to stop and consider what we are feeling, what our emotions are telling us about what's

going on inside of us. So this is the verse that we read towards the end, it's the second to last verse that we read in Proverbs 27 verse 19. It says as in water, face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man. This is kind of an interesting verse, if you go study it in the original language, the Hebrew that it's written in, it's really kind of a hard verse to translate. You even kind of see that in our English Standard version, it translates it very kind of wordily, as in water, face reflects face. What most people think that that means is that as you could imagine, before there were mirrors, you would usually look into the water to see your reflection and what you're going to see is a reflection. It is a picture of what is really going on in your face. It is a picture of how your face really looks.

And the analogy is, is just as the reflection would show you how your face looks or how you look, in the same way there is this correspondence between the heart and the person. In other words, what is going on in the inside is going to work its way out. One of the reasons that Proverbs has so much to say about our hearts is because our hearts do really dictate how we live, how we think, how we act. What Proverbs is saying is there is this kind of consistency about us, that people can maybe try to fool people and hide things, but in the end, really what is on the inside is what's going to come out. The heart, what's in the inside is going to be reflected in the person. And I think this has wisdom for us in thinking about our emotions, that our emotions are telling us something about what's going on inside of us. Our emotions are a gauge or, here's what Paul David Tripp, who is a counselor and pastor, he said our emotions are like a barometer. This was the quote he gave that I thought was helpful as I was thinking about this. He said, "If you really want to know what you're living "for, if you want to know what really controls your heart, "don't look at your confessional theology." In other words, he's saying you can't just believe the things that you claim, that you really believe the things that you say you believe.

Actually, what you should do is look at where you find joy. Look at where you run after pleasure. Look at what makes you angry. Look at what you hate. Look at what you love. And you'll begin to understand what is really an effective, functional, street-level control of your heart. Every emotion can be an expression of what is deeply unrighteous or what is beautifully righteous in God's eyes. We need to pay attention to our emotions because they are a barometer. This is what I mean when I say our emotions should serve as a gauge. Doesn't necessarily mean that our emotions should guide our every decision, but we also should not ignore our emotions. Our emotions are telling us something about what we really believe, what we are really motivated by, what we really love. I mean, just think about in my own life, a negative emotion, if you will. He says emotion could be a reflection of something that is unrighteous. So maybe at times when I am seeking to parent my sons, there might be a time whenever I am quick to get angry at them. All of a sudden they didn't do what I asked them to do and now I'm yelling at them. Well, I could just look at myself and say, I really shouldn't do that. I mean, that's not a good reflection of the heart of a loving father that I want to represent God. That's not helpful to their development. So I just need to do better about that. I need to not be so angry. But if I was just to try to suppress or just try to improve on that emotion, I think I would have missed the opportunity to say, well, why was I so quick to be angry at them in this moment? Maybe it's because of my stress level. I was already up to here. So just the first time they didn't listen, it just pushed me over the edge. So why am I so stressed? What am I dealing with in my life that is keeping me at this level? What am I walking in and not giving to God that is allowing me to be at this place where I'm going to react in this way?

Our unrighteous emotions and reactions can tell us a lot about ourselves. So can even our positive emotions. And I was just thinking about the way we can be moved to hearing a beautiful story that maybe depicts love, that depicts a picture of what God has really created us for. I was thinking about just a really quick example is, I don't know if you've ever seen those brief videos of someone who is returning home from service in the military and they surprise their loved ones like on the football field or somewhere they weren't expecting them. And there's just this huge embrace. And in 10 seconds, people you don't know might move you to tears. Because there is just this connection that you feel, this emotion that you feel that I think is in many ways deeply righteous, reflecting the love of God. What God has created us for in loving each other and having family relationships and community around us. That there is something that we could look at and say, this is why I feel that.

So rather than emotions being your guide, I think Proverbs is saying emotions should be your gauge. It should be telling you something as what's going on in your life reflects your heart. Now one thing I think is important to point out as we consider what Proverbs is telling us is that in the Hebrew culture that Proverbs was written in, the heart wasn't just about the feelings. So sometimes I think we separate the head and the heart. We might tell somebody, follow your heart.

And what we're saying is, don't just follow what you think, follow what you feel, kind of go with your gut or go with that feeling, that desire that you have. But in the Hebrew culture, they didn't separate out the head and the heart. The Hebrew culture actually didn't really have a concept of the mind. The heart was a place of thinking. It was a place of feeling. It was a place of the will. It's where decisions were made. It's why when you look at the Old Testament, there's a call to love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. But then in the New Testament, when Jesus teaches it to people who have been started that probably think in different ways, maybe influenced by Greek thought, he says, love God with all your heart and all your mind and all your soul and your strength. Jesus separates the two because in their minds, those two were separate. But back when Solomon is writing, I think the two weren't separate. The heart is where everything happened. So what Proverbs is teaching us, I think, is that while our emotions are flowing out of our heart, there's more in our heart than just our emotions. And Proverbs is constantly reminding us the importance of the heart. In Proverbs chapter four, verse 23, it says, keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Another way that you could think about that would be to guard your heart or to guide your heart.

And so when I think about our emotions, I think that if we would to use them as a gauge to tell us what's going on inside of us, then we could better address our hearts. That it's not just about addressing the emotion, the angry outburst or the tears of joy, but it's rather about guarding and guiding our hearts. So the second thing that I want you to think about as we think about wisdom for our emotions is that our heart should be guided by God's truth. Now I'm using hearts here a little bit more, I think, like Solomon is using it in the book of Proverbs. Though what I'm not just trying to say is just our feelings need to be guided by God's truth. I think that's part of it. But I think if we do the work to recognize where our emotions or feelings come from, then it's actually all connected into what we think and what we believe, what we are feeling and the way that we are acting. It all is kind of central in the heart. And Proverbs is saying, your heart needs to be guarded. Your heart needs to be guided by the truth of God. And so I think it's important that as we experience life and as we experience different emotions, that we would let them be engaged for how things are going within us, but they would also point us back to ways that we can be guided by God's truth in our innermost being.

So let's just take a couple of examples that Proverbs speaks about. Proverbs speaks about many different emotions. I'm just going to highlight a couple for us this morning to think about how we might be guided by God's truth in the midst of these emotions. So one of the emotions that the Proverbs speaks about that a couple of our verses spoke to was the feeling or the emotion of jealousy or envy. The one of the natural, I think, emotions within the human heart in our fallen state is especially to be jealous or envious of others. And Proverbs speaks about how dangerous this emotion can be. It says in chapter 27, verse four, "Rath is cruel, anger is overwhelming, "but who can stand before jealousy?" In other words, wrath and anger are bad enough, but he's trying to say jealousy is even worse. Part of the reason I think jealousy is so bad is because it affects our own view of our lives. You ever heard the phrase that comparison is the thief of joy? So many times you're content with what you have until you see what someone else has. That the feeling of being jealous or being envious of someone else affects our own view of our lives. It also affects our relationships with others. When we are envious of someone, we not only want what they have, but so often we resent them for having it. So often when we want what someone has, we would love it if they were to fail and lose what they have. When we are envious and jealous of others, we can't rejoice when they rejoice. We weep when they rejoice because we would rather them be weeping. We would rather them fail and us gain some type of benefit from it. You see, jealousy, envy, is a powerful emotion affecting ourselves and our relationship with others.

So the question would be, well, how do we guide our hearts? If you look at someone else's life and you start to feel envious, you start to feel jealous of what they have, you could just say, well, I know that's breaking one of the commandments. I'm supposed to be content. I'm supposed to not covet. I'm supposed to not be envious. So let me just try to do better and not want what they have. But maybe it would be important to use it as a gauge to ask yourself, why do you desire so much the thing that they have? What do you think about their life would truly bring satisfaction to you? Why do you think that what God has given you is not enough to be able to do some work behind the emotion, to be able to take a step back and see the bigger picture? In fact, I think that's part of the wisdom that Proverbs tells us about envy and jealousy. You see in chapter 24, verses 19 and 20, Psalm and says, "Fret not yourself because of evildoers "and do not be envious of the wicked." Why? "For the evil man has no future. "The lamp of the wicked will be put out." What does he say? "Don't be envious of these certain people "because you don't know what's in store for them." Now that's only one kind of picture of envy, being envy of the wicked, but I think it speaks to the help of looking at the bigger picture any time we might feel jealousy or envy.

Usually when we're envious of someone else, we're usually envious of kind of one particular aspect of their life. We kind of wish we had maybe that one slice of life just like they did, but we don't stop to consider about having that one slice might change everything else about our lives. We don't stop to consider all else that God has given us, all else that is going on in their lives. What Proverbs is saying is when you feel this emotion, one of the best things you could do is to take a step back and be guided by God's truth to see the bigger picture.

And when we see the bigger picture, I think it will lead us to rightly experience jealousy. You know, the Bible says that God is jealous. He's not envious of people for what they have. He is jealous for their love. Like a husband would be jealous rightly for the love of his wife. When we are being guided by the truth of God's word, it can take us a step back from just being envious of a slice of someone's life and actually be jealous that they would know the one true God, that they would have a future with him rather than a future under his judgment. You see, there's this wisdom that the Proverbs is trying to give us that when we feel these things, to be able to use it as a gauge and then be guided in our hearts by God's truth. The other one that Proverbs speaks to quite frequently is the emotion of anger. In fact, I thought about maybe just devoting this whole sermon to anger because it seems to come up so much in the book of Proverbs. Notice in chapter 29, verse 22, he says, "A man of wrath stirs up strife and one given to anger causes much transgression." I think that language is important in verse 22 and it talks about being given to anger. The idea there is not just that you feel angry, but that anger is starting to control you, that you are given over to it, that it is clouding maybe your judgment.

I think most of us have probably seen this or experienced this at some point. You ever heard the phrase to be blinded with rage? That at some point you say things or you do things that you would not normally do because of your anger. It's saying when you do that, it's going to lead to all sorts of transgression. Now it's important to know that not every feeling of anger is sinful. Bible says that there are things that we should be angry about. As we talked about earlier, Jesus rightly expressed emotion and rightly expressed anger at certain points in his life. But even when we are rightly angry, I think the question is are we given over to that anger and are we quick to be angry? We began this service by looking at the character of God and one of the things God said about himself is that he is slow to anger. Even the thing is that anger God, God is slow to express that anger. And Proverbs tells us to do the same in Proverbs chapter 14 verse 29. It says whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.

Well, just as I was mentioning earlier, I think it would be helpful for you not to just try to suppress that anger or merely try to find a way to get it out if you will, but to ask yourself, why does this situation make you so upset? Is this something that would anger God? If so, are you reacting in a way that would honor God? You know, Paul tells the church in the New Testament, be angry and do not sin. Meaning it may not be wrong to be angry about a situation, but the way that you express that anger might be wrong. But if we just try to ignore our emotions or just try to suppress them, we're not actually doing the good work to actually look at what is making us angry and then to go back to God's truth, to be guided by it in our hearts, to say, what is God angry about? Am I angry about the things that anger God? So many times we are angry about things that only are making us angry and not God, but so many times we're also apathetic to make the things that make God angry. But to be able to work past just our feelings in the moment, to see what's really going on and to have our hearts guided by God's truth.

One thing I love about Proverbs is it's not always just telling you that you have to do this by yourself, but there's this work that can happen even with others. So Proverbs, as we talked about last week, it speaks about the importance of relationships and friendship, as we'll see next week, it has the importance of the words that we say to each other and it deals with our hearts and our emotions. So some of the Proverbs we read that speak about the heart, it speaks about the way that the external can lift up the internal, if you will. Like consider Proverbs 15.30, the light of the eyes rejoices the heart and good news refreshes the bones. You see the way that the external can affect the internal here? He says the light of the eyes, most people think that means that it's the light of seeing someone else's eyes. Like looking at another friend can actually lift your spirits. That when you find yourself in a feeling maybe of anxiety, maybe if your emotion is sadness or depression, that there is an opportunity to not just have to do this by yourself, but to be able to look a friend in the eyes and what a way that can lift your spirits. To be able to hear good news that refreshes the bones. An external word, something from the outside can be something that lifts our spirits emotionally. I think these words of Proverbs are important because again, it's not just about looking within and doing better ourselves, but it's a community project to

deal with our emotions. To be able to be honest and sensitive with each other, as we talked about last week, but to be able to encourage one another. In a similar way, Proverbs 12, 25, the first verse that we read, says anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.

When we are feeling anxious about our present circumstances or about what the future holds, it is going to weigh us down. But it says a good word can lift his spirits, can make him glad. Well, there's this opportunity that we have to be able to help each other emotionally, to be able to speak a good word of encouragement to each other that would help lift someone's anxiety, that would help someone deal with their anger or their envy, whatever emotion they might be feeling. And sometimes we don't always have to go to other people. I think we can go to God's word and hear a good word from him. But again, it's not just I think about just seeing the emotion and trying to read a Bible verse that tells you that emotion is bad, but rather doing the work of seeing where it's pointing to your heart and then allowing your heart to be guided by God's truth as you hear from his word, as you hear from other people. But as we said throughout the book of Proverbs, Proverbs is not just telling us how we should live, much like the law, I think Proverbs is also telling us that we need something outside of ourselves, as much as we would want to be people who could be slow to anger. There are times when we're going to struggle to do that, that we don't move from emotional jungles into emotional gardens just by our own strength or our own power, but God needs to do a work in us. Well, that's why the last word that I would just point you to as we consider wisdom for our emotions is just the reality that our hearts must be transformed by the gospel. The ideas of just trying to balance our emotions, to use certain techniques, to not react so hastily, those are things that we can hear from many different belief systems and many different religions about how to live as healthy people.

But I think it's only the Christian faith, it's only the gospel that speaks about the fact that God wants to do a work from the inside out. As much as Proverbs gives us guidance on how to direct our hearts and how to walk in accordance with God's will, we also see that we need new hearts. The good news is that God has promised to give us new hearts, that in the gospel, God has promised to transform us from the inside out. Listen to this prophecy that God speaks through the prophet Ezekiel about the work that he is going to do in his people. He says, "I will give you a new heart "and a new spirit I will put within you. "And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh "and I will give you a heart of flesh. "And I will put my spirit within you "and cause you to walk in my statutes "and be careful to obey my rules." What God is saying there is that he's not just interested in behavior modification, that you just don't act angry, you don't act envious. And God is even interested in moving beyond just emotional manipulation, that he would just change something about your emotions or persuade you or sway you by your emotions. Rather, God is interested in transformation, working from the inside out. And the promise is never that this happens overnight. That simply by believing in Jesus and believing in the gospel, that we are just automatically emotional gardens. But the process is one that takes time. But it's one that is encouraging to know that God is at work in.

As we sang right before the sermon, he is the one who's going to hold us fast. That as we are going through this process of transformation, we will have emotions and we will have experiences where we are not honoring God with our lives, where we are not walking in his ways. And our hope is not just that we can reduce our anger or we can just not be so envious. Our hope is that he's doing a work in us to transform us from the inside out. That when we believe in Jesus, that he has not just lived the perfect life and expressed every emotion perfectly, but that he died in our place, that he took the wrath of God, the anger of God, against sin on our behalf, that we might know the love of God fully. When we believe that, that he begins to do a new work in us. And as the prophet Ezekiel says here, part of the good news of the gospel is not just that we are forgiven of all those times we got angry, of all those times we were envious. We are also begin to be transformed by his spirit coming into our lives. That God places his spirit within us and we are born again. We are made new and his spirit indwells us to begin to walk according to his ways. To be able to walk in wisdom, to be able to have emotions that align with God's emotions, to be able to actually be jealous about the things that God is jealous about and angry about the things that God is angry about. To be able to bear fruit as emotional gardens. The New Testament speaks about the fruit that the spirit produces in our lives. It's a well-known list in Galatians chapter five, verses 22 and 23. He says, "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law." I think you'll notice about the fruit of the spirit is that none of those fruits are really emotions. They aren't necessarily feelings as if the spirit gives us new emotions, but rather they are very connected to our emotional lives. I mean, think about if we have patience, how it will change our response in a moment of anger

when something makes us upset. If we have joy, how it will change our way that we look at people's lives and the envy and the jealousy that we might be tempted to feel. We have self-control, it will affect the way that we express our emotions, the way that we relate to other people. See, the fruit of the spirit is not necessarily about giving us new emotions, because God created us with emotions from the beginning.

But the work of the spirit is helping us to be cultivated into gardens that flourish and honor God in all of our lives, including in our emotions. So today you might feel like an emotional jungle. Maybe you have more emotions than you can name, you can't quite place them, they feel kind of out of control. Maybe today you feel like an emotional desert. Maybe it's hard to feel anything right now. Feels kind of dead inside. The word of the gospel is that God wants to do a work in you, to transform you from the inside out, to not just do away with your emotions, to not just suppress them, to not be guided by them, but to cultivate them, to make you an emotional garden that bears fruit, the fruit of love and joy and peace and patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, that we might be healthy people, as God created us to be. We might have relationships that are healthy, that we might be able to honor Him in all that we do. This is why we need the wisdom of Proverbs to guide us, to let us see how our emotions can be engaged, but it's why we need the transforming work of the gospel and why we need to be reminded of that on a regular basis, as His Spirit is in our lives. Let us walk in His Spirit and see the work that He does in cultivating us.