

Proverbs Week #93 (10:23-25)

“A fool finds pleasure in evil conduct, but a man of understanding delights in wisdom. What the wicked dreads will overtake him; what the righteous desire will be granted. When the storm has swept by, the wicked are gone, but the righteous stand firm forever.” Proverbs 10:23-25 (NIV)

As we continue to study these wise sayings we need to remember that proverbs are not promises. A proverb does not always present all the truth on a given subject. They are not intended to be statements that can hold true under every single circumstance. For example, the above proverb speaks of a storm sweeping away the wicked but not affecting the righteous. Is this true of every storm in life? Do tornados, hurricanes, flash floods, or tsunamis only destroy those who are wicked? Proverbs need to be understood and we need to consider what they have to teach us.

To Learn – God is our creator. He made us to like some things and dislike other things. In simple terms, things like pain, hunger, fear, and thirst are things we do not like. Eating a full meal, being warm, and satisfying our thirst are things we enjoy. The fallen world we live in does not always find pleasure in things that are good. We learn today that some (maybe even ourselves at times) will find pleasure in doing things that are bad. The proverb warns us about two positive outcomes and two negative outcomes that can be expected based upon whether a person is righteous or wicked.

To Discern – For those who are wicked, the things they dread (or worry about) will “overtake them.” Sin and disobedience are like weeds. They grow and take up natural resources but do not produce any usable fruit. In contrast, those who are right with God (righteous) delight in God’s wisdom. As we learn God’s wisdom, we learn how to order our thoughts and lives by His standards. We learn that He cares for us and will respond to our cries for help. When we have troubles in life we can cry out to God and trust that He cares for us. God answers prayers. Sometimes He answers us by giving us what we ask for but not always.

To Receive – The truth is, everyone will receive from God whether they ask for something or not. Our focus today is upon receiving pleasing things from God and not the things we dread or fear. “To glorify God and enjoy Him forever,” is the answer to the catechism question “What is the chief end of man?” All men will glorify God. The wicked and the righteous will show God’s glory as He demonstrates His compassion and justice, but those who remain in their wickedness will not enjoy the glory of God in their lives.

To Impart – *Prov 1:4 “To impart shrewdness to the morally naïve and a discerning plan to the young person.”* With this as one of our stated goals, how can we help those who are still maturing in wisdom to remember the lessons of these proverbs? To impart God’s plan we must have His plans written on our hearts. Maturing in wisdom starts and continues with believing what God says, turning to Him with trust and submission, and growing in a loving relationship with Him. Those who are made righteous have great security in God. If we want the next generation to live with this kind of security we need to put into practice those things we hear from God.

“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. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell — and great was its fall.” Matt 7:24-27

God will not always give us everything we think we want or need. Sometimes things will happen that we do not understand. God does not promise an easy life. He does promise that those who trust Him, seek Him, and hold fast to Him can expect that He will provide all their needs. From God’s perspective He will cause all things to work for good for those who are called according to His purposes (Rom 8:28). That does not mean that He will always explain everything along the way.

Pictures to help remember this lesson: Sand castles and crashing waves or a house built with cards. It is fun to build both of these types of houses but what might you fear if you had to live in them? Part of being wise is stopping to think about things like this. Ultimate wisdom always includes God’s plans in our questions and answers.