

The Fear of the Lord

Introduction Proverbs series

Next 6 weeks

Again based on LICC Bible Studies

Can be followed at the Life Groups

Introduction Proverbs

Strange book - full of sayings

Some connected

Others not

Saw a bit of the structure of Proverbs in the video

But it may still be weird in our eyes

As these were written in a different time and culture

But on the other hand they can be timeless!

According to the introduction it contains

^ v6

Proverbs, parables, sayings and riddles of the wise

For example:

"Do not answer the fools according to their folly, or you will be a fool yourself"

^ Ch 26:4

Proverb: action - consequence - if you do this then that will happen

It could be a saying - Salomon may have said this and it was written down

It is also parable: how we become fools if we engage with foolishness

May not politically correct!

We are not allowed to call each other fools any more

But we still know the meaning

Another example:

"Answer fools according to their folly, or they will be wise in their own eyes"

^ Ch 26:5

Wait - that is totally opposite

And it is the next verse

What are we supposed to do then?

It is almost a riddle

Maybe it means something like that you have to actually be very carefully when dealing with foolish thoughts or behaviours

your risk looking a fool yourself

but if you do not - then people think they are wise!

Maybe this is what Paul meant when he said that

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of the cross

Foolishness depends on the context, and the meaning of your life

This is what proverbs is about:
How to learn to live meaningful
lives

Learning

WISDOM, INSTRUCTION, WORDS OF INSIGHT

^ v2

wise dealing, righteousness and justice
and fairness

^ v3

Teaching

shrewdness to the simple

^ v3

so they can protect themselves

knowledge & prudence to the young

^ v4

basic life education

But the wise can also gain in more learning

wise people know that we learn all the time

^ v5

Discerning get more guidance

^ v6

Because if though you think you know the way

you may need to know which roads are closed!

God is the meaning of our lives

Proverbs starts with the most important thing

With a warning to those who think this is not important: they are fools

All else will be useless knowledge

The basis, the foundation, is

The fear of the Lord

Fear of the Lord

What is Fear

Fear is ambiguous

Fear is good

Fire, heights, pain, trauma

Protects ourselves

Fear can be troublesome

of irrational things: open squares, being with people

Even when there is no danger

But we have often learned to be fearful

Due to a traumatic experience and have associated this with a harmless activity or thing

So fear is often learned behaviour

My grandmother often let her children touch the stove once - so she learned it was dangerous

Fear can be inhibiting

We are often careful to share the gospel with people, as we are afraid of their reactions and the consequences of our lives!

But it is important to fear the right things

Fear of the Lord means respect him

Realising that he is the most powerful being in the universe

And to give him his due awe and respect

Like with the flood and the story of Noah he can destroy the whole world

But he has promised us not to

As a child I was afraid of my father

especially when I was naughty

Because I would get punished - rightly so!

But I knew that he did this because he loved me

And I was afraid that our relationship would be damaged too

God is our Father

He loves us - beyond any measure

hence Jesus dying on the cross for us

But he also has the authority of a Father over us

He chose us first!

We sometimes can be too glib about God

And we want to set him to our agenda

Whilst in reality we need to set our actions to his agenda

Our worship to his glory

And in that context wisdom and knowledge changes

When God becomes the meaning in our lives

All rules and regulations go out of the window

That also changes how we read proverbs

Not as a set of instructions that are sometimes contradictory

But as a set of phrases that we can learn

And when we find ourselves in a conundrum we can ask God

Which proverb applies here Lord?

Should I speak against the fool?

Or should I keep quiet

I know what the consequences are of both

But which one do you want me to follow through

Application

Look at our congregation

Mostly mature Christians

Not the young that need wisdom and instruction

But we could use if for teaching others

Those who are not so mature in faith

Or have no faith in Christ

But also to gain more wisdom and discernment

As we fear God

We know that we need to listen to him

We want to reach out to Whitefriars shopping centre, how?

Listen to God

Image of us becoming the bridge between Jesus and the people who do not yet know him

Priesthood

Presenting God to the people

Presenting people to God

Priesthood of all the people: us!

1. Presenting God to the people

Pray for them - stand in the gap - intercede for them

How can we do that?

Listening to them

Building relationships

Coming alongside when times are tough

And they will be tougher

Chaplaincy

2. Presenting the people to God

Open St Andrews as a quiet space

Be available to people to talk

all things

But also things of faith

3. Intercede for ourselves

Present our plans to God

Listen to God about his plans

Really needs to come first

Next Tuesday?

1pm