

discerning. But when you are humble you listen to warning sounds and take note of danger signs and hear the earnest supplications given.

Behind the voice of Agur, hear the voice of Christ, my friend, urging for utmost humility in life's journey. See what the world did to Christ, indeed, what the covenant people of God did to Christ, taking and crucifying Jesus on the cross and wanting nothing more than that He be dead and forever out of their life, exactly as we all do by nature, and as some of you are likely doing even right now still. Don't you see, won't you be convicted of, how much reason there is for utmost humility on our part, yes, as creatures of the dust before God and as sinners before His holy sight?

I will not go on here but move to the next point and that is, not only is Agur-like flood-conquering wisdom about utmost humility but see too it is about utmost regard for God's holy Word. Agur shows this in verses 5&6 confessing there that God's Word is so pure and trustworthy as the Source of all wisdom. He says about the Holy Scripture that it is not to be added to, meaning here surely it is not to be trifled with or despised, but to be wholeheartedly completely respected and trusted and followed after. You see how this point goes together with the first. Without utmost humility you won't have utmost regard for God's Word, but when you know that there is no wisdom of ourselves, and how much we need wisdom, then won't you begin also to listen to God's holy Word so full of true wisdom from the first word to the last word, cover to cover? Notice too Agur testifies not only about regarding God's Word highly, but trusting it really. Wisdom's way is not just about lip-service to God's Word, but about hearty faith and submission and dependence upon all God's Word. Is this the way you are living too?

Next week we will conclude this study. For now let me end with these appropriate words based on Psalm 51, and may this message also lead you so to pray: 'I am evil, born in sin; Thou desirest truth within. Thou alone my Saviour art, Teach Thy wisdom to my heart; Make me pure, Thy grace bestow, Wash me whiter than the snow.' Amen

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Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



'AGUR-LIKE' WISDOM [1]

For this message and next week's broadcast too, I want to speak to you about Agur-like wisdom. There is a whole chapter from Agur in the Holy Bible in Proverbs 30. Let me read just the first 17 verses of this passage now. *"The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal, Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell? Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain. Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty. There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men. The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough: The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough. The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it."*

From this text consider some marks of Agur-like wisdom. This is a divine urging for Agur-like wisdom in our day, shown by you and by me. Before we consider the wisdom taught us from Agur, let me say a few things about this person. The last two chapters of Proverbs are written by two different people about whom we know very little. Proverbs 30 is the writing of Agur, and Proverbs 31, the writing of King Lemuel. The point to notice is that both these last chapters are described as "the prophecy" or utterance,

or burden or oracle, as mentioned in verse 1, referring to this being the actual prophetic Word of God that these men give.

In other words, also now with Proverbs 30, we have here God's holy inspired infallible Word! Indeed, we need to see and hear in our text passage, Christ Himself, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, as the One now speaking to us from this passage. This Agur had at least two disciples who listened to him, Ithiel and Ucal. Agur taught them the wisdom of God for in their day and for every day. It could well be they were asking him certain questions and wisdom's way in life, and here he is answering their questions. If it is well with you, you too will be seeking wisdom's way in life. How many are not interested in this at all, being all too busy gathering treasures from this world and pursuing pleasures in this world, thinking only of the present moment. Are you wiser than that? Let me give you from our text five details of Agur-like wisdom, so crucial then and also for you and myself in our day.

Notice with me first of all from Agur his utmost humility before God and man. This surely comes out in the whole chapter but especially in verses 2-5. Agur, as a true man of God, realizes with deep conviction how base and ignorant and unwise and foolish he is by nature. He confesses he is more brutish or dumb as an animal than any other even. Of himself he has no real understanding and true knowledge of anything, and he realizes what does he know about God and His ways? Nothing at all really! Agur's humility is almost embarrassing; he is so utterly humble about himself before God and man. And he is not speaking here in false humility. Agur here expresses and reflects genuine humility.

Do you realize this is the great need of our times? How many people go about as if they know so much and have so great knowledge, more than others for sure, and they think, speak, and act as if they can pass on so much wisdom to others, even about God. And certainly some will know more than others about this and that also spiritually, yet, truthfully speaking how little, yes, very very little, even the most knowledgeable and wise among us really knows about anything. If we are honest, even when we may know a whole lot about much, we have to admit there is so much more we don't know about so much more. We know so very, very little about everything, even when we may seem to know so very, very much about anything.

Certainly also in regards to God and the realities that count most of all from Him concerning creation, providence, and redemption, and the things of God before and now and hereafter, what do we know? Do you know that those who know the most in reference to God will bow the lowest in confessing, what do they really know? Agur, considering himself and especially considering himself before God as he does in verse 4, admits so much ignorance still and lack of true knowledge and wisdom of himself. You find the same confession among the great men in the Bible like Job, David,

Asaph, and Paul. Asaph writes in Psalm 73:22 in utmost humility before God, *"So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before Thee."* Paul confessed he was the chief of sinners [I Timothy 1:15] and *"less than the least of all saints"* [Ephesians 3:8]. Where is this humility today? If you are a Christian, do you honestly view yourself as *"less than the least of all saints?"* Or is it the other way around, and everyone else is less than you, and that is why everyone needs to listen to you, and you insist on people hearing you while you yourself won't be teachable at all or hardly at all, nor do you even see any need for that. Later on Agur speaks of a generation that is living so arrogant and with lofty eyes, and isn't this in general a great problem not just in the world at large but too often within the church as well?

Agur's utmost humility is especially in reference to God. The questions Agur asks in verse 4 speak of God in His greatness and glory, and how comparatively, what is man, and what do we know? Just take that phrase, *"who has bound the waters in a garment?"* This speaks of how all the waters in the world, the rivers and streams and oceans too, God sets bounds for and He holds the waters in the clouds even. Just reflect on that awhile! Repeatedly in different places in the world we read and hear about rising waters and floods here and there and rainstorms as well as other natural disasters and these are all in His hands, under His control, but what do we know? In the realm of nature, and with all things, God knows everything about everything. But do you and I? How true what one said about God's works in nature just, *"There is not a single department of His works of which the investigation does not bring us to a standstill, to points beyond which we are unable to penetrate."* And with the truths about God and salvation, in every detail of it, how true what Paul writes in I Corinthians 2:14, namely, *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* This the Bible teaches us honestly, and so true to the facts, namely, as fallen sinners of ourselves, we are totally blind and completely ignorant about all that really counts before God and for this life and eternity. Have you learned this about yourself as Agur did, and do you confess this about yourself as Agur did?

It is having utmost humility before God and man that gives us also to begin to learn to listen to wisdom as taught us from God. When you are humble you become teachable, and rather than being quick to judge and condemn, you sooner will listen and be so very careful and prayerful even with all your words and ideas and opinions. All too many people just scoff at all instruction about being wise unto God and preparing to meet God and to be ready for the world to come. Without the Agur-like humility expressed in our text, you also will scoff at the greater flood warnings with the flood of sin and evil from within us and sweeping around us and raging upon us and you won't think or believe there is much reason to be concerned and so very