

**Job 28: 1-28; “Where Can Wisdom Be Found?”, Sermon # 35 in the series –
“Remember to Magnify His Work”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
On September 3rd, 2023, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

In the first 11 verses of this passage, we see the diligence of man in his labors in mining for silver and refining gold. We see it in his taking iron from the earth, and smelting copper from ore. In these things which have earthly value to him, a man who does not know God can be extremely diligent to accomplish all of his purposes.

In verse 10 it says that his eye sees everything that is precious to him. And what is hidden from him, he brings it forth to light. But when we get to verse 12, we find this statement – “But where can wisdom be found?” “And where is the place of understanding?” “Man does not know its value.” This is what we want to look at more carefully. What is precious to man, and what should be precious to man, we want to consider in terms of our finding God’s wisdom. Let me give you 3 principles concerning finding God’s wisdom.

Before we partake of the Lord’s Supper I would like us to think of these things in relation to all that the Father has given us in His Son, for our salvation. Because wisdom can only ultimately be found, in and through, our Lord Jesus Christ.

1st of all – In finding God’s wisdom in Christ, you will be brought out of darkness and into light, and you will be remade into a precious stone. (verses 1-11)

Job begins by telling us how men mine for precious metals such as silver and gold, iron and copper. A very interesting description of this is found in verse 3 – “Man puts an end to darkness, and searches every recess for ore in the darkness and the shadow of death.” What is being said here is that man knows that these metals are precious in an earthly sense. And so he digs and lets God’s natural light shine into the earth where he has dug so that he can find the valuable ore. If the desired precious metal is deeper, where the light of the sun cannot reach it, he brings his own light down into the earth with him, so that “every recess” might be searched, so that the ore might be found.

Man, of course, takes great risks in doing this. He breaks open a shaft away from people, in places forgotten by feet, Job says in verse 4. His search for precious metals exposes him to being in the shadow of death at many points in his work. He swings to and fro in deep earthly caverns, and he hangs from ropes that take him far away from men. Then, suddenly in verse 5 Job says that from the earth, man is able to grow grain to make bread from it. But in mining the earth, when the earth is turned up, there are many hot places below its surface. He is contrasting what is above the surface with what is below the surface of the earth.

He says that below the surface the temperature in certain places is turned up as by fire, sometimes. The deeper you dig, you may run into great heat. It is this great heat which God uses to make precious stones. It is by a man’s risking being in this great heat, of being underground, that he is able to mine the sapphires out which have the gold dust in them. This underground mine, the falcon has never seen it, the proud lions have not trodden there, and the fierce lion passes over and by it. But man puts his hand on the flint when he mines in this way. He overturns the mountains at their roots. He cuts out channels in the rock, and his eyes sees every precious thing. In order to mine these precious stones out, he must sometimes dam up the streams from trickling. And in this amazing way, what is hidden from him, he will bring forth to light.

Now, we must ask ourselves then, if man is so diligent in his search to find and to obtain these precious metals and jewels, why isn’t he interested in finding what is most precious spiritually? It is not that he can put an end to darkness physically by his own natural light. For he cannot put an end to his own darkness spiritually. He is not able to do so. The Bible tells us in Ephesians 5: 8 – “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.” “Walk as children of light.” So, since a person, before they come to Christ, is walking in darkness, and is darkness itself, in their soul, they must come to Christ for the light of truth which will bring them spiritual wisdom. Man’s inclination by nature is not to seek for the wisdom of God.

And that is because this spiritual wisdom is related to the knowledge of God Himself. That man, by nature, the Bible tell us, does not want that knowledge. In Romans 3, verse 11, Paul says – “There is none who seeks after God.” “They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable.” We see that man will not diligently seek for spiritual wisdom. He believes that his earthly wisdom is sufficient for him to live by. But he forgets about the fact that God is watching him to see if he cares for Him. It is only God who can put an end to darkness in the soul of man. It is God who searches every recess of the heart, and yet cannot find any light there.

The light of nature is insufficient for a man to understand God by, except in a dim and primitive way. And so God must bring His own light into the hard ground of a man’s heart. 2nd Corinthians 4: 6 – “For it is God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” You can see from this verse that it is God Himself who shines in a man’s heart to give him the light of the knowledge of His own glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

The fire of God’s word heats things up in the man’s mind and heart so that He can mold him and make him into a sapphire, a living stone. Out of a sinner, God can make a saint by the grace of Christ. In 1st Peter 2, verses 4 and 5, we read these words – “Coming to Him (that is Christ) as to a Living Stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” So Christ is the One who was chosen of God the Father and everything that He said and did in His earthly ministry was precious in His sight.

Verses 6 & 7 of the same chapter say – “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.” “Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone...” So I hope that you can see that it was because the Father sent His only begotten Son, and molded and shaped the earthly life of the Lord Jesus to accomplish redemption, that He became everything that was pleasing to Him.

And as it says in 1st Corinthians 1: 30 – “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption – that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord. So we see here, that if we believe in Christ, we will by no means be put to shame. Indeed we shall ourselves become sapphire gems of grace with the glory of His grace, His gold, in our lives.

You will remember that in Ezekiel chapter 1, verse 26, in the vision that Ezekiel saw, it says – “And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it.” “Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of his waist downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around.” “Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of brightness all around it.” “This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God.”

This, the Living Stone, the Living Sapphire, our Lord Jesus Christ, became a man. He was, and He is, the glory of God. This is how it is that He could become the source of salvation and eternal life. Yes, He is the Bread of Life. But He is also the Living Stone, chosen and precious in the sight of God. And He would become the foundation and cornerstone of the Church. He is the King of King and Lord of Lords, and overturns the mountains at the roots. The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ.

In our salvation, He cuts out channels in the rocks of our hearts. His eye sees every precious thing, in terms of what He can do for us, to make us into men and women of God. When God gives us grace, He dams up the streams of our sinful hearts, and what is hidden to us, in terms of our becoming wise, and really knowing God, He can bring to it light, and make us wise unto salvation.

Let me ask – Has God done a work like this in your soul? If He has begun this good work, He will perfect it, and you will become one of His jewels.

2nd – In finding God’s wisdom in Christ you will come to recognize what is truly valuable. (verses 12-19)

Verses 12-15 say – “But where can wisdom be found?” “And where is the place of understanding?” “Man does not know its value, nor is it found in the land of the living.” “The deep says, ‘It is not in me’; and sea says, it is not with me.” “It cannot be purchased for gold, nor can silver be weighed for its price.” So, the reason that Job says here that wisdom cannot be found in the land of the living, is that wisdom is found in no man apart from their relationship with Jesus Christ. What is troubling, is that all people by nature do not know the value of Christ either. The value of Christ is infinitely great. He is wisdom personified. You can see this if you will turn over to Colossians chapter 1, verses 27-29, and chapter 2, verses 1-3.

“To them (that is to God’s saints) God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” “Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” “To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.” “For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Now, notice how it is, that God has willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of Christ. The mystery that is being talked about here is that Christ can be in you, even if you are Gentile, and even if you are presently a sinner. Paul preached Christ and Him crucified for sinners; Christ, and Him risen from the dead. He would warn every man – Don’t miss out on what Christ alone can give you. Because if you will believe in Him, you will be seen as perfect in the sight of God, in Him. That is, in justification, first of all. And then after you are saved, you will be made wise. You will learn spiritual wisdom from the Bible and you will be given wisdom to pursue holiness.

Paul labored in his preaching. He strove according to Christ’s working in him, which was a mighty working. But Paul wants you to understand that God will strive working mightily, in you as well. Paul wanted those in Colosse to be encouraged because God and Christ had knit their hearts together in love. He wanted them to attain to the riches of the full assurance of understanding. That, even though it was a great mystery, that in the Father and in Christ both, there were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and understanding, they should seek to find the value of this wisdom. Let me ask you now whether you have seen this and understood this great truth for yourself? For if you have understood this, then you will come to recognize what is most valuable.

You say – How do I find this wisdom? You will find it by faith in God and faith in Christ in relation to the Scriptures. Turn with me over to Psalm 19, verses 7-11. “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” “More to be desired are they than gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” “Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward.”

So we see here that the law of the Lord, that is, God’s word the Bible, is perfect. It is through the truth of the Bible that we know what the gospel is. It is the word concerning Christ, both Old Testament and New. It is the testimony concerning Christ which is sure, and makes wise the simple-minded person concerning his or her greatest need. These truths concerning Christ are that which converts the soul from a life of worldliness, wickedness, self-righteousness and sin, to God. All of the statutes of the Lord are right. All that has been written concerning what is right, everything found in the law of God and the commandments of God is righteous, holy, and true. All of the

promises of God rejoice your heart that there is grace to be found in Christ which is greater than all of your sin.

The commandment of the Lord to believe in Christ is pure, because Christ Himself is perfectly pure. It is your believing in Christ which enlightens your eyes. It is what causes you to see your need of Him, in terms of knowing God and walking with God. The fear of the Lord is clean because the person trusting in Christ is now willing to have a regard for God's will and His ways. They find themselves wanting to do what is right in every situation, and this desire will always remain with them. These desires lead to practical wisdom in living the Christian life. You want to affirm and submit to the judgments of the Lord in regard to yourself.

You want to understand more of God's wisdom, that His judgments are true and they are righteous altogether. You want to know more of God's righteous and holy thoughts as they are revealed to you in the Scripture; that concerning any subject, they are always wise and good. They are more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold. This ties in with our text in verse 15 where it says – "Wisdom cannot be purchased for gold, nor can silver be weighed for its price." "It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx or sapphire." "Neither gold nor crystal can equal it, nor can it be exchanged for jewelry of fine gold." "No mention shall be made of coral or quartz, for the price of wisdom is above rubies." "The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold." As we come now to remember Christ, will you now affirm the value of Christ is far and away beyond any earthly thing? This is why it is good to celebrate the Lord Supper, to remind ourselves of this.

3rd – In finding God's wisdom in Christ, you will come to understand the fear of the Lord.

Verses 20-28 say – "From where then does wisdom come?" "And where is the place of understanding?" "It is hidden from the eyes of all living, and concealed from the birds of the air." "Destruction and death say, 'We have heard a report about it with our ears.'" "God understands its way, and He knows its place." "For He looks to the ends of the earth, and sees under the whole heavens, to establish a weight for the wind, and apportion the waters by measure." "When He made a law for the rain, and a path for the thunderbolt, then He saw wisdom and declared it; He prepared it, indeed, He searched it out." "And to man He said, 'Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.'"

Let us understand that all wisdom comes from God, and that it is personified in our Lord Jesus Christ. When God the Father made the world in the beginning, Wisdom Personified, the Son of God, was right there with Him. The Divine Son was beside the Father as a Master Craftsman, and daily He was His delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in His inhabited world. And it says there in Proverbs 8: 31 – His delight was with the sons of men. Our Lord delights to be with us here at His table now. And what would He have us to remember today, even now, at this time? He would have us to remember that He died to bear our sins in His body on the tree.

He would have us to remember that He rose again from the dead. And what He is looking for now, in relation to our lives, is whether we will be wise in the way that we live our life to Him. He says – "Now therefore listen to me, my children, for blessed are those who keep My ways." "Hear instruction and be wise, and do not disdain it." "Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." "Whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord. And in Proverbs 9: 5, He says – "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed." "Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding."

Verse 9 says – "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." Our text in Job in the last verse of this chapter says – "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." To depart from evil, we must understand that we need Christ to help us to do so. And to live considering carefully and then

going about to do what is right will take Christ helping us to do so. He will be leading us into the truth by His Spirit and teaching us. To fear the Lord is to set Christ before us always.