

WD March 8, 2021

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“The Benefits of Wisdom a Year Later.”

Today’s reading is from Proverbs 3 with selected verses. It may be familiar to you.

- ⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
⁶in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.
- ¹³Blessed are those who find wisdom,
those who gain understanding,
¹⁴for she is more profitable than silver
and yields better returns than gold.
¹⁵She is more precious than rubies;
nothing you desire can compare with her.
¹⁶Long life is in her right hand;
in her left hand are riches and honor.
¹⁷Her ways are pleasant ways,
and all her paths are peace.
¹⁸She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her;
those who hold her fast will be blessed.
¹⁹By wisdom the Lord laid the earth’s foundations,
by understanding he set the heavens in place;
²⁰by his knowledge the watery depths were divided,
and the clouds let drop the dew.

Today marks the anniversary of when everything shut down for Covid. One year ago we just finished a beautiful weekend at the local Sugarbush Festival. Yesterday was the last day of this year’s Sugarbush Festival. So, we have come full circle.

One year ago the state of Indiana shut everything down for what we thought would be a few weeks. No one could have guessed the way the rest of this last year would go. Hindsight being 20/20 (as it has been said) we understand so much more than we did. We have grown wiser in so many ways. We know much more about the virus, enough to develop a vaccine in less than a year—which by all accounts is extraordinary. It is extraordinary because vaccines for viruses are tricky things and because three vaccines have been developed so quickly. It just goes to show what can be done when people put their mind to something.

A year ago we knew nothing really about what we were in for. And so, we were left to trust in the Lord with all of our hearts and lean not on our own understanding. Trust is only proven when it has to be put into practice. Proverbs 3 is a chapter about wisdom and it begins by saying the wisest thing you can do is trust in the Lord and not in your own understanding of things. When we don’t know how things are going to turn out—trust in the Lord. When we do not understand what it is that is making us sick—Trust in the Lord. When we cannot make sense of the way things are moving—Trust in the Lord. Notice it doesn’t say, trust in the Lord and everything will go great. It doesn’t say anything like it. It’s where we put our trust that makes

one wise. And that is the emphasis. The Proverb calls us to trust in the one who in wisdom created all things. The Lord is the One who alone can save us from our sin and from this world. But we only know what trust looks like when it is tested. Many felt tested during this last year.

I have to say that there is nothing worse then, not knowing something that we need to know. If I need to know how to fix something on my car, I just turn on the Youtube and get directions on how it can be done. Have you ever had to change a light bulb on a headlight of your newer car? I've had to turn on the Youtube just to figure out how to do it. I didn't have the understanding of my own to lean on. So, I leaned on the wisdom of someone who knew how to do it. Something similar is being offered in Proverbs 3.

Proverbs 3 not a step by step guide on how to fix Covid, or escape fear, but it is directing us toward the Lord. When we do not know how things will turn out we at least know the Lord, Jesus and our Heavenly Father. We know that God loved the world that He gave us Jesus. We know that Jesus died for our sins while we were still sinners and enemies of God in our sin. We know that Jesus rose from the grave on Easter morning and promises that all who believe in Him will not perish but have eternal life. Jesus is working harder to save us than we are to believe in Him. We know the Lord and that is the beginning of Wisdom.

But because of this last year more of us know the value of wisdom. The Proverb calls us "blessed". We know that word from the Beatitudes (Matthew 5): "Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted...Blessed are the pure at heart for they will see God...Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God." We especially know this word when the Resurrected Jesus tells a formerly doubting Thomas in John 20:29, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Thomas, like the other disciples heard all the times Jesus predicted His death and resurrection but he lacked understanding as all the other disciples once did. He did however gain that understanding from Jesus Himself—The Word...made flesh. He trusted in the Lord through the Word and learned to trust in His fellow disciples to go and see. And all of it came together.

Proverbs 3 tells us ¹³ Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, ¹⁴ for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. ¹⁵ She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her." Imagine how blessed we are to have vaccines, and people dedicated to making those vaccines. And I know that some have expressed doubts about the Vaccines. But I can't even in my worst day imagine an army of scientists working night and day to come up with a failure or something harmful. First, in the secular sense, that would not be profitable. Secondly, it ultimately would be counterproductive to science in general. But as the Proverb reminds us if these vaccines help save lives then they are more precious than rubies, and yield better returns than gold. Lives benefit from what has been learned and the understanding that has been gained.

So, here one year later we are wiser. Scientists have learned more than they did a year ago about Covid 19. Their understanding has led to Vaccines. We also understand more than we did a year ago about schools, E-learning, Zoom meetings, working from home, and a little more about ourselves; fears, priorities, maybe some idols. Lord willing as we look back, we have learned to trust in the Lord a little more fully. A lot has happened in this last year. My prayer is that the cost that we have paid because of it will at least make us wiser and more eager to turn to the Lord, especially when we need the understanding.

Pastor Matthew Woods
John 3:30