



Sermon - November 5, 2017
Proverbs 1:7

Verses Covered This Week

Proverbs 1:7
Ecclesiastes 12:13
1 John 4:17 – 18
Psalms 111:10
Proverbs 9:10
Ecclesiastes 3:14 – 15
Luke 7:14 – 16
Mark 4:38 – 41
Mark 5:30 - 34
Matthew 17:4 - 7

So I want you to open your Bibles to the book of Proverbs. Now we cover, when I preach I go book by book and we're going to start at the first of the book and work our way through it. We're not going to work our way through it like we do a normal book. Most books are linear. Proverbs has no context. We're just going to have to look through the various sections of it and what it says about particular issues we're wrestling with.

Now before we get into it, there are couple things we need to understand. Number one, we need to understand we're going to run into Hebrew poetry in this book. There's a vast difference between Hebrew poetry and Western poetry. I'm going to dumb down Western poetry, but Western poetry, generally we think of two things: cadence and rhyme. Roses are red, violets are blue, I'm a better deer hunter than you will ever, I messed that up. I had a really perfect ending there. Hope the rest of the sermon doesn't go that way. So at any rate, well that's embarrassing. Hebrew poetry is parallelisms. You'll have two statements, sometimes three, but generally a couplet that will basically look different, but they're saying the same thing. For example, the heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament shows His handiwork. That's Hebrew poetry. It's simply saying the same thing in parallel statements. So we're going to run into that. We're going to see some of that today.

Number two, this says in verse one of chapter one, the proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel. Solomon wrote three books in the Old Testament. He wrote Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes. Interestingly enough, they're inside three epics of Solomon's life. He's the son

of David and Bathsheba. He comes to the throne and when he first comes to the throne, there is this unbelievable humility in him and a deep walk with God. Because God comes to him and says, “Give you anything you want.” He said, “Look all I want is the wisdom to be able to lead these people. I don’t have it and so I need you to give it to me.” And so God says, “Look because you ask for that and not for wealth, I’m going to give you both. I’m going to make you the wisest man on the earth.” And so He does that and so Solomon begins to live in that wisdom.

At that moment he married a lady. Now that’s the Song of Solomon. It’s not a book about Christ and the church. It’s a book about the physical intimacy of marriage and the covenant inside marriage. There’s a ton of metaphors of a deep love that he has for this woman and how she’s impacted his life and the richness that she’s brought to him. And so he writes this book and it’s just a really holy moment in his life. He writes Proverbs in the second aspect where he begins to step into, look at what he says,

²To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, ³to receive instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, equity; ⁴to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth,

Sea of Galilee, last week, he says “I want to gain wisdom so I can deliver it to people that don’t have it.” So he has a period in his life where he begins to work here.

Now in this period, he writes probably this book Proverbs where he is gaining this wisdom and it’s intensifying who he is. But then he comes to a point of pretty deep darkness in his life. Where he begins to find wisdom instead of the giver of the wisdom and he leaves God and moves into the benefits of his own wisdom. From that he writes the book of Ecclesiastes which is a pretty dark book. There are parts of it that are very strong and then there are parts that are, he just seems to be discouraged. One of the lines in it, he says, no matter how much a guy works, he’ll turn his work over to somebody that may or may not bless it. Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow you may die. So the third book, which reflects that epic, and remember, this is the point in time, he’s not like his father who was this tough warrior. Solomon’s not that way. He becomes terrified of the countries around him. And so he begins to marry. This is why he had the large number of wives and concubines because what he did, if there was an enemy that might pose a threat, he would marry the daughter of the king or some royalty and bring her into the house so that it was less likely that these enemies would attack him. And so his faith in God began to kind of go on a diminish as he put his faith in his wisdom and less faith in the Father. That faith in God diminished to where he now has, instead of the wife of his youth, and the beauty and the intensity of the covenant with this lady in Song of Solomon, now we have toward the end of his life where he stepped away from God. And it’s interesting though, I want you to listen to the last thing he writes. Ecclesiastes, listen.

¹³The end of the matter, all has been heard, fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

Now look at the verse we look at at the beginning of the book of Proverbs, chapter 1, verse 7:

⁷The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Now you've got to have wisdom and instruction to make it in this world. Adam and Eve had this perfect world. They knew exactly what to do. Wisdom was innate. You and I die and we go to heaven and we step into the presence of the Father, wisdom will be innate. But it's not innate here. It's not intrinsic. God has to give it to you. Jeremiah makes two statements. He says, "The heart is desperately wicked. Who can know it?" And then he says, "It is not in man to direct his steps." You are not smart enough to know what to do in your home. You are not smart enough to know what to do with your business. You are not smart enough to know what to do in a world that is broken, still under the sovereignty of God, but that we deeded over to the enemy. And all the mess we face here, you are not smart enough to know how to walk in the middle of it. But the Bible does promise wisdom and instruction. Here's what it says, now listen carefully. Fools despise that. How does the Bible define a fool? The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." You've got three ways of saying that. You can be an atheist and just declare there is no God. There's not. He's nothing. An atheist can be a 4.0 in Quantum Mechanics at MIT but he can't possess wisdom and knowledge. An agnostic can't possess wisdom and knowledge. He will say, "Yeah, there is a god, but we can't know him, he can't know us. If I can't know that god, we can't have a relationship. Then he can't give me wisdom and knowledge. He can't possess it." And then there are the big bang theory astronomers. They're almost kind of in this realm. You'll hear them say, "Well, yeah, it must have started somewhere. What started it, we don't know." In other words, there might be a god, which is kind of deism, there is a god, but man he's gone. He started this stuff and now he's gone. He's in some other part of the universe. He's not coming back. We're on our own. Any one of those three is a foolish statement. So listen. Let's just settle this issue. You're going to have, particularly in a university town, you're going to have some really smart people that are professors, academics, who are brilliant. I mean they take organic chemistry and read it like people do Louis L'Amour. They get anatomy and physiology. They just roll through this school. And they're brilliant. But if they're an atheist or an agnostic or deist I don't care how smart they are. They cannot possess the wisdom they need to live correctly in a broken world under the direction of the enemy but still under the sovereignty of a holy God.

So you don't take your direction from those people. Here's what you do. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Now I want you to buckle up. OK. We're going to cover some scriptures this morning. So we're going to walk. Now I've been at fault at this as well. The phrase fear of the Lord, we've sanitized it. We've made it sweet. It's a reverential trust. No it's not. It's an emotional fear of God. It's what it is. Everywhere you turn the word is fear. The Greek word is *fóvos*. We get the word phobia. It is an emotional fear. It is not just a reverential trust. It's time to quit sanitizing it and face it for what it is. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Now don't be Baptist today. I want you to hear me all the way through. Don't cut out on me. Don't move away from me. Don't go, "I can't believe he said that. He's wrong." I'm not at home, so I don't have to be wrong.

Now what is that "wow"? You're on staff here and you do not respond to the pastor in public. So fear of the Lord is beginning of knowledge. Now I know some of you out there are going, "No, no, no. Perfect love casts out fear." Good. Let's go to 1 John 4. 1 John chapter 4. You hit Revelation, hit a left. Hit 2 John, hit a left. Hit 2 Peter, hit a right. 1 John 4. Now I want you to walk through the Scripture with me today so we know what it says. 1 John 4:17. Now listen to this.

¹⁷By this, is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

Now there are two kinds of fear of God. One is distinctly holy; one is absolutely wrong. If you're a born again child of God, the Holy Spirit's told you about Jesus and the cross, and you believe that, and your faith has met what He's told you. And now the Holy Spirit indwells you, you're now in what's called perfect love. When you die His love for you is eternal. And His love carries you all the way through eternity. If, though, you say no to what the Holy Spirit tells you about Jesus Christ, now listen, at that point you are not perfected in love because when you die you don't face His love now, you will face His wrath. I know we don't like that, but that's what he's saying. He uses the words in here right: punishment and judgement. If I say no to Jesus Christ, I face a punishment and a judgment. I face a great white throne judgment and I face an eternal punishment of banishment from Him and from everybody else. You are alone for all eternity. His love doesn't follow you past the grave. But for those of us that embrace Christ, we have a perfected love and it carries us through all eternity. His love's on everybody now. The offers on the table. But my rejection to the offer brings me to a point where I do face punishment, I do face judgment. Now listen, if as a Christian you fear any repercussion from your God in any way over anything, you are not perfected in love. There is no punishment for a child of God. Even if there's discipline, it's not punishment. My punishment was taken at the cross. It's over. So there's a perfection in my love. So I don't worry about punishment. I don't fear God because I think, "Oh my goodness! When I die this is going to happen." I don't worry about that. I don't face that judgment. I don't face that punishment because of what Jesus Christ did and what I believe in. So I don't have that fear.

There is, though, another fear that is equally an emotional reaction that I'm to live in. Look at Psalm 111:10. Go to the book of Psalms, chapter 111, or Psalm 111, verse 10. I'll give you time to get there today because we're going to go walk through this. Listen to Psalm 111:10.

¹⁰The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;

Same thing, right, Solomon says, but look at the next statement.

All those who practice it have a good understanding

I am to practice in my life the fear of the Lord. 1 John 4 says, "No, no, no, no. Perfect love casts out fear." Psalm 111:10 says, "No, no, no. I've got to take the fear of the Lord and practice it. It's got to be in my life daily. I've got to implement it in my life. I practice it. I do it." So we obviously have two distinct fears of the Lord. One I fear retribution from the Father. The other, there's no retribution, but there is still a fear. But it is distinct. Obviously 1 John 4, I am never to practice this one. As a matter of fact, if this one shows up in my life, I don't understand how much He loves me. This one, though, I am to practice. Whatever he talks about in Psalm 11:10 is what he said in Proverbs 1:7. There is a fear of the Lord I am to shun. There's a fear of the Lord I am to practice. Both phrases the same: the fear of the Lord.

Now let me show you what it is and what it does. Turn to Proverbs chapter 9. Proverbs chapter 9, verse 10. We have Hebrew poetry here. We have a couplet. We have two things, two statements, but they're really saying the same thing. Now listen. Proverbs 9:10.

¹⁰The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, now listen, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

The fear of the Lord is not a fear of retribution or punishment or "Man He's going to nail me." No, no, no, no, no. The fear of the Lord is, listen, a knowledge of the Holy One that I know who He is. We just finished a song basically singing, "pouring out our love and praise on Jesus because of who we know He is." Listen. The first aspect of a fear I am to practice is that I know who He is. He's holy. He's great. He's beyond me. He's the creator of the universe. He caused the Son to die so that He could bring me back to Him. His greatness and the knowledge of His holiness and His distinction from who I am is the first aspect of healthy fear. I am to practice that daily.

Now look at the next aspect. Go to Ecclesiastes. Hang one right. Ecclesiastes chapter 3, verse 14. Listen to what he says.

¹⁴I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it nor anything taken from it, God has done it, watch this, so that people fear before Him. ¹⁵That which is already has been, that which is to be already has been, and God seeks what has been driven away.

Now listen. He says I need to understand what He has done and what He is capable of doing and if I know those two things, they will create a fear in me. So this fear that perfect love drives out is a fear that, "Man I'm in trouble with God." This fear that I'm to practice that is healthy, that is the beginning of wisdom, is a fear because I know who He is and I know what He's capable of. He created the universe in six days. A universe we can't even see the end of. He can do anything He wants at any time. There's coming a day when the Son's coming back. He sent His son the first time to bleed for us. He's coming back the second time when we will bleed on our own when we reject the Savior and God's Almighty Son. Two things. I see Him as He is. I see what He is capable of and those two things create a fear in me. Why would that fear be the beginning of wisdom? Here's the distinction. If I think God's mad at me and He's going to punish me, I run from Him. He frightens me. He bothers me. I don't like this. But if I fear Him because I know who He is and I know what He's capable of; that fear doesn't push me away, oddly enough, that fear pulls me to Him.

Go to the gospel of Luke chapter 7. Go to Luke chapter 7. We're going to look at a section of Scripture where He takes, He busts up a funeral. There's a widow who's lost a child. She's not only lost her husband, now she's lost her child. They're in the funeral procession. They're carrying this dead young man to put him in the ground. When Jesus, He's the only one who could do this, interrupts and ruins the funeral because He raises the young man to life. Look in verse 14.

¹⁴Then He came up and touched the bier; and the bearers stood still. And He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise!” ¹⁵And the dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him to his mother. Now watch this. Watch this. ¹⁶Fear seized them all,

Now are they afraid Jesus is going to kill them? Maybe put somebody in his place? It’s a great thing! Who would not, who in the world in here would not be thrilled that you’re walking your child to a grave and Jesus steps in and says, “Not a problem.” Who in here would not be happy? That’s a good thing. That is a thrilling thing. It’s not, this is not a 1 John 4 deal. I’m not afraid God’s going to punish me. It’s the opposite. He raised him from the dead. Watch this. Fear seized them all, now listen to what they say. They say two things.

they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has arisen among us!”

What’s happened? Their knowledge of Jesus is now different.

and, “God has visited His people!”

He has done something we didn’t think He was capable of. Two things. They don’t run from Jesus; they stand there. They’re afraid because He is not like them and He is capable of something they are not capable of. Nobody can break up a funeral except Jesus. He’s done it. And so those two factors exactly, Psalm 111:10 and Ecclesiastes 3, exactly is my understanding of who He is is different, my understanding of His capability is different, and I am terrified but not a single person leaves. Listen that fear holds them in the presence of Christ and it doesn’t say, it says fear seized them all. What’s the next thing? They glorified God. This fear that 1 John 4 addresses does not glorify God. But the fear of knowing who He is and what He’s capable of and the impact that is in my soul glorifies God when I know who He is and what He can do.

Now look at Mark, chapter 4. Mark 4:34. I’m sorry, let’s look at Mark 4:39. Now listen. Watch the two fears. They’re in the boat. Jesus is asleep. Big storm. The disciples are doing what? This is always proof that we have some Southern Baptists guys in here. They’re freaking out. They’re scared, they’re terrified, they’re nervous, they can’t believe it. Verse 38.

³⁸But He was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”

Now are they scared here? Oh, yeah. You’re in the water, no Coast Guard, no life vests, no boats, you’re in one boat, big storm, fixing to flip over, you’re toast. They are scared of something bad happening in their life that God’s obviously going to allow.

³⁹He awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace, be still.” And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰And He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”

So He rebukes them for the fear that something bad is going to happen to them. Watch.

⁴¹They were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey Him?”

Their knowledge of Him is now different. Who is this guy? He’s capable of something they didn’t think He was capable of; that the wind and sea obey Him. Now watch. He rebukes them for the earlier fear, He does not rebuke them for that fear. He allows it because it will pull them to Him and enhance their understanding of who He is so they will be distinct in their walk with Him. Look at Mark 5. You have a woman, issue of blood, she’s been to twenty million doctors, they can’t fix it. She hears about Jesus, who He is, and what He’s capable of. So she goes up and she thinks, “I’ll just touch Him.” And so she does. She touches Him and the issue of blood in her is healed. Now let’s look at, look at verse 30.

³⁰Jesus, perceiving in Himself that power had gone out from Him immediately turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched My garments?” ³¹His disciples said to Him, “You see the crowd pressing around You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’” ³²And He looked around to see who had done it, ³³but the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and, what, fear and trembling and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, be healed of your disease.”

She’s scared to death. Why? Because she was right. He is distinct and He’s capable of something nobody else has ever been capable of in her life. Even the smartest man in the world, the doctors of the day, they couldn’t fix it. She’s terrified, but the terror, instead of making her run, the terror pulls her to Him. “Lord I’m the one You healed.” The correct fear, an emotional fear, pulls us to Christ. The incorrect fear shuns Him. Let me show you. Matthew 17, verse 4. Again, we’ll see two things. Transfiguration. Now think this through. Matthew 17, verse 1, listen.

¹After six days Jesus took with Him Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up to a high mountain by themselves. ²And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became which as light.

Now stop it there. Are you sitting there going, “Cool.” You’re terrified! This man that, OK maybe He says He’s God. He’s great. Probably can do some cool stuff.” You get up on this high mountain, just the three, when all of a sudden you turn around. Here’s what’s happened, right. His deity, I mean, His humanity has dropped. His face is like the sun. His clothes are like light. You’re not thinking, “Cool.” You’re terrified. Now you know He really is distinct from you. The problem with Christ is, a lot of the miracles that He does we find in the Old Testament. There were people raised from the dead, there are lepers healed. We find in the Old Testament, nobody in the Old Testament dropped his humanity and showed off his deity. They’ve got to be terrified. And then look at the very next verse.

³And behold, there appeared to them,

In other words, boom, out of a puff of smoke.

Moses and Elijah talking with Him.

I don't think they met them before. Here's two guys they spent their life reading their books and all of a sudden there they are; two dead men that just appeared out of the mist. And the Bible says in another gospel that their communicating about His impending death. We're on that mountain, we see His humanity drop, and all of a sudden two dead guys appear out of nowhere, I don't think it's cool, I'm terrified. Watch.

⁴Peter said to Jesus, "You know, Lord, it's good that we're here; if You wish, I will make three tents here, one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

Their terror pulled them to the deity and the beauty and the holiness of Jesus Christ. But watch this.

⁵He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; you listen to Him!"

⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified.

They hear this voice of God and now they think, "Oh my gosh, we're in trouble."

⁷Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." ⁸When they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

He does not rebuke the fear that pulls them to Him. He rebukes the fear that pushed them away from Him. When they hear the voice, they fall down and they're not even looking up. They're terrified. This other fear pulled them right to the Lord; let's build three tents. This is great. You're to practice the fear that pulls you to Jesus Christ. You are not to practice the fear that God's mad at you in any way as child of God in the blood of the Savior.

So what do I do? There's nothing you can do. Every instance we've read is an experience God allowed that created that fear. He has to do it. 18 year old. I've shared this before, but it's distinct with this story, I had the very same thing. I'm in the shower when I hear God say to me three times in my head, "I want you to preach." Terrified. Fell in the shower weeping. I got out, went back to my room, drying off, putting on clothes, and I began to think to myself, "This is insane. He does not speak like this anymore. This is nuts." And now a different fear came. I had this overwhelming feeling that He would blind me. And I said, "God, plea.." that's all I got out of my mouth because I realized whatever He wanted to do, my begging wouldn't change it. So I went into the room my parents were in and I said, "Look I believe He's called me to preach. I'm afraid, though, He's going to blind me." And my dad walked back to the room with me and prayed with me. And then he said to me as he walked out of the room, he said, "I don't think He'll blind you." When he said that, that fear left, but the other fear stayed. I was connected to a God that could speak to me out loud with a purpose for my life. He created a fear in me based on who He was and what He was capable of. He has to do that. Here's the only option I have for you today. That if you don't have that fear, you're not practicing that fear, you don't believe in that fear, which is why you do this more than you do this. I had a lady in the church tell me she put an app on her phone about how many minutes a day she's on Facebook. She said, "I was staggered by how often I was on there. When you scroll vertically instead of horizontally, it's because your fear of Christ

is not where it should be. So what do we do? I think, dads, husbands, take your family's hand and you kneel, "Father, not this fear, but bring this fear into our home. Bring it to my children, bring it to me, bring it to my family." You're single, you ask for it in your life and every brother and sister you know in their life that's in Christ. It may be a good day today to come down here and kneel and just ask God to revisit, listen, but a new understanding who He is and what He's capable of. Fear is a consequence of what I know. I don't create the fear. I let Him create knowledge that He's distinct and He's capable of things I can only dream of. That is the key.

Father wisdom in Your word is staggering. The simplicity of it is rich. Bring us home to who You are and what You can and have done and will do. But Father we don't run from You, we run to You. Father I pray for this church that we would engage in that in a way that our horizontal turning of the pages is way better than our vertical scrolling. Free us from the world and to You. In Jesus Christ name.