

Wisdom for the Inner Life

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 March 2021

Preacher: Jason Webb

[0 : 00] We come now to the reading and preaching of God's word. This is the chief instrument that God uses to keep us persevering to the end. The scripture that Pastor Jason would like read are the ones that are copied on the sheet that was handed out to you.

These taken from the book of Proverbs. I'll not read the reference. You see them in front of you. A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother.

An anxious heart weighs down a man, but a kind word cheers him up. Hope deferred makes the heart sick. But a longing, I believe it's a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

Each heart knows its own bitterness and no one can share its joy. A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.

The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful spirit crushes the spirit. A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit.

[1 : 22] Pleasant words are as honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feast and strife.

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. A man's spirit sustains him in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?

A tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. Well, the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

May it do that with us tonight, Pastor Jason. Well, what I like about the book of Proverbs is that it does touch on everything.

It touches on the whole fabric of God's world. It touches on the whole human experience. So it takes you by the house of a sluggard, and you see a fence broken down, and grass and weeds all over a garden, and maybe one of those screen doors swinging open, broken.

[2 : 39] And there's a lesson there. It takes you to a king in front of his army, and he's riding boldly and proudly on his large war horse, and it has something to say about that.

But it also has a lot to say about our inner life, what's going on in our hearts, the secret hidden life that we all have.

Maybe you've seen the movie, *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*, and it's the story of Walter, who works at a regular office building, and he has a regular, normal, humdrum sort of life.

But he has a secret life going on inside of his head all of the time. And the movie does a wonderful job of showing the juxtaposition of this humdrum character and what he imagines or what he thinks his life could be.

So he's not really the guy who can't even talk to that office girl that he likes. He's a bold Arctic explorer, tasting the limits of the human experience is what he says to himself.

[3 : 59] We all have a secret life. We all have a hidden life. It's called our heart. Proverbs says, above all else, guard your heart. That's where we talk to ourselves.

Have you thought about that, how fascinating it is that we have this lifelong conversation? I guess it begins when we learn how to speak and we learn the words.

And so we start talking to ourselves and it ends when we die. We deal with the world. We talk to other people. We go out there and we do things.

And yet, in a very strange way, we always come back home to ourselves and to this conversation and this life that we have. Home is in here to a great degree.

And Proverbs wouldn't be of any use, really, at all, if it didn't touch on this hidden inner life. The very first proverb, Proverbs chapter 10.1, talks about a father being thrilled at his wise son or a mother being grieved at her foolish son.

[5 : 14] So every day, for one person, it's a party. And then for another person, it's a funeral. And it's all going on inside of their heart, inside of their mind.

So the son is out there, but the party or the funeral is going on in here. They're experiencing their son's wisdom or folly, and they're living it out inside of themselves.

And so if I had a particular kind of x-ray machine, I could see what's going on in your heart. So if you were this kind of person, if you have a son, wise or foolish, we could x-ray your heart, and it would be fascinating because it would go past all of the things of your life, circumstances.

So maybe you're doing very well externally, circumstantially. You have money in the bank. Your marriage looks good. It's a solid job.

Happy marriage. You have a vacation planned. And yet I can go in with my x-ray machine, and it's dark, and the curtains are black, and your soul is over there in a corner weeping.

[6 : 26] And I ask, what's going on? Well, you would say, everything is wrong. Everything is black.

The sun will never rise again. And I say, why? What's going on? And you say, my son, my son, how can I be happy when they're lost, when he's lost?

How can I smile when he's thrown himself into sin? I would trade all my money. I would trade all my vacations. I would trade so much of my life to be happy, to see my child walking with the Lord.

For them, I'd trade it all. Or the exact opposite could be true. You have \$300 to your name. You're broke as a broke window, and yet I take my same x-ray machine, and it's a Mardi Gras jazz band going on in there because you say, my son, my son, he was lost, but now he's found?

Or, yeah, I'm as poor as can be, but look at my daughter. She is going places. She is wise. The inner life of a person.

[7 : 44] It's where we live. It's where we interact. It's where we're having this constant conversation. And Proverbs says, above all else, you want to guard that. Guard what's going on in your heart.

Because out of that comes the whole of your life. So what does Proverbs have to say about the secret life that is going on right now? What does Proverbs have to say about what's going on inside of us, our hearts, our emotional, the modern term would be psychological.

What does Proverbs have to say about that? Well, four things. Four things. It's priority, it's complexity, it's solidarity, and it's healing.

It's priority, it's complexity, it's solidarity, and it's healing. Well, first of all, you see it's priority. I've already quoted Proverbs 4.23 two times.

Above all else, guard your heart. Above all else is priority. So the most important thing is the thing that you guard the closest. And what Proverbs says right from the very beginning is this is the thing that you want to put the most troops around.

[9 : 03] This is not some sort of obscure base that you can afford to lose or keep. It doesn't really matter all of that much. No, he's saying this is Washington, D.C.

in the Civil War. I read somewhere where there were more troops surrounding Washington, D.C. than there were in any army in the Union.

Why? Because whatever they did, they didn't want to lose that city. So it's priority. I hope you can see, just even by my illustrations, that what is going on inside of here in your head, in your heart, is far more important than what is going on outside.

It's far more important than circumstances. I don't, and I imagine you didn't, maybe you did. No shame if you did. I didn't watch the Oprah interview with Harry and Meghan, whatever their last names are.

I didn't watch that, but like the highlights, or at least a lot of the commentary has been everywhere. So I've seen that. And I think it's a prime example of the priority of the inner life.

[10 : 18] So here they are. Here's Meghan, this princess, this millionaire. She's, her fairy tale has become true. And yet, at least according to what I've read, she's thought about suicide.

She's absolutely miserable, or she was, because everyone's criticizing her and misunderstanding her. And we, like, I think initially we would say, oh, poor, poor princess.

You're rich, you're famous, you don't have any reason to be so sad. But if we say that, we're not listening to Proverbs. We're not taking the wisdom of Proverbs to heart.

We're being fools. So she has everything, humanly speaking. But everything doesn't protect a heart from misunderstanding and false accusations when, you know, the press is relentlessly picking you apart.

The inner life is more important than your outward circumstances. So you see Proverbs 17, one there, better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feast and strife.

[11 : 29] Again, I don't know anything about Meghan and Harry. I don't know whatever, but it seems to me that they're living proof of that. That you can have everything and yet if there's strife, if there's sadness, if there's grief, no amount of feasting will make it better.

No amount of things attacking your heart will make all that feast worth it. Well, it's more important than your physical health. We're talking about its priority.

Above all else, guard your heart. It's better than money. It's better, it's more important than physical health. Proverbs 18, 14, a man's spirit sustains him in sickness, but a crushed spirit, who can bear? So right there, Proverbs is making it plain and simple. If you are to choose between a wounded spirit and a hurt body or sickness, you should choose the sickness.

Physical sickness, if your spirit can hold you up during that time, it's tolerable. But a crushed spirit, who can bear? A body can't help a spirit when it's crushed.

[12 : 46] A crushed spirit. The word spirit in the Old Testament in Hebrew is used for wind. It's the same word and it always implies movement and power.

So Jesus, you know, compared the Holy Spirit to the wind that blows where it wills. But here's a crushed spirit and there's no movement here.

There's no power. There's no strength. It's injured. It's paralyzed. Now, that can mean anything. It's not a very particular kind of word, crushed spirit.

It could mean anything from depression to just listlessness to some sort of real profound existential kind of boredom where everything has lost its flavor and taste.

It can talk about even what some people have called the dark night of the soul where God and all of his promises just, it's just all black and unreachable and untouchable.

[13 : 51] It talks about things like heartbreak, grief, grief, and loss. But he's saying if you're sick, you can be encouraged.

Your spirit can sustain you. So you think of someone like Johnny Erickson Tata, paralyzed for something like going on 50 years, I imagine.

Or you can think of some other Christians, some here in our own body who have gone through long, physical pain and suffering and yet they're still going.

They still have spiritual life. They're still moving. They're not a crushed spirit. Their spirit is carrying them forward. They're in pain but they're not down and out. They're not lost.

They're still fighting and carrying on. But a crushed spirit, who can bear? Who can carry that load? It's a pain worse than sickness. Charles Spurgeon knew both physical pain and he knew mental pain.

[14 : 55] And whenever you read what he says about that, he always would put the emphasis on the mental is the worst. So Spurgeon preaching on Proverbs 18, 14, he said this, every man sooner or later has some kind of infirmity to bear.

That's the truth. It may be that his constitution from the very first will be inclined to certain diseases and pains. So just, you know, your genetic constitution, disposition, you're going to be inclined to some sort of physical pains.

That's what he's saying. Or possibly, he may be in passing through life, suffer from accident or decline in health. Anything, he could have a car accident and now his back hurts.

But he may enjoy the great blessing of health. Or, excuse me, he may not, however, have any infirmity of the body. He may enjoy the great blessing of health, but he may have what is even worse, an infirmity of the mind.

So, here he is. He's a well-traveled person. He's tasted both and he's saying, this one is the worst. The inner life, the heart, that's more important.

[16 : 14] And so, we need to be very careful and we need to take this wisdom on board. you know, if I said, I'll give you a billion dollars, I'll give you a billion dollars, but you are going to be absolutely miserable with it.

So, you get a billion dollars, but you get absolute misery at the same time. I don't think anyone here would be such a fool as to take that deal. Only a great, great fool would think that that would be worth it.

but generally, life doesn't come to us with that one big choice of I'm going to put all my eggs on the outer and neglect the inner.

What happens is it comes to us at a million little choices. I'm going to put the priority on my external circumstances that I'm not going to take care of.

I'm not going to watch over my heart. And whenever we pick the outer, over the inner, we're still being that great fool.

[17 : 21] We're just doing it an inch at a time, a small choice at a time. But we're not prioritizing correctly. And so, above all else, take care of your heart.

Feed your soul. Colossians talks about setting your minds on things above where Christ is. So, you can rest your minds on external things and neglect spiritual things.

And that's the pathway to misery. That's choosing the lesser. But Proverbs would say, if you even love your own happiness, choose the inner over the outer.

So, it's priority. Number two is it's complexity. It's complexity. Proverbs refuses to let us reduce the world in any way. Proverbs refuses to let us into any sort of reductionism where we just see things as just one particular way.

So, I brought this up before. So, what's the cause of poverty? If you say, well, that's easy enough, it's laziness, it's vice. Well, Proverbs would say, you're being a fool.

[18 : 39] You're being way too simplistic. You're forgetting about injustice. You're forgetting about God's sovereignty, that God has decided where you would be born and who you would be born to.

But if all you think is vice and laziness, well, then you're a particular kind of fool. Proverbs says, the poor man's field produces plenty of food. He isn't lazy, but injustice sweeps it away.

Well, so what's the cause of poverty? So conservatives, we would say, they tend towards one direction, and liberals, we would say, reduce it in a different way. You know, it's these social structures, it's these corporate structures, it's these big systemic issues, and Proverbs again would say, that's too simplistic.

You're forgetting about laziness and vice. You're forgetting about the other side of the equation. But Proverbs says, you need to lay a hold of both and not let go of either one.

It's refusing to reduce God's complex world into something very simple. Now, what is Proverbs view of humanity, of us?

[19 : 50] Well, we're complex. We're body creatures, talks about our bodies. We're soul creatures, it talks about our hearts. We're sinful creatures.

Nobody can say, I am without sin. We're suffering. we're social. We're spiritual. We're at least four-dimensional creatures.

So we're sinful, we're suffering, we're spiritual, we're social. And we're all of those things all at the same time. We don't take turns being those things.

We are all of those things all at the same time. It's going on all of the time. And all those areas interact with each other. And so what is going on on the inside? Well, it has to do with what's our problems?

Where do they come from? Well, our problems come from a variety of areas. Sin, suffering, social problems, spiritual problems. Our inner problems come from these things.

[20 : 54] You can be holy, dedicated to God. Elijah was dedicated to God. And you can be lonely, and there you are, he's depressed.

Elijah says, I'm the only one left. He felt so alone, so defeated, so by himself, and God's answer wasn't, Elijah, aren't I enough for you?

No, that wouldn't address what was going on. He said, Elijah, there's 7,000 who haven't bent the knee.

You're not alone. And the thing that he told him to do next is, okay, go find Elisha, and he's going to, I want you to go along with he's going to travel with you for a while.

He didn't say, read your Bible and pray. He didn't say, why aren't you trusting me more? He didn't say, repent of your sins. He said, you need to go, you need to know you're not alone.

[22 : 01] You need to go have a friend, and you need to sleep, and you need to eat. So our inner life troubles come from different places, and they interact. Sometimes it's sin. So David had crushed his own spirit with his own sin by sinning with Bathsheba, and then being silent about it, and then hardening his heart, and refusing to think about it, and so he had shut himself off, and he wasn't on speaking terms with God, and so he had this sinfully crushed spirit, and the answer then was not sleep and eat, or go find a friend, it was repent, you're the man, you need to deal with the sin, but there's always these interactions going on.

So Proverbs 14, 30 there, a heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones. So here we have this direction of what's going on in the spirit affects your body.

1722, a cheerful heart is good medicine. Again, there's this spirit-body interaction. Envy rots your bones, but contentment, cheerfulness is good for you.

So that's one way it's true, but it's also true in another way. I think you can understand that, that if you haven't slept for a long time, or if you're really, really hungry, you're probably given.

It's easier to sin in certain ways. John Piper said this, it's irrational that my future should look bleaker when I get four or five hours of sleep several nights in a row.

[23 : 47] What he's saying is, when I haven't slept like I ought, the world starts to get gloomier and gloomier and my future gets darker and darker, and that's irrational. The amount of sleep I get doesn't have any effect on what's going to happen, what's God going to do in the future, but that is irrelevant.

Those are the facts. I commend sufficient sleep to you for the sake of your proper assessment of God and his promises. If we are going to evaluate and believe God like we should, accurately, we need to take care of our bodies, we need sleep.

So maybe your spiritual troubles, maybe your heart troubles, and even your doubts are not related to some sort of deep spiritual problem or sin.

Maybe you just need to go to bed earlier, and you need eight or nine hours of sleep a few nights in a row, and then what happens is, oh, wow, the sun is shining. God's promises are there.

God is there. He's always been there. His promises have always been there, but I didn't have my mind. It's too foggy to see. So man's inner troubles, it's complex.

[24 : 57] 1513, a happy heart makes a face cheerful, but a heartache crushes the spirit. There can be heartaches, heart wounds that crush a spirit.

God's heartache. Charles Spurgeon, again, he had this heartbreaking trauma that came into his life. We've told you about this, I've mentioned this before, but people cried fire in the middle of the crowded church, and there was a stampede, and several people died in the chaos.

And it was traumatic, and he never really completely got over it. So trauma from a long time ago, heartbreak from a long time ago, can so disturb and so weaken the heart that we carry that around to some degree for the rest of our life.

I was thinking of a certain missionary's wife we used to support. She had gone through something like that. Her house on the mission field was broken into, and I don't know all the details.

I think she was held up at knife point. She sought counseling, and time passed, but really it became impossible for them to stay on the field, and they needed to come home.

[26 : 20] I don't, again, don't know all the details, but what I do know makes me feel compassion, nothing but compassion for her. And Spurgeon, again, I think has such a wise thing to say.

He says, do not hastily say, they ought to be more brave and exhibit a greater faith. Ask not, why are they so nervous and so absurdly fearful?

No, I beseech you, remember that you understand not your fellow man. We're going to get to that proverb in a second.

man. My point here is that we can't reduce people, reducing people into something one-dimensional.

Proverbs is saying we're complex, and so we don't jump to conclusions. We don't think that we know it all, because the moment you do is the moment you don't. So we need to think holistically about others and about ourselves.

[27 : 24] holistically about others and about ourselves. And the Christian life addresses man in his entirety as sinful and suffering, as social, as spiritual.

And so we don't want to reduce men to something less than that. Now third, solidarity. This is what Spurgeon just said, I beseech you remember that you understand not your fellow man.

Now what is he getting at? Where is he getting that? It's from Proverbs 14 10. Each heart knows its own bitterness and no one can share its joy.

Eli, the priest, said to Hannah, why are you drinking? Go drink at home. And she said, I am praying, Lord. And Eli has to take his foot out of his mouth.

Jesus went off to pray in Gethsemane and his disciples slept. He had been trying to convey how bad he was feeling, the terror, the difficulty, the struggle of his own heart, and yet they didn't get it.

[28 : 44] Proverbs 14 10 is saying, we need to understand that we don't necessarily understand what's going on inside of someone.

And we need to be very careful and very respectful about that. they aren't like you. Not in every way.

They haven't had your past. They've had their own past. They have their own way of interpreting things. As I was preparing my notes for this sermon, even on Friday, my wife had a meeting with some other people, some ladies, no one here, no one that you would even know, but where this woman was talking about another woman.

And this other woman had lost her husband six weeks ago. And the first woman said, oh, she's playing the victim card. I know, I lost my husband too. And honestly, that makes me really mad that she would even say that.

But she thought she knew. She thought she knew what that lady was going through. she thought that she was just like her. And what Proverbs is saying is, you can't possibly know everything that she's going through, or what it was like for her, because you aren't her, and she's not you.

[30 : 15] You can't reach the bottom of people like that. Bruce Waltke wrote this about this proverb. The proverb infers the dignity and the significance of each individual.

We cannot reduce people, and we can't think that we just understand them. No, we have to respect them.

Respect them on their own terms. There's only one person who knows a person's heart completely, and it's not a human being. Death and destruction lie open before the Lord.

Lord, how much more do human hearts? There's only one person that understands a human heart, and it's the Lord. We ourselves don't understand what we're doing. Have you gone through things and made decisions where you're trying to evaluate your motives and your reasons and your purposes, and you look down and you can honestly say, I don't know.

I don't know. I think I know, but I have a sneaky suspicion there's more down here in the depths than I realize. Well, only the Lord can see through the depths, and we certainly can't see the depths of other people.

[31 : 35] To this point, before the evening service last week, Max Rarick came up to me. Max, he was just telling me that we do need to be very careful when we're helping people to lament that we don't easily say, oh, I understand.

I understand. I understand to people who are grieving. And what he meant is, and I think this is what he meant, you can ask him, but you can't assume that their grief is just like yours.

That you just understand all about it. That their experience is just like mine, or I can perfectly imagine it. The point of the proverb, I think, is we need to treat other people's internal experiences with care, and with respect, and with dignity.

Not without sympathy, with sympathy, expressing sympathy, and I understand that when someone says I understand what you're going through, they're trying to express sympathy.

So, yeah, that's good, you just need to be careful how you do it. sympathy, and gentleness, because you don't know. You don't know completely. Foolish people assume.

[32 : 54] Foolish people are reckless. We don't want to be like that. Now, last, healing, healing.

So, here we are with our hurt hearts. Men are born to trouble, and the sparks fly upward.

And heartbreak is common. And we all have, to some degree or other, we're suffering, not just externally, but in our hearts. So, full of anxiety.

And maybe some of you live with that. You're always fighting off anxious thoughts. Maybe you're living with the constant clashing and symbols and Satan's voice of hate and accusation.

Or maybe you hear it in your mother-in-law or your mother's voice inside of your head that you're a bad parent, you're a terrible mother, you don't do anything right.

[34 : 01] And sometimes it's things like that that we're wrestling with. Sometimes it's hurts and traumas. I just read of one lady who spent five or six years taking care of her ailing husband, and now how does she feel?

She feels exhausted, and she feels afraid. Not afraid of, oh, I'm going to get cancer, or I'm afraid I'm going to run out of money. No, it's not afraid of that.

What is she afraid of? She's afraid to move on. This is what she said, I feel like I've run a marathon, and I've survived, but I worry that God will ask me to run another marathon.

And her heart is saying, I don't know if I really want to do that. I'm afraid God is going to ask me to do that. And then she feels guilty for feeling that way.

And so it can be trauma, or it can be guilt, or fear, it can be loss, it can be family troubles, that's where we began with children living a life of sin.

[35 : 06] It can be physical, or spiritual, or social, or it can be loneliness. So what's Proverbs' answer? Well, I'm not going to give you the answer as if there's this one big answer.

The one big answer is Jesus Christ and his final and full salvation, salvation, but one of Proverbs' answers, one of Proverbs' answers to a crushed spirit, it's surprisingly simple, and at the same time, it can be very powerful.

Well, what is it? What can help a crushed spirit? 15.4, the tongue that brings healing is a tree of life. 12.25, an anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up. 18.21, the tongue has the power of life and death.

The tongue is powerful. The tongue has power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. If you love to give life with your tongue, you will experience life.

[36 : 12] If you love to give death with your tongue, you'll eat the fruit of death. 16.24, pleasant words are a honeycomb sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

So, what's one of Proverbs answers to a hurting heart is this, kindness, a kind word, pleasant words, affirming words.

The Proverbs 31 woman, her husband and her children rise up and they call her blessed and they tell others about what she's done. They affirm her, they build her up, and she is built up.

She's built them up, and now they in turn vocally build her up. So, wisdom is not cynically seeing through everybody and tearing them down and finding out what's wrong.

That's not the wisdom of God. Ephesians 4.29, do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs.

[37 : 16] What did God do with his wisdom? He built a world. He established and strengthened a world, and he made it work. That's what God does with his wisdom.

And what are we to do with our wisdom? Well, our wisdom is also to be constructive, to build people up. The devil has his own version of wisdom, and it's to destroy people. Our wisdom is meant to be not destructive, but constructive.

So kind, affirming words. Words that find a reason, or words that praise people.

So wisdom is looking for ways to find something to affirm, to encourage in someone else. That's what a hurt heart needs sometimes, is a kind word, a cheerful word, a word of praise, of encouragement.

I'm thinking of the father who always exasperates his children, and they lose heart. Well, what's going on there? Well, this father has nothing but criticism for his children, and sooner or later, they don't care what he says, and they don't want to do what he says.

[38 : 28] He's crushed the life out of them. But a cheerful word would have encouraged them along. So kind affirming words, where you see what is Christ like in them, and you catch them doing good.

So I wonder, who can you catch doing good this week and say something? It might be the cash register lady at the store, it could be your children, it could be your spouse, it could be anyone, where you catch them doing good, and you point it out, and you encourage them, and you affirm them.

And we as a church, we could do this, we could become this culture, and I think we are to a great degree, I'm not saying this as a way of you are far off base, I think we are here, but we can create a culture even more so of where wounded hearts, discouraged hearts, crushed spirits can come and be encouraged because they know they're going to hear a cheerful word.

They're going to hear encouragement, they're going to hear a kindness in people's voices where they feel heard and safe and not trampled over and they're not beaten up and battered, they're instead built up.

They're affirmed. And it begins with a pulpit where Pastor John and I do what the Apostle Paul did where he saw things in those believers and he said, I thank God for this.

[39 : 56] I'm reading Colossians right now and he says, I thank God for your faith. I thank God for your love. I see this in you. He wasn't saying, oh, you need to keep growing in faith and love.

Well, of course they do. But he was saying, I see it. It's there. It's real. It's in action. It's for all these saints. Your love is expressive and large. And I want to thank God for that.

Well, we can do that. We can set the tone. But together we can create a humble church, a gentle church, a sensitive, where we're thinking others are better than ourselves.

So we're gentle and we're respectful with people. And that would be the wisdom of Christ. The wisdom of Christ working here and in us.

A wisdom that builds and doesn't destroy. And, you know, that really is another way, just bridging off of what we heard this morning, that we can live lives that are worthy of the gospel.

[41 : 02] In the gospel, Jesus is the wisdom of God. And what does God do with his wisdom with Jesus Christ? Well, he invades a broken situation and he rescues it and he loves them and he saves them and he builds them up and he builds a kingdom of righteousness.

That's what God does with his wisdom, with Jesus Christ. Well, now, how can we then go do likewise? Well, we can be God's instruments to build others up.

Well, may God give us the grace to be like Christ, even as we've experienced him and as we've experienced his wisdom and his kindness and his affirmation and love.

May we do the very same thing. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we do thank you for how you have so wisely loved and cared for us, that you are like a father who has compassion on his children and that compassion is matched with such wisdom.

And so, you know how to do us good and you know the best way and you are set upon it to build us up, to build us up even into the image of your one and only son, Jesus Christ.

[42 : 32] And so, I pray that you would give us the same kind of heart, that you have the same kind of priorities that you have and may we see the wisdom of God and may we imitate it even as we enjoy it.

I pray, I do pray for those who are discouraged, who are beaten up and crushed in spirit. There are surely some here even now. Lord Jesus, gently take them to yourself and heal them, restore them, save them.

Be a merciful shepherd as only you can be. Pray this in your name. Amen. Amen.