

The Wisdom of God

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[0:00] In this class, we are talking about the fear of the Lord. Why are we talking about the fear of the Lord? Why this subject? Well, because it's the happy life.

It's the happy life. And that might sound a bit unspiritual, but that's definitely one of the themes of the Bible, that blessed are those.

Happy. Things are going their way. Are those who fear the Lord. And as a pastor, I want you to be happy. Because the joy of the Lord is your strength.

Happy Christians are attractive Christians. Happy Christians are strong Christians. Happy Christians are loving Christians. Psalm 112. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands.

Blessedness and delight. Psalm 128. Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor. Blessings and prosperity will be yours.

[1:07] So blessing, happiness, prosperity are not things that we should just poo-poo and think are below us to motivate us to fear the Lord. No, this is part of the promise of you fear me.

You have a big view of me. And God says, I will bless you. Psalm 115. The Lord remembers us and will bless us. He will bless the house of Israel.

He will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless those who fear the Lord, small and great alike. So the fear of the Lord is the key to the blessed life, the happy life, the life with God on your side.

And so we aren't talking about just some sort of theoretical, theological, up-on-the-shelf idea. We are talking about what lies at the heart of our relationship with God.

That's why it's repeated again and again and again and again in the Scripture. It fills the Scripture. This word, the fear of the Lord, reverence and awe.

[2:15] So the greater our fear, the greater our joy. The greater our fear, the greater our holiness. So happiness and holiness. To fear the Lord is to shun evil.

Job feared the Lord and shunned evil. That was one of the ways that he was described. At Mount Sinai, the Lord thundered and trumpeted the law from the mountain.

The law rang out and Moses said, God has come to test you so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning. So here you are and the fear of the Lord is right beside you.

The fear of the Lord would be with you to keep you from sinning. The fear of the Lord is a companion, a friend, to keep you from sin. So Joseph had the fear of the Lord beside him when Potiphar, Potiphar's wife, came to him and tempted him.

And he said, how could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God? Now, no one was there. No one would have seen him. Humanly speaking, he probably could have gotten away with it.

[3:27] But the fear of the Lord was there living in his heart and it kept him from sinning. So what is the key to secret, private holiness?

Where no one is around. No one sees. And yet, even when no one is around, I am holy. John Owen said this about pastors.

But it's true about pastors. It's true about everyone. A minister may fill his pews, his communion role, the mouths of the public. But what the minister is on his knees in secret before God Almighty, that he is and no more.

That's true of me. That's true of you. So where does that private, secret holiness, where it's just me and God in the room, where does that come from?

What's the fear of the Lord? John Murray said the fear of the Lord is the soul of godliness. It's the motivating power, the motivating life of godliness.

[4:32] So that's why we're talking about this. Holiness, happiness. That's what the fear of the Lord gives to us. And as your pastor, as your shepherd, those are the things that I want for you.

So we've been looking at what breeds, what waters, what feeds, what helps grow the fear of the Lord. And at the bottom of it, the fear of the Lord comes from knowing God.

Those who know the Lord personally, intimately, know who he is, his character, but they live with him. It's knowing his greatness, his holiness.

And today, we are looking at his wisdom. When we know and appreciate God's wisdom, that will encourage us to fear him, to respect him.

A low view of God's wisdom always leads to a high view of my own wisdom and a low view of God and his wisdom.

[5 : 34] But if God is wise, then that raises him up in my estimation. That lifts him up. That raises him up in my esteem and my appreciation for him.

So I want to know what he says. I want to hear what he teaches. I want to be instructed. I want to trust him because he is this all-wise God. So I want to wait upon him and trust his wisdom.

Every year, Warren Buffett, the billionaire investor, writes out a two- or three-page letter to his Berkshire Hathaway stockholders.

And the stockholders wait for it. And it's a big deal when this letter comes out and people read it, not just his stockholders, but the whole financial industry, because people respect his wisdom.

They respect his expertise. They respect his experience. And so they hold him in high regard. So if you want to prove a point, you can quote Warren Buffett, and that sort of seals the deal because if he says it, then it's probably true.

[6 : 47] So Warren Buffett's wisdom. He's always very careful to give credit to his college professor. And he always says, he taught me everything I know about investing.

But listen to Isaiah chapter 40. Who has understood the mind of the Lord or instructed him as his counselor?

Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him or taught him or who taught him the right way? Who was it that showed him the path of understanding? So here's the difference between human wisdom and God's wisdom.

The greatness, the distinction, the holiness of God's wisdom. We always get our wisdom from other people. Generally. We need other people to instruct us, to enlighten us, to teach us.

Let me just put this down here. Rex Klotz isn't here. I've already asked Dave Grinert about this. So Rex, you know, is a very good auto mechanic.

[7 : 56] That's what he does for a living. But he worked for Dave Grinert for a few years. And Dave said, I didn't teach him anything, but I don't believe that. He probably taught him some things. And now Rex is an expert.

He's a professional. But God created the whole universe and no one taught him a thing about how to do it.

No one ever showed him the right way to do something. There was never a problem that God faced in his creation or was confronted by that he wasn't sure the way forward.

Or I don't know how to deal with this problem. It was dark and he didn't know what to do. He said, whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him?

Sometimes we need outside counsel to give us a new perspective. We're in the middle of some trouble and we're running into these dead ends. I don't know what to do.

[9 : 01] I don't know the way forward. I don't know how to think about this. God never needs that. God never needed that. No problem in all of creation puzzled him or stumped him for a moment.

So we're going to spend a lot of time this morning just thinking about God's wisdom in his creation. And the idea is not that our big scientific brains get bigger, but the idea is that when we see how wise God is, we will fear him.

We will respect him. We will trust him more than what we already do. So let's just start with that heart, with your heart, beating in your chest.

I don't think anyone in here is a mechanical engineer. One of my good friends is a mechanical engineer. He works for the Air Force.

So he helps create and design engines and things like that for the Air Force. So think about this assignment. Think about how hard it would be to create this machine.

[10 : 12] What kind of team of engineers could come up with it? just the heart. To design a pump with these specifications, it has to work around 75 years.

80, 90, 100 years. With over 2.5 billion cycles throughout its lifetime. And here's the amazing thing.

Now we can imagine things that last for 75 years. But the heart, it can't, this pump, it can't require any downtime. No maintenance.

No lubrication. You can't go in there and fiddle with it. You can't take it offline for a few days to fix it. It needs to, it needs to change its ability, its output from something like .025 horsepower to 400 times that to 1 horsepower of pumping ability.

It can't weigh more than 10 and a half ounces. And yet, it has to be able to pump over 2,000 gallons of blood a day. And its valves have to operate without stopping 4,000 to 5,000 times an hour.

[11:31] So, let's put it this way. The longest that I was able to find, the longest that an artificial heart has gone has been almost four years.

So, our best design is almost lasting four years. Now, one breakthrough artificial heart I read about, I've never thought about this, but had an astounding battery life of between 5 and 16 hours.

Now, think about that. Ever forgotten to charge up your cell phone? Well, we take it for granted what's pumping in our heart. But we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

So, right in the middle of your heart, right in the middle of your chest, you're walking around with this magnificent display of God's wisdom. You don't have to think about it, it's just pumping, pumping, year after year after year.

Think about the brain. Your brain has one trillion nerve cells. And, within those nerve cells, those one trillion nerve cells, there's between a hundred and a thousand trillion synapses that's connecting them all.

[12:53] in total between them. It's an organ that's always growing, adapting, changing, making connections. Even that elderly couple who's sitting on their porch swing, looking into each other's eyes and patting each other's hands, their little brains are, not their little brains, their brains are firing and connecting and growing.

Even when they're 80 and 90. So God in his wisdom has created this interconnected network that's always growing of cells.

And along those nerve ways, in some way or other, we don't know how, there's traveling thoughts and emotions and feelings and it's all related in some way. And out of this huge network of always talking to each other's cells, there sometimes comes these wonders of creation and imagination.

I just read this week about J.K. Rowling, she's the author of the Harry Potter series, and you know, it's, whatever, if you like it or not, it's been a worldwide phenomenon, and she just said that the idea for that whole story just popped into her head one day.

she said, I haven't got the faintest idea where my ideas come from, or how my imagination works, I'm just grateful that it does. Now, that's just something to me, that someone could be going along, and an idea comes out, and it's, it's the seed of an idea that millions and millions of people have read, and now there's theme parks based on it, and all sorts of things, but it just all started there in that brain.

[14:48] Now, our brains are these wonderful creations, wonderful in all senses of the word, just full of wonder, and delight, and yet, God invented it, God created it, he designed it, can you imagine the blueprints for a human brain?

now, the question is, I wonder if he's smart enough to know what he's doing with you. I wonder how much smarter does he need to be for me to trust him with what's going on in my life.

Let's go really, really small. So, imagine you had a machine and you shrunk yourself down to the size of an atom, an A-T-O-M, atom.

And, if you were an atom, let's say that you were in a cell, just one cell in your body. If you're the size of an atom, the cell is about the size of a big city.

And, in that big city there would be all sorts of things going along. So, just imagine, use that wonderful brain of yours, and imagine that you're the atom size, you're this little person walking around in your cell, just one of your cells in your body.

[16:09] And, you would see that this is not just some sort of blob, it's very carefully structured and ordered, there's a lot going on. Just imagine a city, and all the cars, and all the people, and all the telephone lines, and all the trains, and everything, traveling, and moving, and working together.

Well, that's what it would be like. In the middle of that one cell is a big library, where all the knowledge of that city lives, called the nucleus, there would be a wall around this city, called the cell membrane, and this wall is amazing, because it has thousands and thousands of gates, and each gate has a key that will open it, a certain kind of protein, and only certain proteins can open certain

gates, and some open one way into the cell, and others open up the other way out of the cell. So just imagine Chicago with all of its streets in and out, except the cell has these protein guards that stand on each street, making sure that only what it needs and wants comes in, and what it wants to get rid of leaves, the garbage leaves.

Now, in this great city, there's power stations called mitochondria. There's streets where normal proteins travel, called cytosols. So there's little streets in this cell that's moving from one place to another.

There's train tracks called actin. It's full of factories that's producing different kinds of products that the city needs called ribosomes. But this is a green city.

[17 : 53] God cares about recycling, and so in these cities, there's these little things called lysosomes that take the parts that can be recycled, put them in there, and they recycle into something that the cell can use.

Now, one of the proteins that works in this city is called myosin 5, and it is a mechanochemical protein. So it's a mechanical chemical protein. It's a protein that acts like a machine, and it runs on those tracks, on those train tracks, called actin.

And its job, like a big freight train, is to carry products from one place in the cell to the other place in the cell. And this is going on all the time in your bodies. So, but it's not like a train that has wheels, it's a train that has big legs.

So, you know, let's see, if you like Star Wars, it's like those imperial walkers with those big legs. things. And when the, that protein puts down one of its feet, it puts down a foot, and then it puts down another foot, and then another foot, and another foot, and each time it puts down a step, so to speak, it moves 37 nanometers.

[19 : 14] But eventually it gets where it wants to, wants to go. And it's moving stuff throughout this great city all the time. Now, imagine, God invented all of that. And he invented 37.2 trillion of those in your body.

Some of them doing one thing, some of them doing another. Cities that live and die and reproduce themselves. That's what's going on inside of you.

In some cases, these little cities, full of all their goings and comings, they can totally replicate themselves in under four hours.

So where there was one city, now there's just two. Psalm 104. How many are your works, O Lord? In wisdom, you made them all.

The earth is full of your creatures. Amen. What is interesting, I didn't include this in my notes, but what is interesting, for every cell in your body, there's approximately one bacteria, bacterium, that lives alongside of them.

[20 : 30] So for every cell you have, you have bacteria too. Now, before that grosses you out, those bacteria in those cells, they learn to live together. And they learn to keep you healthy.

And that's why if you take some sorts of medicine and you kill off all that bacteria, you end up getting sick. Because God has created us to live not just with our 37.2 trillion cells, but with our 37.2 trillion bacteria friends living with us.

So here we are, these wonders of cells and of cities, of brains and of hearts. And then we sometimes wonder, can this be the right way, God?

Are you sure you know what you're doing? Can this be for my good? How can this work out? I don't see the way forward. I don't understand how Romans 8.28 could be true in this situation.

And we can look at the world and we can say, this seems to be going all wrong. There was that quote, I don't know who said it, but if I had God's power, I would change a lot of things.

[21 : 40] But if I had God's wisdom, I wouldn't change anything. God knows what he's doing. From the smallest little quark that lives inside the proton, that lives inside the atom, to the vast heavens.

He created it all. And he created it all by himself. Thinking each little thing up. Each big thing up. So let me ask you, if it was just up to you, how long do you think it would take for you to create the spoon that you ate your cereal with this morning?

I'm not talking about designing it. Let's just say you already know the design of a spoon. But you don't have anything to go on. You don't have any sort of raw materials. You're going to have to go get them all.

And you're going to have to somehow figure out how to mine that metal and to forge that metal and to shape that metal. So we're all pretty smart here.

But could we even make the spoon that we eat our cereal with in the morning without the help of millions and millions of friends helping us, all these other people?

[22:55] Would you even know where to begin? I thought about that. If there I was and I needed to get some metal, I don't know where to go.

What, do I start digging in my yard and hopefully I hit some steel, some iron, and then what? And how long is it going to take me to build a shovel to get out my iron or my pickaxe?

But on the very first day, right out of the chute, God said, let there be light. And there was light. And in seven days he was done. And did he take a lot of tries?

Did it take a lot of trial and effort, a lot of redos? No. At the end of each day, he said it was good.

And then at the end of seven days, it was very good.

God doesn't work by trial and error. That's how we work. That's how we learn. That's how we figure out things. That's how the very smartest people in the whole world work. Trial and error.

[24:01] But God did everything magnificently the very first time. And so what should our response be? Well, how did Job respond when God started taking him through his creation?

Thing after thing after thing after thing. Well, he ended up saying, I am unworthy. How can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth.

Job surrendered. I know that you can do all things that no plan of yours can be thwarted. Surely I spoke of things I did not understand. Things too wonderful for me to know.

All of God's plans work not only because he is so powerful, but all of his plans work because he is so smart. And they are so perfect.

And they include everything. And he knows exactly how to do it. So that is why no plan of yours can be thwarted. He is too powerful.

[25:09] He is too smart. And so when Job started speaking, he ended up saying, I was speaking of things I did not understand. Things too wonderful for me. So we have seen God's wisdom in creation.

Now I want you to think about God's wisdom in providence. Now what is God's providence? We had a Sunday school series on this. What is God's providence?

Just in general, you do not have to have the exact definition. What is it? Mark? His governing. His governing and his caring for all of his creatures and all their actions.

It is God's power and governance over everything to bring them to their appointed end. To care for them, to sustain them, to hold them until their proper end.

So let me tell you about my wisdom. And then we will compare it to God's wisdom. So in providence, what is God orchestrating?

[26:15] All of his creatures and all of their actions. Now that's crazy, just because once we started thinking about there's 37.2 trillion cells and there's 37.2 trillion bacteria living in your body, multiplied by 7 billion people, multiplied by billions and billions of animals.

all of their, all the creatures and all of their actions. God's providence brings them every single one to his appointed end.

And he cares for each one along the way. So every Sunday morning, we do what you do. If you have a family, we, my wife and I try to organize and direct our kids to get out the door and in the van and to church on time.

Sorry. The job seems so simple. Five people out the door in the van on to church on time. And, you know, it was hard.

It was hard. We had real trouble. It could get really stressful. And so we, in our great wisdom, decided that what we needed to do was have a Saturday night list.

[27:40] And that's a good, it was a good step. What we did was say, before Saturday night's over, before you go to bed, you need to have these things done. You need to have your clothes picked out for tomorrow. You need to have your Bibles ready to go.

No more, I can't find my Bible at 8.50 in the morning. You have to have your room cleaned up. You need to take a shower or bath. You need to be ready. And that helped.

That one little thing helped a lot. And it started working better, but there was still a lot of stress. We still had a lot of trouble. And after months of working through this and wondering what we can do better, we decided to just simply change the order of things that we did on Sunday.

And so now instead of having family time first and then eating and then getting dressed, we sort of flip-flopped everything. Or no, sorry, we had family time last.

But what we did was we put that thing first, the family time first. And then you had to get dressed first before you could eat because we found that if they wanted to eat, that got them dressed faster. [28:42] So we arranged things. And like magic, it all came together and it worked beautifully and the stress was gone, the rushing was gone.

We found what worked. It took two or three years of frustrating agony and thought to figure it out. And so there's our wisdom, our control in action. Our, so to speak, human providence. You get what I'm saying? We were able to figure out how to get five people out the door dressed to church on time. Now, think of God's wisdom. Not five people, but billions and billions of people from birth to death to their appointed places to best serve his glory and his purpose. And all those billions of people acting on their own with their own desires, with their own agendas. And so great is God's wisdom that he is able to bring it all in his power, to bring it all to his appointed end.

He gets everyone out the door and into the van and a church exactly on the right time. And he does it so surely, so confidently, so steadfastly that he can say, I know the end from the beginning. [30:10] I know exactly how this whole river, this huge Mississippi river of people, I know exactly how this is all going to end. And I know it right from the very beginning.

Not only because he's so smart, or only so powerful, but he's so smart. Now, do you see, we're working down here. I don't know, down here.

We're coloring pictures of dogs. And we're learning our numbers. And God is creating nuclear physics. And so it's no wonder, it should be no wonder to us that God works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform.

He plants his footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm. So, if God is really that great, we should really expect to not understand some of the things he's doing.

He's way up here. We are way down here. So what does the fear of the Lord look like? It looks like us trusting God's wisdom.

[31:28] God's wisdom. It looks like us trusting God's wisdom. It looks like us humbling ourselves under God's mighty hand. So, instead of ranting and raving that I want to know, and I think, I don't know if this is the right thing, we humble ourselves.

We put ourselves down under his mighty hand. Jerry Bridges says, God isn't looking for advice. He's asking for trust. He doesn't need our help. Instead, he says, trust me. My thoughts are not your thoughts.

Your ways are not my ways. So what does the fear of the Lord look like? Well, it looks like trust and worship even when we don't understand. Even when we might wish things were different right now. Jonathan Edwards died early. He was 53 or so, 56. And his wife Sarah was left alone.

[32:36] And Sarah wrote to her daughter. I just want you to listen to the letter because this is what the fear of the Lord sounds like. This is what it looks like. It's not in here. That exact phrase is in here.

But it's the whole heart of it. Sarah writes to her daughter, what shall I say? Holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud.

Oh, that we may kiss the rod and lay our hands on our mouths. The Lord has done it. He has made me adore his goodness that we had him so long.

But my God lives and he has my heart. Oh, what a legacy my husband and your father has left to us. We are all given to God. And there I am and love to be your ever affectionate mother, Sarah Edwards.

The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love. So to hope in his unfailing love is to fear him when we don't understand.

[33:42] To hope in his unfailing love is to trust him. And so as we stand in awe and we respect and admire and appreciate and feel the weight of God's wisdom, then let's trust him.

Let's trust him even when we don't understand what he's doing. Let's pray and then we'll be dismissed. Heavenly Father, we do ask that you would help us to remember your wisdom when we are full of questions.

And to remember your wisdom when we ourselves need wisdom. When we need understanding and we need attitude and a heart that would approach our trials and our difficulties in a godly way. Thank you that you promised to give generously to all without finding fault. So we pray that you would help us to grow in our fear of you and our appreciation for how wise you are.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.