

Hopewell ARP Midweek Sermon
Wednesday, September 4, 2024

Proverbs 2:1–9

1 My son, if you receive my words,
And treasure my commands within you,
2 So that you incline your ear to wisdom,
And apply your heart to understanding;
3 Yes, if you cry out for discernment,
And lift up your voice for understanding,
4 If you seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hidden treasures;
5 Then you will understand the fear of the Lord,
And find the knowledge of God.
6 For the Lord gives wisdom;
From His mouth come knowledge and understanding;
7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
He is a shield to those who walk uprightly;
8 He guards the paths of justice,
And preserves the way of His saints.
9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice,
Equity and every good path.

Seeking Wisdom, Finding God

Main idea: we must devote ourselves to receiving God’s wisdom as His own provision of Himself

Introduction: we must respond to wisdom’s invitation, but how should we, and what should we expect?

1. **What We Must Do** (v1–4)
 1. Receive (v1a)/Incline your ear (v2a)
 2. Treasure (v1b)/Treasures (v4)
 3. Apply your heart (v2b)
 4. Pray (v3)
2. **What (Whom!) We Find** (v5–6)
 1. Understanding wisdom is understanding the fear of YHWH (v5a)
 2. Finding the knowledge of God, of a Being
 3. Wisdom comes not as an achievement but as a gift (v6a)

4. The gift is not merely transactional or operational but personal, “from His mouth” (v6b)
3. **What He does** (v7–9)
 1. Provision (v7a). Abundantly (“store up”) provide effective/successful decisions/actions (“sound wisdom”)
 2. Protection (v7b). He is a shield.
 3. Preservation (v8). Keeps us in the right path. (more on this in the rest of the chapter)
 4. Preparation (v9). Equipping for every good work.

Conclusion: if, by God’s grace, you attend upon and treasure Him by way of His Word, you will find that He is attending upon and treasuring you (“His saints,” v8b)!

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Proverbs chapter 2 verses 1 through 9. These are God's words. My son. If you receive my words and treasure my commands within you, So that you incline your ear to wisdom and apply your heart.

To understand. And yes, if you cry out for discernment and lift up your voice for understanding, If you seek her as silver and search for her, as for Hidden Treasures, Then you will understand the fear of Yahweh and find the knowledge of God. For Yahweh gives wisdom. From his mouth, come knowledge and understanding.

He stores up sand wisdom for the upright. He is a shield to those who walk. Uprightly. He guards the paths of Justice. And preserves the way of his Saints. Then you will understand righteousness and Justice. Equity. And every good path. Oh man, my sense this reading of Inspired and and Aaron tort Well, we are In danger, we are in danger from ourselves.

From our sinful nature. Having sinned in Adam and fallen with him. And Having given our consent to his sin with every subsequent sin of our own and being full of sinfulness. And so, it was A great generosity that we heard about last week when God addressing us Compares his wisdom.

To the Sinners who might entice us and invite us and describing his wisdom as giving a counter invitation. And the need to do need to. Respond to hear and heed this invitation to get wisdom. Uh, while we may lest we be destroyed and this wonderful conclusion, the last week's passage, but whoever listens to me, will dwell safely.

Will be secure without fear of evil. And so, the father here, Addresses. His son again, tenderly. Earnestly. Dearly my son. Uh, of course setting for us an example of how fathers should instruct their children but also Reminding us that God deals with us as a father to his own children.

Uh, that his law is not harsh or tyrannical or domineering. But that as law is fatherly, instruction and commandment that we who are his children, might live consistently with the character of

him who has given to us. Given himself to us. As father. And so we must hear and heed wisdom's invitation, and now he comes to us.

And he tells us what that hearing and hearing is going to look like, what that response to wisdom's invitation is going to look like in the first four verses. He gives us the if Must do. That is the if and if we do what we must do in verses one through four, then he tells us what we will obtain, what we will find What we will receive in verses 5 and 6.

So first, what we must do in verses one through four and then what we find, what we shall find if we do. So in verses 5 and 6, because of what he does, As well here. And verses 7 through 9. First. What we must do? My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you.

So that you incline your ear. To wisdom. And so, first thing that we must do is this receiving this inclining of our ear. And, of course, it's not just the body part children that God has given us ears and we should aim them. They are designed to be aimed at wherever our faces are pointing.

Although perhaps you may hear better out of one ear or maybe, Have just tried on occasion to aim just one ear. He's not just talking about your ear, is he He's saying direct yourself into the path from which wisdom comes. God has given you a Bible. Don't leave that Bible unopened.

Don't leave it on the Shelf. Make good use of it. He has given you some of you many decades and others of you, not as many decades, but a large portion of your life has been spent hearing his word at home and hearing his word week by week in.

In the assembly. Meditate upon what he has said and incline yourself. Direct your thoughts. Don't just let your thoughts drift aimlessly. Don't let your flesh. Grab them. Grab your thoughts and either stir up anxiety, or desire, or planning what you're going to get or how you're going to accomplish.

Whatever, fleshly aim you might have. No direct your thoughts towards God's word. And especially since He blesses the reading, but especially the hearing of his word when his word is going to be preached. Particularly if you know, some faithful preacher. Or the Lord, having given you a faithful preacher in the local congregation whenever you have opportunity to go and sit under the word.

Preached. Incline yourself, direct yourself towards. The. That God is giving that's the real helpfulness of the word ear there. That God gives his wisdom to us. Not by infusion, not by Magic, not Uh, not by taking a pill or or some superstitious sort of exercise, but in those actions by which God gives us to draw near to him, he gives his wisdom to us in words.

Every word of scripture is breathed out by God and useful. And so, we are to direct ourselves into the path aim ourselves at the words of God. And when we get there, what do you think we should do children? Do you think inclining, your ear is Okay, Pastor said the, the one application Of this is that if there's preaching, I should be there while I'm there.

I just check the box and pretty soon. I'll be wise because I I was there for a whole bunch of sermons. Is that the inclining of our ear? No. You must do something when you come You must pay attention and not just pay attention, but paying attention with all the faculties of your soul, Thinking about what is set taking note, maybe if there's a word that you didn't understand and catching it from the context or just continuing to pay attention because the pastor may use a word and then explain it to you.

And you don't get hung up on it, you pay attention, you ask God for help with your mind and yes, you think about what is being said. But not just your thoughts. Put your affections when you're told about how God is fatherly. You receive his fatherly love, and you are delighted and you love him back.

You lift up your heart towards it. When you hear about how dangerous and wicked our sin is, you hate your sin and you consider it. Uh, you consider it filthy and disgusting, and hateful and an enemy. When you hear about what God has done. You're so glad and thankful.

You praise him for his greatness and thank him for his goodness. Uh incline, your ear. And apply your heart incline, your ear and apply your heart. That's first two. So incline, your ear to wisdom and apply your heart to understand. And of course, not just your thoughts, not just your affections, but your will Buyers, your decisions.

That what God teaches you is good. You desire. What is good? And what God tells you you should do you resolve to do and you promise to him in your heart, you've often heard or sung maybe even or prayed that you would keep your vows to God? We sing that way when we sing the songs that he has given us and in the Psalms These vows these promises.

These resolutions that we make before God and unto God In Worship. Apply your heart. Your thoughts, your affections, your will And as you do, so you will be treasuring, his commands. My son, if you receive my words and treasure My commands within you. Not to treasure them as merely to look at and to polish and to be glad I have I have understood and collected, all these theological ideas and I can connect them together and I can tell you what they mean.

Well, that is a sort of treasuring. That's not all of the treasuring here. That's not the major part of the treasuring here. We treasure it as valuable, but we treasure it within us. So that the receiving and inclining, our ear and the treasuring commands within us are all feeding into this.

Applying your heart. To understanding. There's just a problem one problem with this. You and I can't really change the way that we think. And we're very much under the power. Often, how of how we feel? And many of us have tried, but We found that. A person can't change for himself.

His desires, his will And so, praise God. He hasn't just told us to come to his word attending carefully and treasuring, and applying our heart seeking to have our thoughts changed, and our feelings changed, and our desires and our choices changed. But we can ask him to do it.

Yes, if you cry out for discernment and lift up your voice for understanding now, he's not here saying. Cry out in agony, like someone who's just So longing and Desiring that he cries out, but it's not aimed at anyone. Certainly, the intensity of that. Kind of cry is implied here.

But there's someone listening, there's someone to whom we are to cry out, isn't there? Does he not tell us that? We? Uh, we should come to him.

Remember how Hebrews 4 verse 16 starts just now? Come boldly to the throne of grace. In order to obtain mercy and find Grace to help in the time of need. Now this is a crying out to God. This is a lifting up your voice to God. You're not left by yourself.

The one who gives wisdom is the one who has given his word to give you wisdom. The one who tells you to incline your ear and to treasure and to apply your heart as the one who actually works in your mind, works in your heart, Works in your soul.

He he Your thoughts changes. Your feelings changes, your desires and your choices. And so we we are always to come to his word crying out to him. Taking his word personally. Not just

coming and thinking. Okay, I've got to figure this passage out and perhaps, When we come to the conclusion that I'm unable to understand what we should have gotten out of it or Perhaps we can see how it should move us, but we feel comparatively unmoved and No, don't come as if it's something that you are doing by yourself or from yourself.

You have these instructions of what he says to do. But come praying. Come pray. You learn this, don't you. Uh, when his word and various aspects of our use of his word and are believing, his word are presented to us in the armor of God in Ephesians chapter 6.

You've got things like. Uh, his righteousness and salvation and truth, and the gospel of peace. And all these things that are That are his word, or that, we believe, from his word or received by a believing response to his word. And yet he says, in all things praying, That we must always come to his word.

And come to his worship praying. Here's a great thing for you to do. And in that time before, The service and Uh, I'll let you in on a secret. You don't actually have to wait until the Elder up front says, okay, now let's pray, you can start praying earlier than that.

In fact, you can pray, when you wake up that morning and you realize it's the Lord's day and I'm gonna go hear God's word preached today and how often I have come. And I haven't, I haven't learned the way that I wish I had. And I haven't been full-hearted towards him, and all of the emotions and affections that I shouldn't have that, I should have had and and I haven't Dealings with him in which my will to love him and Obey him and serve him and kill sin.

Had not been refreshed and resolved, oh God, help me today, it's another Lord's day. You are the one who, who must do these things, you've told me to receive your words, you've told me to treasure your commands. You've told me to Incline my ear and apply my heart, but here I am.

Now, verse 3 crying out for discernment. Lifting up my voice for understanding And will not the God who has told you to do this. Will he not answer the prayer that he commanded you to cry out to him? He is not. Some deceitful instructor or Commander who will tell us to do this and and tell us to cry out for the effect of it.

And not come by his grace. He will not fail to come by his Almighty. Cause his word to be implanted in your heart, the implanted word, which is able to save your soul. He says in James chapter 1, So what we must do receive and treasure and apply our hearts.

And pray. And when that prayer is answered, What do we find? What do we find? Verses 5 and 6 and as is so often the case, Jesus said it was the case, didn't he? When he said you search the scriptures for you think that in them you have eternal life but it is they that speak of me, he said, So often find that these, what questions in the Bible have this, whom answer or this, who answer because he's active and doing it.

What we find is whom we find then you will understand. What will we understand? Have we've inclined our ear to wisdom and we've applied our heart and we're already and we've cried out and it's going to we're going to get wisdom now. We're going to understand. Then you will understand the fear.

Of Yahweh. Then you will begin to understand. Who God is? This glorious being from Everlasting to Everlasting. Who is ever blessed in himself and dwells in unapproachable light. This Triune God who lives in perfect, adoration and fellowship. And love between the three persons among the three persons of the godhead, and who made creatures, created Heaven and Earth and all that is in them all of them.

Giving him glory but not adding to his glory as if the creature could add anything to his glory and why create all of these? If the father and the son and the spirit are enjoying and and adoring and loving each. The other from all eternity, in an unincreasable way.

Has created one of these creatures. In his own image. To bring into loving and being loved and knowing and being known. To adore him and behold and enjoy. His majesty. And in this complete generosity gaining Nothing by it, giving everything by it, God, creating Beings creatures in his own image, we whom he formed out of the dirt.

And yet he himself, breathed. Into our first father Adam's nostrils, the Breath of And how we ought to Marvel and wonder with what gratitude we should live with what joy and Zeal. We should embrace the purpose of our creation to know our God and image him and give him glory.

And yet we sinned in our first parents, And we fell. And now we are no longer. No longer come into the world and knowledge and righteousness and Holiness we no longer come into the world fearing. Yahweh Living in Wonder. At and worship unto. The Living God, who made us for himself?

And so when we make use of his word, when we respond to his invitation, in the way that is instructed in verses one through four, what we find is a what with a that's really a whom whom we find is him. Is he sorry? Then you will understand the fear of Yahweh and find the knowledge of not just facts, not even, just great and wonderful ideas.

But the knowledge of God himself, a personal knowledge and knowing him. Because God has so designed us that the way that we may be wise, the way that we may learn and understand reality The first great reality who he is. And what he has done and to know and understand who we are and what we have done and what our condition is and what God has done about that and how he saves us.

And what he does in us when he saves us and what we are to do by his grace and all these things, They all come. Not just in the knowledge of ideas, but in the knowledge of our God, Because he gives it to us personally. You see verse 6.

Wisdom comes not as an achievement. But as a gift, Remember we, after we pointed out the other things that we must do, we we did, we noted in verse three, that even doing all these things, we must be crying out. We must be lifting up our voice because we are unable To do the things that we must do.

And he doesn't just then come and Supply power. And as glorified as the mighty one who is able to work on our mind and able to work on our heart and able our affections and able to work on our Wills. But he comes not merely as the mighty one, not only as the mighty one, but as the good one, As the generous one.

Wisdom comes not as an achievement, but as a gift for Yahweh gives wisdom. You see, he glorifies himself. He glorifies himself in in being generous and giving us wisdom as a gift. Yes. He could be Glory. Could have been glorified upon us. As he is glorified upon every single one of the angels that fell none of them are saved.

None of them are Are made righteous or h. And it could have been glorified in making his wrath and his power known. You remember that from Romans 9? What? If God willing to show? Has. Um, and this wrath upon vessels prepared for Destruction. But he patiently endures those vessels prepared for Destruction.

Why? In order to make the riches of his glory known. Upon vessels prepared for Mercy. And so it's very similar here when we think about how to come to God's word and what we must do and how it works in us. Well, One of the great truths in all of this is that it, it is a gift.

That God may show his generosity by how he works in us for Yahweh gives wisdom from his mouth. Come knowledge and understanding. Now, that's a little bit of a head scratcher, isn't it? Children. From his mouth.

Does God have a body? Oh, what is God? God is a spirit and has not a body like men. So does he have lips and teeth and tongue? Does he have a mouth? Well, I know he doesn't. Who have mouths? I see not very well. I tried to put my glasses on earlier.

It helped a little bit. I see many mouths. God made you with mouths. He made me with a mouth. So that when you and I have spent time together and we've heard things and spoken things to one another, we've we've opened our mouths, this is is personal interaction. With one another.

So, one of the things, You can't get from an audio recording and even streaming such as it is and we're grateful for the availability of the technology, but it's it's just not as personal as coming and and seeing one another and sitting under the preaching and in person Well, when he uses the word, Math here from his mouth, come knowledge and understanding.

I was talking about how personally and intimately God communicates himself to us by his word. That's what second Timothy is talking about. When it says every word of scripture, is breathed out by God. Yes, it means every word of scripture is. Is God's Own word and since God cannot lie, the scripture cannot lie.

You know, we rest our doctrine of inerrancy on it. And there's the inerrancy of scripture. And then the next verse the, sufficiency of scripture that the man of God Be equipped for every good work. But in verse 16 there in second Timothy 3, there's the intimacy. Of scripture. Every word of scripture is, Breathed out by God.

And so, there is not just Um, The effectiveness. Of God's word because he answers our prayers and he works and he gives us wisdom. There's the relational sweetness. Of wisdom. There's the relational significance. Of wisdom as being personally communicated to us by God. Who draws Us near to himself and who himself draws near to us?

By his word that he blesses to us. Is not merely a when he gives wisdom for Yahweh gives wisdom. It's not merely a transaction or an operation. It's not merely transactional or operational. But personal. It comes. From his mouth. You remember, one of The Temptations in chapter one? One of the enticements.

From among Sinners was. Throw your lot in with us. We will all have one purse come with us. And, One of the enticements was to feel like you belong and many many people. Have fallen into sin in order to uh in in order to feel like they belong in some way, in some fashion.

Well, how much better is this? That Yahweh himself. Gives us wisdom. From his mouth. Comes knowledge and understanding. And so, finally, What then does he do? As he brings us near as he as it were opens his mouth and breathes out. Not that he has a mouth, but he communicates to us by his spirit.

And he uses words and he addresses us. And he works on our own minds and our own souls. God the Holy Spirit and love from all eternity in this work. That That he's carrying out and the

plan of the father to give people to the son and the son to redeem them and give them to the father and the spirit giving us the words of.

God God loving us and speaking to us, What does, what does he do? What does he give us? Well, we've arranged it. Uh, ranged verses 7 through 9. In these 4p words, provision protection preservation, preparation. Provision, he stores up. Sound wisdom. For the upright, this word that's translated. Sound wisdom, meaning?

Effective or successful successful deciding or acting. It's uh, wisdom, that is effective and successful in in the use of it in the employment of it. And he has, A treasury, we were told to treasure wisdom. As for silver or Hidden Treasures, seek for it as silver and search for it as Hidden.

Treasures for treasure. His commands within us verse one. But here the treasury in verse seven is God's treasury, not ours. And no, this is an infinitely smaller. Um, Uh, illustration. But when I was a child, and I'm not saying that parents should let their children do these sorts of things but it happened to me in in God's Providence.

No doubt. Um, much pleading of my own. There was a cartoon. And there was a very wealthy duck. And he had this giant room full of heaps of gold and in the opening scenes of the cartoon, he would dive into the gold and swim around and it he had this giant treasury where he had stored up his wealth.

Well. The Living God has an infinite treasury. Where he stores up. Sound wisdom. You. And I often feel our lack of wisdom. I I think for many of us it it feels like we're barely making it one day to the next one. One week to the next God, giving us just enough Grace for the day and we being grateful and looking to him for more, but just because you and I must live one day at a time and continual dependence upon Grace.

Do not fret as if the wisdom is going to run out. God has stored up sound wisdom for the upright. There is no limit to the abundance of the treasury from which we receive our portions from God, who gives his wisdom to us by his mouth. Or sometimes we make a mistake.

We come into a situation and we've been Christians for a long time and we know our Doctrine really well and and we feel flustered. Because we just can't see what to do in a particular situation. But we have not exhausted the treasury. Shall we not keep going back to him?

Who has stored up, sound wisdom for us? And have we really exhausted his work. Will he not now give more of that effective and successful decision, making and acting? Now he stores up, sound wisdom for the upright provision, and then there's also the protection. He is a shield To those who walk uprightly.

Again. Illustration that Not meant to reinforce that from which illustrating. I used. Play a game in which you could you need a shield for something. I can't even remember. Of much of the particulars but you start out with a wooden Shield and you can Work your way up and you get a, a metal shield, an iron shield and a steel shield and a diamond and then whatever nonsense the the game people made up oh what kind of a shield does God give People in verse 7.

Is a shield. To those who are uprightly. He himself is our Shield. Isn't this what you love to sing from? Psalm 46. God is our refuge and our strength. Not he gives us a refuge. And he gives us strength. God has a refuge. And God is our strength. And so there's protection and then there's preservation is keeping us in the right path.

I'm very bad at bowling. And perhaps none of you are so afflicted as I am, but they do things for people at the bowling alley. Maybe not at my age. It's been a long time since I was bullying, but they used to do things for people. Or they do things for people who are the age that I used to be.

And I went they would put bumpers in the lanes. So you could never throw a gutter ball, it would never fall off the path. It would always End up doing. What you wanted is that not what God is doing there. In verse 8, is that they're not something that he guards the paths of the righteous and preserves the way of his Saints.

Oh, this is true in two different ways, isn't it? His Providence to us is perfect. He works all things according to the council of his will. And so, and he does, so because he's bringing us into our inheritance and the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, that doesn't excuse any foolishness, it doesn't excuse any sin but it does make certain That no ultimate harm can come to us.

That he has ordained even even when we have fallen, even when we have been foolish, even when we have been sinful, if we have Christ, then we know that he who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us. And why did he have to give him up for us because we're sinful, But if he did not spare him but gave him up for us.

Certainly he will together with him freely. Give us all things. So he when he says, we know all things work together for the good of those who love God and are called, according to his purpose, doesn't just mean, As long as they love God. No, but because God has called them because God has produced what love they have for him.

They may. That he guards their path. And he preserves their way, but there is a second way in verse 8. And that is the way of not letting us fall. Yes. We we sin but we cannot ever be disunited from Christ. We can never have the seed of God, that new life that we have been given by the Holy Spirit can never be taken from us.

Now, someone who is presumptuous, who hears, such ideas such truths and says, aha, I can do whatever I want and still be saved. This is probably not a truth that applies in his case. Is unlikely that someone who thinks that way has ever actually been saved. But God guards, the paths of the Justice, he preserves the way of his Saints.

He instructs. Because he is preserving us, keeping us. In the right path. Now, more on this in the rest of the chapter because there are paths. Well, that we need to be protected from the paths of those who Rejoice in doing evil. The paths of the loose woman. But even the paths of our own remaining sinfulness.

We need to be guarded from that. We need to be preserved to walk in the right way. And then preparation, this training verse nine, then you will understand, righteousness, and Justice Equity. Every good path. Yes, there is. The forming of ideas, the forming of Doctrine. The skill of. Upright, Godly decision, making and wise beneficial decision making.

Both of those things are here in verse nine. Not just that, which is righteous and according to God's law and moral, but also that which is effective and wise and beneficial and good. You know, decision making in the Christian Life, the exercise A prudence. And discernment, especially is not just right from wrong.

But good from better and best. From better and good. And God does give these things to his people. As he matures you, there is such a thing as Christian maturity. There is such a thing as growing. And righteousness and Justice. And Equity. And every good path. But it is not.

The way to God. Is the way to it. That's what he does. And why does he do it? Because we're Did you catch that in verse 8? He guards the paths of justice and preserves the way of his

If by God's grace, you attend upon him. And you treasure him by attending upon his word and treasuring his word. You're crying out to him to give you to do so and you do do so What you find is that you're attending upon God, because he attended upon you first.

And that you're coming to treasure him and treasure his word. Because he has treasured you first. Because, Who sets you apart to himself before the world began? That is he who when he brings you to Faith in Christ and gathers. You Not just to himself by faith, invisibly and spiritually, but even visibly into his church and separates you from the world.

He pointed to you, he marks you and he says holy Just like we say in First Corinthians 7, the children of Believers are holy. Why the the believing wife in that case, trying to remain with her husband? Her unbelieving, husband, if you will have her. So that their children.

Who would be underearned because of her be included. In the church says, as it is, your children are. Holy, they have the holy name of the Triune. God upon them. Father, Son. And Holy. Thing, that isn't just Uh, visibly and covenantally and formally externally put upon us in the visible.

This is a reality in the life of the believer. God counts us as his He preserves the way of his. And so, this is This is great motivation. To do what we must do in verses one through four That we might find. Not merely ideas or skill or information.

But that we might find him. And that as he provides for us and protects us and preserves us and equips us prepares us. That we might find that he's doing it because we're his And he has loved us.