

Pastor Dave: Father, thank you that we can come and sing and celebrate and even say, hallelujah, that you are good. That you have done good. You are doing good and for all eternity, for everything you've done, you will be proclaimed over it. That is good.

And so that means that where you have us right now is good. And you have good plans for us. So I pray that you'd help me remember that first, I'm a citizen of heaven and that I'm an ambassador here on earth to proclaim and beg people to be reconciled to God through Christ Jesus.

Lord, would you help me remember that priority so that I don't get wrapped up in the chaos and the crazy here in this world. And so now I ask that as we walk through this new series on Proverbs, I admit I have no wisdom. And so as I empty myself, I pray you would fill me with your Spirit and wisdom that I might be able to serve and shepherd and strengthen and support your children, your body, and for your glory.

And so as we humble ourselves, would you give us wisdom to walk out your wisdom in this wonky world for your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen

Well, welcome. It's good to see you. Newcomers, so glad you're here. My name's Dave. I'm a new creature in Christ and a recovering addict and alcoholic. I get the honor of just opening up the scriptures each week. If you're here and you don't think you should be at church, this is actually exactly where you should be.

There's no one here that's a greater sinner than me, but Jesus forgave me and held me forth as a picture of His great

mercy and goodness. So if he can forgive me, he can forgive anybody. So I'm so glad that you're here.

At Hillside, we believe Jesus changes everything. He starts by changing us. We want him to change politics or stuff out there. He begins by changing us, individually, and then puts us together as changed people who are being changed. We call that sanctification.

So he changes us from the inside out so that we might be a people who stand out. And that's what he's going to do in this world. So if this is your first time, I want you to walk away thinking, man, Jesus changes everything and he can change me too, because that's true.

So with that -- happy birthday. Is it your birthday today? Sorry. I have no idea why that's in my mind. Anybody else's birthday?

[Laughter]

Because as soon as I call out Eric, anybody else born on the 31st of January. Happy birthday. Is this 50 or 51? I don't have that. Okay, 51. Okay. We're past the big one.

[Chuckling]

Or one of the big ones. Or maybe it wasn't a big one. I don't know. I'll talk to you and Wendy later. Sorry. Let's get into this. Because we're starting a new sermon series. And so I accessed a file that ought not be.

Let me just start with reading the scriptures. We're starting out in the book of Proverbs. I apologize if over the next two

months, my mind seems scattered. Proverbs seems scattered to me. It is like buckshot in the scripture and so if it seems like, man, Dave is more scattered than normal, blame it on Proverbs. It's not me.

Let me read it to you. We're actually going to start in Proverbs 3. I think this is the best place if I'm going to take 915 verses, 15,038 words and I'm going to put them in a Vitamix and blend it up for us, I think chapter 3, verse 13 through 22 is going to give us a good picture. Because what I want to do today, one, I want to look at my problem with Proverbs.

If you're just here for a life hack or something to make your life better, marriage better, finances better, you can have your life hack, you can have your better marriage, you can have your better finances and still go to hell. That's not a win. Like just an easier life or better finances isn't the win.

So I'm going to walk through my problem with Proverbs and then I'm going to walk us through, in 28 minutes, the point of Proverbs. What is wisdom, why wisdom matters and how do I get wisdom. So there's my overview for the sermon if I lose you in it. I've already given you the overview. So if I lose you, it's your fault.

Let me read it. Chapter 3, Proverbs, verse 13 down through verse 22. God says, Solomon writes, 13 "How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding. 14 For her [Wisdom's] profit is better than the profit of silver and [Wisdom's] gain better than fine gold. 15 She is more precious than jewels; and nothing you desire compares with her [Wisdom.]

16 Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. 17 Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace. 18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who hold her fast. 19 The LORD by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding He established the heavens. 20 By His knowledge the deeps were broken up and the skies drip with dew.

21 My son, let them not vanish from your sight; keep sound wisdom and discretion. 22 So they will be life to your souled and adornment to your neck."

Now as we jump in, let me just give you a broad overview for those of you who've never read through the Bible. If you read straight through the Bible, Genesis to Revelation 22, one of the foundational truths about God that you're going to see is that God is all wise. That's one of the truths about God.

Romans 16:27 "To the only wise, the all wise God . . ." Paul would say. So God does everything perfectly and he knows reality and how things really work and he has aligned everything with reality in how things really work. That's wisdom. He applies knowledge perfectly according to how life works.

Now, you're also going to see a small theological picture here; about us. We are not all wise. In fact, because of sins entrance into the world, the Bible would say we are foolish. And foolishness is trying to align reality with what you want. So we try and change everything out there to align with what we want. We will literally -- we won't walk in reality. We'll walk in fantasy.

You ever met anybody walking in fantasy, not reality, and they invite you to live in your fantasy? That's called foolishness. Now, you also see, in this book, a story called The Gospel, where the all wise God, humbled, emptied himself and came and joined us in this foolish world. Not to just show us wisdom, but to become wisdom for us.

1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 30. Jesus Christ is our wisdom. And this is what, for my friends who are atheist, agnostic, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, this is what separates Christianity from every other world religion. Every other world religion will teach you a wise way to walk. Hopefully, you'll become better enlightened and you will walk in this way.

Jesus became the way because none of us could walk it. He literally said, "I am the way." I lived it for you so that you will put your faith in me, I will be in you, you will be in me and I become your wisdom. And so, each week I'm going to point you to the gospel, because every time we talk about wisdom we're talking about Jesus.

He is the personification of wisdom. He is our wisdom. So it's not just a wise teaching that we're looking for. We're looking for Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God. Now, with this, let me give you a framework of where I'm beginning from. Having read through, studied through, memorized through a lot of Proverbs, I wish I could come to you and say, I'm a wise teacher and I have wisdom to give you.

But by the time you reach Proverbs chapter 30, you realize that the point of Proverbs isn't to prove how wise you are. I've got to agree with Aiger. I don't have the wisdom of a wild beast. And that's the point of Proverbs. You see, if you're

wise in your own eyes, you're actually a fool. But if you know that you're a fool, you're well on your way to wisdom.

Okay. Well, that was my first wisdom nugget. Clearly didn't land well.

[Laughter]

But it's true. And you'll see it. Watch. Let me break this down a little bit more. I'm just going to call the sermon series, Confessions of a Recovering Fool. That's me.

Now in this, I have seen over and over this year, 2020 heading into 2021. One of the top questions I get is, Dave, as a parent, how do I raise kids in this crazy world? In fact, as a society, I have seen and experienced it, week in, week out, day in, day out. I take my four kids out to Target and people will literally apologize for me. We are so sorry for you, raising kids in this world.

So it's become very clear that people have just given up. We've just given up. We're like, it's politically off the rails, philosophically off the rails, intellectually off the rails. How do I raise kids in a post-modern, there's no agreed upon fundamental overarching narrative to our lives. Post-modernism.

Secular-humanism. How do I raise kids in a secular-humanist day when we voted God off our island so now that every single person becomes the center of the universe and gets to set their own rules? How do I raise kids in a morally relativistic day when you get to set right and wrong for you and you can't tell me what's right and wrong. There are no moral absolutes.

I've found, culturally, that we've really broken bad in several ways. Let me just walk you through it. One, we've decided it's time to go to war. Right? That's my hyper-con . . . it's time to go to war! Get everybody out to vote. We'll defeat them. Notice, it's silent.

Others, let's withdraw. I got a bunker. I've got a bunker. I'm going to withdraw with my two people, but nobody else -- it's us four, and no more. Sorry. But we're going to withdraw. So we go to war or we just live in a bunker and withdraw. I would say to you, both of those options are foolish and not wise.

There is a better way. If you're worried about raising your grandkids, your kids. Two of my kids are here. If you're worried about how do I function in the workplace, going to war is not the best idea and withdrawing is not the best idea. The best idea is walking in wisdom.

See, this is where we're going to stand out. It's not time to give up. It's time to grow up. The world has no idea what to do with wisdom. And so this is our time, as the body of Christ, to follow Jesus and walk in wisdom.

So let me just start out by defining wisdom. You know you've got a problem culturally when we can't define wisdom and you open up Merriam-Webster's dictionary and it says, wisdom is the act of being wise.

[Chuckling]

I used to try that junk and my English and grammar teacher would be like, F. You can't define a word with a word. I'm

like, well, I just did. So deal with it. I was post-modern before post-modernism was even cool. But now, you literally, when you don't have a definition of the word, you know something wonky is going on in culture, because to define wisdom, that is to use knowledge and have the competency to align your life with reality as reality really is, is offensive.

Apparently, that's offensive. So we can't say, wisdom is to align your life with reality because to say that is to agree on reality. And we don't in post-modern America. If I feel like a girl today, I demand you recognize Davida is a girl.

[Chuckling]

And I'm going to invite you into that and that's called wisdom. You see, we're in real problems. When I go to get coffee and I say, thank you, sir and they say, how dare you. It's like, what? All right. I'm a recovering addict. I need to function in reality. Stay in your crazy.

[Laughter]

And we laugh about it, but that will literally get me canceled now. So if I don't affirm your fantasy and sacrifice my sobriety, I'm the hater. You see, we need a lot of wisdom, don't we? And I'm going to walk through and I'm going to show you today, one, I'm going to just explain my problem with Proverbs. I'm only going to take three or four minutes with that. Hopefully. And then I'm going to walk through and hopefully give to you what Solomon has said where wisdom -- why it's valuable and where it is to be found. And then we'll unpack more of that next week. I couldn't squeeze it all in.

So go with me here. Look at verse 13. Here's my problem with wisdom; or Proverbs as the book. Verse 13. This is going to like Matthew. Sermon on the mount. Beatitudes. 13 "How blessed [truly happy, fortunate] is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding."

Here's my problem with Proverbs as we go through. In the Bible belt, and this is the air we breathe, this is how we function, most of us come to church and we just want to know a life hack. How do I make my marriage better? How do I make my finances better? How do I have better kids? How do I find a better job and get better life circumstances?

Many of us in the Bible belt, haven't grabbed onto wisdom; we've grabbed onto morality. Now, in my perception, this is one of the greatest heresies in this area of America. The Bible belt. Because most of us come in and we'll come to the 915 verses in Proverbs, we'll air drop in, we'll grab one that fits us that we like, and say, look. I'm just obeying the scriptures. I'm moral. I'm good. That's called moralism.

It puts you at the center of the story and makes your goodness heroic. Here's my problem with that. You're not good! You're not! Sin has broken all of us. You're not the hero of the story. And what you don't realize, Mr. or Mrs. Religious, is that when you air drop into Proverbs and you grab that verse and say, well, I did right. The Bible says, correct the fool lest he be wise in his own eyes. And I'm just correcting you.

What you don't realize is you're misusing the book of Proverbs, because on the other side it also says, don't engage the fool in his folly lest you become like him.

Proverbs will box you in and show you your moralism. Your heresy for what it is. Some of us will just use it for intellectualism. Because in America, we love knowledge, don't we.

In fact, in America, we've traded wisdom for knowledge. Just look at the student debt loans in America. No. Truly. When I want to know what's important, I look at where our debt is handled and it's in student loans. So we've traded wisdom for knowledge, but guess what? Then we realize that knowledge isn't all that great. They said, knowledge is power. You ever heard that? But when you've got no fundamental base in the society to agree on anything, knowledge isn't power. It's a point of disagreement.

So we've traded knowledge for information. Information is now power, because you can monetize it. So once you've traded wisdom for knowledge and then knowledge for information, you've become foolish. So if you're just come to say, man, I know a little more, here's my problem. How many of you know super duper smart people? A whole bunch of letters after their names that have made an utter mess of their life.

Yeah, I do. My buddy. True genius. 182 IQ. 4.0 all through. State champion wrestler all four years. Full ride to Stanford. Intelligent! He and his buddies decided to climb up a power pole to see who could get closest to the wire. He made it into Darwin Awards. I was reading through the Darwin Awards that year and I was like, oh, my goodness. You can be brilliant and make a mess of your life. Truly.

How many of you know pastors that have utterly made a mess of their life? Yeah. There's not a week that goes by

that I don't -- you see, you can be super moral and super intelligent, but without wisdom, I guarantee you, you will make a mess of your life. Perfect example. Mom and dad are here. I think this is true, but I'm going to test them.

Mom, dad, do you remember when I brought home a homeless guy? Did that actually happen? Okay. They're nodding at me. That period of my life, a lot of fractured memories, fragmented. It did happen, though. They're both nodding. I was in Oregon, saw this guy in the rain and I was moved. I always am when I see a homeless person. And as a young person, I thought, this is simple. I will grab Homeless Hank, I will bring him home to mom and dad's house.

[Laughter]

And I don't know that I ever apologized for that. I'm so sorry.

[Laughter]

I needed to grow. So I grab Homeless Hank. I'm like, hey, bud. This is simple. I'm going to get you out of poverty. Four quick steps. Bring you home, shower you, shave you, give you a sandwich, maybe some soup and send you on your way to get a jobby job. Get some M-O-N-E-Y. You can get a place to stay. This is simple. Maybe two days.

[Laughter]

We'll knock this thing out, bro. So I brought Homeless Hank home. He went straight upstairs to the middle room and just slept. I'm like, hey, bro, we gotta get you up, shower, shave, get some sandwich in you, some soup to get you to an

interview. If I can get a job, I can get a paper route, you can too. Let's get you out of poverty. Now, did I do a good thing? I think helping the homeless, feeding the poor, hungry, needy is a good thing.

Did I do a right thing? A moral thing? I think it is good, right, and moral to help people who are down and out. Did I do it in an ethical way? Maybe. It wasn't my house. It was mom and dad's house and it ended up being part of -- I mean, I brought issues home to them. It was days and Homeless Hank did not want to shower, shave. He wanted to eat all mom's tuna sandwiches and eat everything there but he did not want a job. He wanted to smoke.

I was like, hey, we gotta get you on the road to get a job. He's like, nah, I want to smoke. Can you go get me something to smoke. I'm like, no, no, no, no, bro. That's not what we're doing. See, you can do a good thing, a moral thing, a right thing, and even do it in an ethical way, but if you do it without wisdom, you're going to make a mess out of everything. In my mind, it was simple. Bring somebody out of poverty, set them on their way and it's good to go.

You can take somebody out of poverty, but if you don't understand the complexities of poverty, you're going to make a mess of their lives. An utter mess of their lives. I faced this month in and month out. I'll sit with some of you and you'll say to me, Dave, if the church has \$8 million saved up for this new renovation, do you know how many people you could pull out of poverty with that?

And I now, having faced that question so often say, yes, I do. I know exactly how many. 266.667. I've calculated it. In this area, I could right now take all of that money, write \$50,000

checks and bring 266.667 people out of poverty. Do you think that's wise? You see, you can take somebody out of poverty for a time, but you can't take the principles of poverty out of a person. And if you don't understand, with wisdom, the complexities of poverty, you will make a mess.

If you would have given me, when I lived in a cardboard box in a garage -- if you would have given me \$50,000, do you know what I would have done with it? Smoked it, shot it, snort it and blown it. And then I would come back to you and say, can I have more, please? And when you said, no, I would say, shame on you! Give me more. I'm in poverty. And Jesus says for you to help me.

You see, if you don't understand the complexities of poverty, if you don't understand wisdom in this world, you can do a good thing, a right thing, a moral thing and even do it in an ethical way and make a mess out of everything.

Now, let me walk you through. The point of Proverbs is not just to be good or to know more. It's to know you're a fool so you run to the faithful one. His name's Jesus. Now, I'm going to walk you through. Here's the value in it. Watch verse 14. Here's the point of Proverbs.

Point 1, what is wisdom? To be competent at aligning your life with reality as reality really is. What's foolishness? Being competent at aligning reality with yourself. You switch it. Where you change reality to fit what you want. Now watch how this plays out. Here's the value and why wisdom matters. Watch verse 14 through 18.

It says, 14 "Her profit is better than the profit of silver." That is, to gain wisdom is better than to get silver. "Her gain is

better than fine gold." Wisdom is better than gold. 15 "She is more precious than jewels; . . . " Whatever carat of diamonds you want, wisdom is actually better than that. ". . . and nothing you desire compares with her. 16 Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor.

17 Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace.
18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who hold her fast."

Wisdom is more valuable than anything you can gain in this world. And let me explain to you why. You see, in America, all of us have decided, thanks to Bill of Rights, how we've founded our country. We've all decided something out there can make us happy. I think we would all agree. The government has agreed to give us life, liberty in order that we might pursue happiness.

And so we're all in the pursuit of that and we've all decided what will make us happy. And that sets the trajectory of our lives. Now, here's the problem with that. As you go and your trajectory is set, you're going to spend most of your life and most of your days and most of your energy trying to control the circumstances around you.

We're neurotic at this. We try and control all of the circumstances around us to get them just right. All the circumstances around our kids so we can get schooling right and housing right and friends right and neighbors right and education right. All the circumstances around our marriage to control it. All the circumstances around our neighborhood. Controlling the HOA. Controlling what everybody do so that we can get our circumstances just right, because if we get our circumstances just right, we'll be happy.

Here's the truth and I want you to know this. In America, a minute fraction of people ever get their circumstances just right. You know that? 0.0001% of all people ever get their circumstances just right. And the ones who do, I call it the Chris Farley principle. Everybody know Chris Farley? Living in a van down by the river. Chip and Dale's Patrick Swayze's dance.

[Laughter]

At 33, his life was ended by addiction. He died. You see, that impacted me deeply. Because Chris Farley, Saturday Night Live, impacted a lot of what I thought humor was and comedy was. Loved him. If you're older, I might call it the Robin Williams' na-no, na-no principle. If you're into history, lottery, Billy Bob Harrell is another good example. I could go on and on. There's a lot of dudes in this, and gals.

Very few of us ever get life circumstances where we want them. And those who do get them there, never keep them there. Chris Farley got there. Millions of dollars. National, international acclaim. And yet, he was miserable. I cried reading about his life. Same with Robin Williams. Those who get life circumstances where they want them, cannot keep them there. And Billy Bob Harrell, nice guy. He's a Texan. Anybody ever heard of Billy Bob Harrell?

One. Lottery winner. I'm not going to ask you if you play the lottery. Sorry, Matt. That's my bad. It's true. I played the lottery for a long time and thought, man, if I could just win Billy Bob Harrell, Texan, won \$30 million. Within two years, first day he's like my life is made. Within two years, he had lost everything. Lost his wife. Good Christian guy. Lost his

wife and after two years, took his own life. He said, it's the worst thing that happened to me.

You see, what you have set out as happiness, if it's devoid of wisdom, it will ruin you. It will. Very few get life circumstances where they want them and nobody keeps them there. Wisdom will allow you -- here's why it's so valuable. You want to know why it's better than gold and silver? Because gold and silver will ruin you without wisdom. It truly will. It's better than knowledge. It's better than information, because that knowledge and information without wisdom will be used to decimate you.

Paul said this. Philippians 4:11, 12. Because he had the wisdom of Christ Jesus, he knew the secret of contentment in all circumstances. And that's what wisdom will give to you. No matter what life circumstances bring. You can sit and view it through the lenses of wisdom and say, God's going to use this. I don't know how. I don't know when. But God will use this. Wisdom gives you a whole new perspective on life.

Now, the question, then, becomes with the last five minutes. How do I get wisdom? I think that's the question we're all going to want. Do I read a book? Do I listen to a TEDTalk? How do I get wisdom, because if I don't have it, and I need to get it in order to know how to function in all life's circumstances, how do I get it?

I'm glad you asked. Watch. Verse 19, 20, 21, 22. Oh, this is so good. 19 "The Lord by wisdom founded the earth." And I want you to write down next to this Proverbs chapter 8, because literally, in Proverbs 8, it says, in the beginning, before there was anything, wisdom was there and God used

wisdom to found the earth. That is the earth, the universe, everything here has a pattern in order. There's a fabric to reality. That if you follow that pattern, that blueprint, that order, it begins to work.

Watch. 19 "The LORD by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding He established the heavens. 20 By his knowledge the deeps were broken up and the skies drip with dew. 21 My son, let them not vanish from your sight; keep sound wisdom and discretion, 22 so they will be life to your soul and adornment to your neck."

How do I get wisdom? Point 1, verse 19. Wisdom is obtained by admitting that there is an order and a pattern to life. I know that sounds simple, doesn't it? There is an order and there is a pattern. Go to Genesis 1 and 2. Wisdom is obtained by saying, in the beginning, God used wisdom to form, fashion, and shape everything. Therefore, as I grow in wisdom, I'm going to understand the pattern, the form, the shape and the blueprint to how everything works.

This is not just scientific. Although, it is scientific. Do you know there's a pattern to relationships? Do you know there's a pattern to finances? That if you function according to that pattern, it actually works. You know there's a pattern to emotions. You see, you've grown up in a world that says, there is no pattern, there is no fabric to society, there is no blueprint. You have to make it up for yourself.

And if anybody tells you different, just write them off your island. It's okay. Wisdom begins by admitting there is a pattern. And you may or may not agree with this, so I'm going to illustrate it. I think I was 22 when I flew the first time. And it was with you, dad. First time I flew. How many

of you have ever flown 747s, 737s, 727s? Okay. Pretty much all of us.

How many of you, the first time you ever got on that giant jet were like, how in the world does this thing actually fly? Anybody ever wonder that? I've got pilots here that I've asked, hey, that 747 fully loaded at takeoff weighs about 737,000 pounds. I looked it up. Because I know people weigh a lot and I see them bring in extra bags.

[Laughter]

Women can shop and they pack it up. And I've carried the bags that we travel with. They're heavy. And so you put all of that in a plane, how can 737,000 pounds get off the runway? And the pilot will be like, well, you see, Newton's 1st, 2nd, 3rd laws. He did some work on that. Bernoulli wrote some principles about air speeds up over the wing. And then you've got thrust and drag and lift and gravity weight. And then you fly.

[Laughter]

And honest pilots, genuinely, will look at me and be like, dude, I have no idea.

[Laughter]

Truly, they know throttle up, pull back and turn. But when it comes to how does -- you see, truly, when the Wright brothers were working on aerodynamics and trying to get a plane off the ground and everybody said they can't work. But when you function according to the principles of aerodynamics and you do have the proper thrust that

overcomes the drag and that wind comes over the wings, you've got lift and it overcomes gravity and weight, you honestly do fly. I don't know how. I don't.

And I still get on a plane and I'm like, I don't know. But I did watch a YouTube video where they loaded this 747 down with 975,000 pounds, a million pounds, and that junk got off the runway, bro. So I think it can fly me and I'm okay with it. I just don't know how it works.

Here's the truth. God created this world in wisdom and when you admit that there's a pattern to that and you begin to function according to that pattern, it works and you begin to align your life with reality and you fly. Now the world looks at you and says, Christianity makes no sense. In fact, Corinthians chapter 1:24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29. The world looks at it and says Christianity is foolish. Foolish! There's no way that bumblebee should fly. None.

You're telling me come submit to Jesus and lose my life that I might find it? Are you kidding me? That's foolish. You're telling me if I want to be rich, let go of everything? Does that not sound foolish? Yeah, and the world says, that's foolish. Jesus says, if you truly want to live, die. Die for one another. And that's where you'll find life.

Jesus says, you want to be first? Be last. Jesus says you want to be great? Learn to be a servant of all. I can go on and on. The principles are upside down. But I'll tell you this. You may not understand it, but Jesus has outlined the principles of spiritual aerodynamics. And when you come to him and submit to him and give your life to him and begin functioning according to truth as truth really is, your life takes off and you fly. You overcome that gravitational pull of self

and sin. And wisdom becomes your companion.

How does it work? I don't know. I wish I could tell you, but I know this. There is a pattern how God created this universe. There is a pattern to how God created this world. There's a pattern to how God created you. There is a pattern to how God created husbands. And when they function according to that pattern, their wives come alive. There's a pattern to how God created wives. And when husbands and wives function according to that pattern, we fly.

Now the world would call it foolishness. Oh, submit to your husband? There's no life there! Listen, if you function according to wisdom and the pattern God has created, you will fly. If you choose to reject it, your life will crash. The church is here to show the world, look, you can fly. There's life to be found in submitting to Jesus Christ.

Now, with that, I'll tell you this. Wisdom is to be found -- it starts here and I'll end with this. Proverbs chapter 1, verse 7. Wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord. If you're here, your life's a mess, you're a wreck, my guess is you've made up your own rules, your own pattern. You're flying according to your own rules, but you're crashing. You really want wisdom, start here and I'll give it to you.

Wisdom begins with fearing the Lord and saying, God, I'm so sorry. I've been running my own life. I've been rejecting the principles of aerodynamics. I've been doing my own thing. No wonder I've been crashing. I want to give my life to you. I want to surrender to you because I know, one day, I'm going to stand before you. That's the beginning of wisdom. That's where you start.

And if you're trying to run your own life and wondering why it's crashing, it's because you don't understand the principles of aerodynamics. You've been coming up with your own rules. How about today you stop and say, Lord, really, I haven't feared you well. I haven't submitted. I haven't surrendered. Start there and watch what happens. Watch. He says, that's the beginning of wisdom.

Now, if you don't want to do that, that's okay. That's your thing. Let me know how it works out for you. My dad used to take me down -- remember, you picked me up I think once a week on Wednesdays. We'd run down to Dairy Queen and get the full meal deal. It's like \$2.99. Delicious. Delicious. It's probably like five bucks now. But inflation.

Then we'd go play at the playground and dad was the first one -- great dad -- he taught me about the monkey bars. You guys ever been on monkey bars? That's probably offensive somewhere to someone. Have they changed the name of it now?

[Laughter]

I mean we laugh. This is the cancel culture. Everything I grew up with now is offensive to monkeys. Every monkey, everywhere. How dare you. You know we're 98% the same. I'm like, then go marry a monkey, because we're totally different. Totally off topic. I am so sorry.

[Laughter]

Do you understand? When you're preaching and you realize everything I saw goes out and it's going to be filtered through thousands and thousands of people. So I realize it offends a

lot of people in a lot of places. You've got to reach a point where it's like, okay. Like, I offended monkeys. So sorry, monkey, if you're watching this.

[Laughter]

Because we do. We have chipmunks. We have -- anyway. Argh.

[Laughter]

Dad would take me to the playground in Gold Beach, Oregon, put me in the monkey bars as a kindergartener and I would just hold on. Right? Do you remember the first time you ever did the monkey bars? You hang there for about five minutes and you're like, this isn't fun. And dad would tell me, son, you gotta swing and you gotta let go to move forward.

And dad was full of simple wisdom that you've gotta let go to move forward. And I'd be like, no, thank you. And so I'd literally hang there. He'd wait. Back then we didn't have rubber tires. We had asphalt.

[Laughter]

That might be what's wrong with our generation. I don't know.

[Laughter]

But it's the most profound thing. Did you see what Solomon said in verse 18? Go ahead and pull up verse 18. Watch this, because this is going to be -- 18 "She [wisdom] is a tree

of life . . . " Continually giving life and help and joy. "She's a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all those who hold her fast."

You're going to see in Proverbs over and over, in order to move forward, you've gotta let go. Many of us are holding on to what we considered good, moral, intellectual knowledge. Jesus is always telling us, listen, I want to sanctify you, I want to strengthen you, I want to grow you. You've got to let go to move forward.

As we walk through Proverbs, if you're not willing to let go of the patterns of the past, what you considered wisdom, you're going to stay stuck and you're going to be hanging there. And it's exhausting, isn't it? The physics of it never work out. You are going to drop. It's what gravity does. It's going to pull you down. You want to grow in wisdom, you want to gain wisdom? Go to Jesus. Bow your knee to Jesus. Ask him for wisdom.

James 1:22. That's what he tells us to do. And then you begin to swing and reach forward, because he's going to give you a lot of wisdom. You're going to see Jesus page after page after page. Today, I would ask you, what are you holding onto in the past that you need to let go of? Because as long as you're holding on and not reaching forward to lay hold of Christ Jesus, you're going to remain in a state of foolishness. It's exhausting. You're going to fall. You're going to get hurt.

Let go and reach ahead towards Jesus Christ. Today, genuinely. It's not just a question to end with. What are you holding onto? What are you clinging to? Can I be honest with you? For many of us, it's politics. If we only would have

won this election, then I would've been happy!

You're a fool. And it's your own fault. You know better. You've been taught better. You're a kingdom of heaven. You are. You are a citizen of heaven. That is where you're from. You're an ambassador here. If that's what you're holding onto, guess what? You're going to pass on rage and anger and hate to you children. They look to you to know how to respond to these things. If you're all spun up, they'll be all spun up.

What are you holding onto today that you can bow the knee to Jesus, let go of, so you can reach a whole of him. Let's pray. Father, God, thank you so much. You've been so good to give us wisdom in the person of your Son, Jesus Christ. And having grown up in a fallen world filled with foolishness and folly, so often I hold onto it. I see it in my own heart. Would you forgive me of those things that I've held onto in the past that keep me stuck, keep me immature, keep me walking in foolishness and folly so that I might lay hold of your Son, Jesus Christ and be led in the way of wisdom?

Father, for those who are here, I pray that you would give us the grace to realize that there is a pattern to life. Would you graciously teach us what that is that we might love you, love our neighbors, so that your light might flow through us in this world that is looking for something that will work and will see your light in and through us and be drawn to you. That's my prayer. That you would save the lost. That you would use us to shine as a light.

Thank you so much this morning for your wisdom, through your word. For your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

