WISDOM

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS: Eternal wisdom for today’s disciples

BY PASTOR JIM LACY, INTERIM

Proverbs is a unique book in the Holy Scriptures. It gives us generalizations of truth in short statements. A modern “proverb” is “a stitch in time saves nine.” This is a general statement that usually proves true, and from which we can profit.

Our memory verse for the month of May demonstrates this -
“Two things I ask of you, O Lord; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.” - Proverbs 3:7-8

It generally is true that those who practice the commands of the Word of God live long and experience true (i.e., spiritual) prosperity.

Proverbs has many other promises in it. Look for them as you read. As we read a chapter of Proverbs each day this month, I ask you to pray for others at Bethel. Ask God for wisdom and character building from the Word this month.

I suggest that you read the chapters of Proverbs aloud and that you consider using a translation that is new, and helpful, to you.

My “life verses” are from Proverbs 30:7-8:
“Two things I ask of you, O Lord; do not refuse me before I die:
Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.”

Elders Notebook: The valuable wisdom of our parents

“Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.” - Proverbs 1:8-9

In reading through the Proverbs this month, I have noticed some of the recurring references to the sources of wisdom. Wisdom is sometimes personified, along with Folly. But wisdom also is attributed to actual persons – and one of those sources that seems fitting to consider in May and June is parents. Mother’s Day falls in May, and Father’s Day, in June.

Granted, not all children are blessed to have had both a father and mother who taught and modeled the wisdom that all of us need. But in my own case, I drew practical wisdom from both parents – and since both have gone on to be with the Lord, I savor those lessons.

My mother modeled, among other things, the gift of personal writing as a ministry. She was a prolific writer of letters and personal notes. My father modeled hard work and a commitment to prayer, Bible study, Christian service.

It is worth asking, as we read through the biblical book, what wisdom we have drawn from two of its referenced sources – our “father’s instruction” and our “mother’s teaching.” After all, it was in the creational wisdom of God that we should have parents, and that they should teach us much of what we need to know in life.

– Ken Wyatt, co-editor
An elder-brother in crisis

Before going into ICU to pray with their brother in crisis, elders got an update from Carolyn Minier on Dick’s status at that point.

ON SUNDAY MORNING, April 23, Dick Minier “filled the pulpit” at Bethel, sharing reflections from Psalm 23. On Monday afternoon, he was airlifted from Jackson to the U of M Medical Center in Ann Arbor after suffering a major stroke. His wife Carolyn asked that as many elders as could, visit Dick to pray with him and anoint him with oil.

However, God’s timing and healing ministry to Dick was already well under way. Though Dick still faced recovery and therapy after a serious episode, doctors had skillfully removed the major blood clot from his brain. By the time elders visited the next morning, Dick was awake, aware, able to express his appreciation and testify to God’s presence. In a dramatic realization of the Psalm he had spoken from, Dick walked through “the valley of the shadow of death,” emerging on the other side, still alive, grateful, and with a renewed awareness of how our “Good Shepherd” lovingly tends His sheep. As this is written, Dick is in rehabilitation at a facility in Chelsea.

Bits ‘n’ Pieces

Ukes and bells. If ever there were variety in a Sunday morning service at Bethel, the congregation got it on April 30. Karen Glaser, accompanied by Ashley Cumings, presented a solo bell rendition of “Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross.” Then, after its informal introduction in a prelude, a newly formed ukulele band presented the praise/worship song, “Do You Not Know?”, based on Isaiah 40:27-31. The group was brought together by David Parsons. He also prepared the music and lyrics.

Ella’s brother. On May 8, Heather Lehman hosted an exhibit at Ella Sharp Museum highlighting a diary kept in the late 19th century by Tracy Merriman, younger brother of Ella Sharp. Heather’s Facebook invitation explained: “As a history major at Spring Arbor University, this exhibit serves as my senior capstone project. Interpreting Tracy’s diary with the help of the Ella Staff over the past few months has been an exciting honor for me. There is so much to learn about Tracy’s life in the Merriman-Sharp farmhouse, and I am delighted to introduce him through this exhibit.” (See photo pages.)

Bean Team. Three Bethel kids – Avery Gillmore, Noah McCallum and Silas York – are members of the Bean Elementary Destination Imagination Team. They recently took second in state in their category. That qualifies them to go to the Globals event in Tennessee this month. If you noticed a car wash taking place in the Bethel parking lot on Saturday, April 29 – that was the team members raising funds for their trip. They’ve also been doing yard work, selling baked goods and sharpening pencils for their teacher. (See photo pages.)

CONGRATS TO:
- Matt Gillmore, on his May 6 marriage to Michelle Hauser Bellah.

CONDOLENCES TO:
- Jana and Dennis Conant and their family, on the passing of Jana’s mother, Betty Ligibel, 92, on April 10.
In honor of Mother’s Day, Jana Conant writes about her mother, Betty Ligibel.

HAVING RECENTLY lost my mother, Mother’s Day will be a painful reminder of her passing and a time to reflect on this influential person in my life. I have been in the process of losing my mom for years as dementia has slowly and cruelly eroded the personhood of the mom I knew, and left in its stead a very different woman.

The mother I knew was a pretty, proud, classy woman with myriad gifts. She had a beautiful voice and was a talented dancer who had been offered a Hollywood contract as a preteen. Her father refused to move to California; however, she continued voice and dance training and went on to win a couple of beauty pageants and sing on the radio in the Detroit area.

While still in her teens, she met my father, Carl, and married this WWII pilot who won her heart. I was one of four children and their only daughter. I’m sure she envisioned having a musically gifted little girl, but that was not to be. I not only couldn’t sing, but my musical future was short lived when I was asked by my parents to stop playing the violin. I guess our home was a bit too small for my parents to endure the discordant noise as I practiced. Mom would not be living out her dreams through me! To add insult to injury, I looked just like my dad.

My mom was a stay-at-home mother and homemaker. She was an excellent housekeeper, interior decorator, and cook who frequently entertained friends and my father’s business associates. I lived an idyllic childhood filled with love, discipline, security and predictable routines. Mom was always there, dinner was always on the table by 6 p.m., and our needs (not our wants) were always met. Holidays and birthdays were special occasions and life was good.

The caveat to this was that she held to Christian Science beliefs and we were brought up in this faith. I never received vaccinations or medications, and doctors were not a part of our lives. We were taught sickness was the result of improper thinking. However, faith was an important part of her life, and she loved the Lord despite misguided thinking and theology.

As I became an adult and met Dennis, we recall the night we called home to share the good news of our engagement. Mom didn’t sleep that night. She was busy writing out the guest list, and planning the reception. The train was on a roll and we were along for the ride. Dennis and I learned to listen politely, then make the decision we felt was best.

Over the years, I watched mom go from strong and independent to frail and child-like. She always recognized me and was delighted to see me. God gave me opportunity, before Mom lost most of her faculties, to share the plan of salvation with her and say the Sinner’s Prayer. She had never been open to this discussion before. Mom asked Christ into her life, and I look forward to seeing this beautiful, strong, lovely lady in heaven.

Thank you, Mom, for loving me, raising me well and giving me the invaluable gift of a happy childhood. I love you, and I miss you.

Don Beans, retired missionary who served with Trans World Radio in Bonaire, a Caribbean island, is involved in a senior writing class. He recently wrote some lines in the Japanese haiku format. This poem taps Don’s memories of Bonaire and his heritage, for his mother Florence wrote poetry, including some poems about Bethel.

SEASHORE 1

Mighty waves march in
Tide slides ashore quietly
Under rising moon.

Beautiful sunset
Over Caribbean sea
There, at last, Green Flash!

At sunset they come
Gliding to their salt-pan nests
Lovely Flamingoes.

Shipwreck! Very strange!
Captain ran ashore at night!
Near south end lighthouse!

Here come the tourists!
Cam’ra, hat, “how much is that?”
Huge ship, tiny town!

Lunch time at guest house
Always corn bread and fish soup
New Guest gets the head!

Arriving tonight
Friends at the airport we’ll meet
See lights? Time to go!
Dave and Wendi McCallum both ran in the Orthopaedic Rehab 10k/5k walk/run event on April 22. Zach Strauss and Kathy Arnold from Bethel also participated.

Easter services often attract family to visit their loved ones at Bethel. Nate York was joined at the Easter Sunday breakfast and service afterwards by his parents, Dennis and Karen York.

Karen Glaser plays "Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross" during the April 30 service.

Dick Minier speaks in the April 23 service, a day before his stroke.

Heather Lehman next to a part of the exhibit she prepared as her history capstone project at Spring Arbor University.

Easter services often attract family to visit their loved ones at Bethel.
Some of Bethel’s senior youth group boys engaged in some quality study time in the youth room of the educational wing.

Pastor Jim Lacy preaching on Easter.

Three friends – Abby Parsons, Charis Cumings and Emma Coleman.

Bean Elementary’s Destination Imagination Team, three of whose members are Bethel kids.

Dave Lemmon and Eric Dorbeck – two of our faithful tech crew on the job at their station during the Easter service.

Ella Williams with Daisy Strauss at the Easter breakfast.

The praise/worship team warming up on Easter Sunday morning before the breakfast service. Much time is spent in rehearsal every week. Rehearsals are normally on Wednesday evening and early Sunday morning.