January 6-7, 2024

<u>Title</u>: Wisdom for Life: The Book of Proverbs, Pt 1: "The Fortress, Fountain, and Feast of the Fear of the LORD" – Proverbs 1

<u>Big Idea</u>: Turn to the fortress, fountain, and feast of the fear of the LORD!

What in the message stood out to you?
What questions do you have?

1. <u>The "FEAR OF THE LORD" is the beginning of wisdom! – Proverbs 1:1-7</u>

Read Proverbs 1:1-7. What do the first 6 verses say is the purpose of the Book of Proverbs? Which of these purposes stand out to you and why?

The goal in reading a proverb (poetry designed to give practical instruction on living well in ways that are memorable and repeatable), is to understand its main point, not to press every detail or treat them as absolute truths or promises. How should knowing this affect the way you read Proverbs?

Read Proverbs 26:4-5. Do verses 4 and 5 contradict? Why or why not? How does this highlight the need for wisdom in applying a proverb?

Read Proverbs 1:7, Proverbs 9:10. What do you think it means to "fear the Lord?" How does Psalm 147:11 help with your understanding?

What does it mean that the "fear of the Lord" is beginning of knowledge and wisdom? Why can't you obtain true knowledge and wisdom without it?

2. <u>Turn to the FORTRESS and FOUNTAIN of the fear of the LORD! – Proverbs 1:8-9</u>

Read Proverbs 1:8-9. In the ancient world, a garland was a symbol of victory and life, and the giving of a pendant symbolized the promise of guidance and protection. How does fearing the LORD provide these things to us?

Read Proverbs 14:26-27 from the NIV. What do you think it means that God is a fortress? What do you think it means that God is a fountain?

Share a time when you depended on God in a time of trouble. How was He a fortress and a fountain for you?

3. <u>Turn away from the invitation of SINNERS – Proverbs 1:10-19</u>

Read Proverbs 1:10-19. The structure of the Hebrew noun for "sinners" suggests habitual, chronic, unrepentant sinners. How does verse 19 describe them?

It seems that being "greedy for unjust gain" is a summary of what it means to be a sinner. What are some examples of this in different areas of life?

Read Proverbs 1:17-19 again. What do you think is the point of these verses?

Do you agree that the net has been spread in plain sight regarding the pain, disappointment, and death of the sinful path? Is it obvious that this is where sin leads? Why or why not?

What are some places people look for happiness other than God? How are all of these ultimately painful and disappointing?

4. Turn to the FEAST – Proverbs 1:20-23

Read Proverbs 1:20-23. What are various places where Lady Wisdom's voice is heard in these verses? What does this tell you about the areas of life where the wisdom of God is needed?

How does the promise of verse 23 encourage you? What is the condition?

Read Proverbs 9:1-6. This passage describes the experience of the fear of the LORD as a feast for the soul! In what ways did you experience a feast for your soul when you became a Christian?

5. Turn away from the FAMINE – Proverbs 1:24-33

Read Proverbs 1:24-33. How do you make sense of Lady Wisdom ultimately laughing and mocking those who reject her in verse 26? What had she done before this in verses 24 and 25?

How do those who reject the LORD "eat the fruit of their own way and have their fill of their own devices?"

C.S. Lewis once wrote: "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, 'Thy will be done.'" What do you think he meant by this? Do you agree with it? Why or why not?

Read verses 32 and 33 again. How does the word "whoever" in verse 33 encourage you?

Do you think this "turning away" from sin and "listening" to wisdom is a one-time thing, or a constant thing? What are some ways you do this in your own life?

"Next Steps" Takeaways – Discuss and pray through the following:

- With God:
    - For the first time or again and again, will you turn away from the invitation of sin and turn to the fear of the LORD?
    - Will you join us in reading through the Bible this year?
- With Others:
    - Will you prayerfully consider entering into our Good Shepherd Continuing Together Covenant?
    - If you want to take your first steps in exploring Good Shepherd:
        - First Step Welcome Lunch – Sunday 1/14 from 12:15pm-2pm
        - Continuing Together Class – Sundays starting 1/21 for 6 weeks from 9am-10:15am.
- On Mission:
    - Will you pray for those whose needs will be met this year through the money that was given to our "Light of the World" Year-End Offering? Our goal of $150,000 was exceeded as we collected over $160,000 to shine God's light into the darkness of human need.