

**“A Heart of Wisdom”**  
**Psalm 90**  
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Good morning. Over the past few weeks, we've been enjoying a series. What we've been able to be here in person or joining us remotely from live stream. But we've been enjoying a series with Pastor Doriani as we've been walking through several proverbs looking for wisdom from the proverbs to apply to regular portions of our lives as we try to live our lives to the glory of God.

We've looked at wisdom and how we how do we find ways to establish good, deep friendships and relationships? We talked about gospel parenting, even as we've looked through the scriptures, and we've also talked about marriage and how God has designed us in our relationships at home to model the love that Christ Jesus has for his bride, the church.

Well, we're also in this same series going to be shifting gears just a little. There's another book of the Old Testament, but it's just chock full of wisdom for us. And that's the book of the Psalms. Now, just to jumpstart our thinking a little as we begin the time together, I'd like to just ask a question. And that is, do we, as a church, want to be a people that are known as possessing a heart of wisdom?

And maybe going along with that same question, if somebody just stopped you on the street and asked, how would you describe wisdom? How would you define it for me? I wonder what our answer would be. Do we have a good definition of what wisdom is? Likewise, do we know where we turn in Scripture in order that we might gain wisdom? And where else beyond Scripture might we gain wisdom as we desire to live to the glory of Jesus Christ?

So, this morning, we're going to begin by looking into Psalms. Psalms is such a fascinating book to me. I've been spending a lot of time in them over the last several years. In the Psalms, of course, we hear some of the greatest praise and adoration of God that has ever been put into word that men can lift and part of worship. We receive great songs that are sung regularly, sometimes either by a choir, sometimes by the congregation. Sometimes we even managed to sing them antiphonal as they were written, where one group will sing to the other group back and forth the precious truths of God's Word found for us in the Psalms. Even as we look at the Psalms, we realize that the Psalms reach the very heights of heaven itself. As we rejoice in God's goodness and all that he is and all that he has done. But also the Psalms express, I think very, very vividly and candidly some of the deepest, darkest struggles of the soul. As men wrestle with the realities of life and the realities of God as God is working and they cry out, how long? How long? So this morning we're going to start. We're going to be looking at the very first Psalm. Now, please notice I didn't say that we're going to be looking at Psalm one. We're turning

to Psalm chapter 90. But it is indeed the first Psalm. This morning we're going to look at a Psalm of Moses. A lot of the Psalms are written by King David. Many more were written by the sons of Korah. An equal number almost were written by Asaph, who is the equivalent of our John Haines in King David's day. There are others that are written by **Ezrahites**. Some have been written by King Solomon himself, but this one in particular is listed for us as having been written by Moses, a man of God, literally a Moses, a prophet, a man who gave everything in service of God.

So invite you to turn with me in your Bibles to the first psalm of our Psalter, Psalm 90. I'll read it out loud as you follow along. You'll find it on page 496. If you're using one of the pew Bibles before you, Psalm chapter 90, beginning with verse one.

*Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world from everlasting to everlasting. You are God. You return man to dust and say, return, O children of man, for a thousand years in your sight. But as yesterday, when it is past, or as a watch in the night. Verse five, you sweep them away. As with a flood. They are like a dream. Like grass that is renewed in the morning. In the morning it flourishes and is renewed. And in the evening it fades and withers. But we are brought to an end by your anger, by your wrath. We are dismayed. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins and the light of your presence for all our days pass away under your wrath. We bring our years to an end like a sigh, the years of life or 70, or even by reason of strength, 80. Yet their span is by toil and trouble. They are soon gone. And we fly away. Who considers the power of your anger and your wrath according to the fear of you? So, teach us to number our days, that we may get a heart of wisdom return. Oh Lord, how long have pity on your servants? Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, and for as many years as we have seen evil. Let your work be shown to your servants and your glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us. Yes, establish the work of our hands.*

Let's pray - Father, we turn to you. We ask that by your spirit and by your grace your word may be preached and applied to our hearts and lives as we turn to you now, looking to understand what it is you have for us today, that will guide our steps as we leave this place and live for you to your glory alone. It's in Jesus name that we ask it. Amen.

Well, again, Moses, the man of God or the prophet of God begins this very first psalm with, I think the only focus that could rightfully be the right first focus or be put in first place. And that is he begins this Psalm by telling us something about who God is. He declares something to us about who God is so that we might know a heart of wisdom. Begin with a right understanding of God. Apart from understanding who God is, there's really no hope for us to gain this heart of wisdom. So in these opening words, Moses says, God alone has been Israel's dwelling place throughout all generations. And then Moses unpacks the statement a little bit further, simply by adding, before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the

world from everlasting to everlasting, you are God. So not only has Moses just given us a very clear statement about who God is, but I think he's also supplied us with a little bit of the context in which he is writing. Moses begins with a fact the fact of God's eternal city. The God who had appeared to Moses back in Exodus chapter three at the burning bush. You remember this story, familiar with it at all. There the bush was burning, it was not being consumed. And Moses drew near to see what it was. And as he drew near, God let him know what his role was about to be to lead the people of God. Well, Moses wasn't quite sure about that. He says, Lord, who shall I tell them sent me? And God's answer simply was, I am who I am, Yahweh.

Well, here in this Psalm now, chapter 90, many years, perhaps after the burning bush, but yet still at a time frame, long before the other Psalms were written. Here Moses begins by using the word Lord rather than Yahweh, simply because to a pious Jew that name Yahweh was too pure, too holy, too revered to be spoken through the lips of mortal men.

So he begins with the word Adonai, but he's saying the exact same thing the eternal God, who always is, who was yesterday, today, and always will be the same, this eternal God has been our dwelling place for all generations. Well, that word generations is actually rich and in depth. And in meeting, Moses first used it all the way back in Genesis 2:4 when he says, these are the generations of the heavens and the earth, when they were created.

Then in Genesis 5, the first verse he gives us in the generations of Adam, chapter six, he gives us the generations of Noah. Throughout Genesis he continues and unfolds the generations of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He gives us the life of the patriarchs and he lets us know something even by this word. Now you are our dwelling place for all generations. What did that look like as Israel heard these words? Well, Israel, even during the patriarchs, had been wanderers. They had been nomads. They've been wandering around from place to place, looking for green pasture, a better place to keep the livestock alive. So, they never really had a land of their own. The only piece of land that they even owned at all was the cave in which Sarah was buried. So here we see that it's not really a physical land that they had, nor could they think of a physical land that they had, even as God established them in Goshen while they were in captivity in Egypt. There they had been sojourners; they had been strangers. They had actually become slaves. Pharaoh became too afraid. Egypt became too afraid of the growth and the size of Israel as a nation within their nation. And they tried to push them down through hard labor and conscript them. But still Israel had no place to dwell that they could call their own. Even as Moses was writing here in chapter 90 of Psalms, we know that even in this they're wandering in the wilderness as a result of their own rebellion and sin. Here they are. They're wandering with no place of their own. They had come up to the Promised Land. They sent spies into the Promised Land. And even in coming up and appearing and looking at the land, they chose to believe the majority, those who said it's too risky, rather than following Joshua and Caleb, who said, Our God is greater and he will establish us in his land.

So now here they are yet again, without a land of their own, wandering, still nomads, vagabonds under the judgment of God. And yet, even as they are wandering, they're looking

around the actual verbiage of the second verse before the mountains were brought forth as a nice English translation, but it doesn't convey the richness of the original language. In the original language, they're walking around and they're looking at the mountains and they're and basically Moses says, you know, God, even before you gave birth to these mountains, before you called them into being, even before you took the earth that was without form and void. And it's as if it was in the pangs of childbirth you call dry land up out of the sea. Before all of that, you are God. You are the one in whom we dwell. You are our refuge, our dwelling place, and our home. Well, I think that's important for us because it is still, isn't it, then, God, that we live and move and have our being?

While we might live in a particular city or neighborhood or community, and we go to church here at Briarwood, we don't call this home. We're just passing through. It's still not our real dwelling place. The real dwelling place is God Almighty himself and we cannot even hardly grasp the enormity of who he is. Have you ever tried to answer these questions? What was it like when God spoke and everything came into being? That is out of nothing? That was I don't know about you, but I remember the day back when I was growing up, I used to get news highlights at 11PM. That's how they were cued up. I hope when we get to heaven, God somehow gives us highlights and we get to see the act of creation itself so we can fall on our faces before him and absolute all and praise him for his almighty power and his being.

Just go step further back with me before creation. Where was God before he created everything out of nothing? That is, see God Himself was his own perfect dwelling place and habitation. So when Moses is telling us that God is our dwelling place, God is our refuge, God is our habitation. He is actually letting us know that we get God Himself in which we live, in which we move, and in which we do indeed have our being.

I think we could take the entire sermon this morning, and probably even for the next several weeks, if we were even to begin to try to plumb the depths and the beauty and the majesty of who God is and all that God has done, but Moses continues to move on, and so shall we, as we not only look at a heart of wisdom beginning with a right understanding of God, but we also need to know a heart of wisdom sees man from God's perspective.

We see that in verses three through 11, the sovereign creator, who created man in his own image, breathed into him a living soul, the one who rules providentially over all creation and all the affairs of men, now says, return man to dust, return, oh, children of man. You know, even if somehow we can manage to live a thousand years.

Kind of like Methuselah. He almost pulled it off. If we could somehow live to be a thousand years old, in comparison with eternity and in comparison, with God. What is that? It's just a blip on the screen. It's here and then it's gone. Moses tells us that to God it would be only as yesterday, and God's thinking even shorter still, he says it would just be as a watch of the night. A watch of the night was maybe about three hours long. As soon as it begins, it's already over. If you're comparing it to the eternality of God. I think what Moses is doing here in these verses,

he seems to be going out of his way to set up a stark contrast between God's eternal reality and man's frailty, the eternity of God and the frailty of man.

So, God, who formed Adam out of the dust and made him a living soul, now is saying, return, oh man to the dust, in keeping with his judgment against sin that he proclaimed back in Genesis 3:19, he is now returning men to dust. And Moses tells us here in our chapter, verse five, you sweep them away as with a flood, they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning. In the morning it flourishes and is renewed, and in the evening it fades and it withers.

I don't know about you, but perhaps you've been watching with some amazement the news clips of the ravages of Hurricane Beryl and all the destruction that it has caused as it's gone through the Caribbean. For me. I can't watch anything like that without my mind also flashing back 20 years ago, actually, to something far more destructive than Hurricane Beryl, when Indonesia was overwhelmed by unanticipated earthquakes, an army and waters so high that they swept across the island, taking out buildings and cars and streets and homes and over 230,000 lives came rushing in. I think that's the image that Moses wants us to see in his mind. He, of course, I think would be going back to the Red sea. He'd been there when they had crossed that Red sea, and he'd been there when those waters crushed down upon the enemy and took out the army of Pharaoh. But he says, basically, he's telling us, God, you sweep away mankind suddenly, as in a rushing flood water. Men and women live and they're gone, as though their lives amounted only to a dream.

You know those dreams you have? You just toss and turn throughout the night. You dream, you go back to sleep. You pick up the dream again. You wake up back to sleep, and finally you wake in the morning and the dream is finally gone. It's just something that's swept away. Or it's just a dream that is gone as soon as we awaken with the break of dawn. He also likens it to the lush green grasses of mourning. The impact of men's life is no more meaningful than this. In the morning in Israel, it was very common. The grasses would come up, they'd be lush and green. They'd be looking like they would stay that way forever. But then the heat of the day and the sun would blister down, and that same green grass would turn to almost like hay. And it was good for nothing short of the side. Then the harvesters hand that they could go through and cut it, and then put it in the kiln and burn it. That night to keep themselves warm, or to bake bread for their next day. This is what God says through Moses. Our lives are that short and that quick. But why? Why does God, in this chapter seem to speak so harshly to us about the existence that we call life here on this earth? Why is our life here so brief and comparison with eternity which never ends? Moses answers these questions for us, beginning with verse seven, for we are brought to an end by your anger, by your wrath. We are dismayed. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins, in the light of your presence. God is angry and he is full of wrath against sin. And for anyone who will just take the time and ponder that and consider the reason for his anger, and even the degree to which his wrath extends, I think the natural response was simply be to be in fear and trembling.

I believe we can almost begin to understand how a man like Jonathan Edwards, who, when he preached, actually held the sermon right in front of his face so he could see it and didn't look at the congregation, but he read his sermon, sinners in the hands of an Angry God. And people wept and fell to their knees. It's because they saw who God was. They saw that God is a God who must judge sin. God is a God who is filled with wrath. He cannot abide sin. He must and will judge it completely. God is holy absolutely and perfectly so. He is holy in all of his ways and is holy in all of his being. Every sin that we commit is a violation of his holy name, even the least of sins, as we might consider them, and pile them up and try to justify them away. Even the least of our sins deserves all the wrath of God. That's why hell exists. Hell's the rightfully deserved place where all who go to their grave still in rebellion and sin, refusing to embrace Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Hell is this certain place where unrepentant sinners will face the unending, unshielded wrath of God. No sin goes unnoticed, for God has exposed all our iniquities.

Iniquities -- such an interesting word in the original language. It's the one word you never study. The Psalms, especially you find multiple words used for sin, but they have different meanings. Iniquities encompasses not only the deed that is wrong, a violation of who God is, but it also includes the consequences and God through Moses says, all our iniquities have been exposed, all our secret sins have been made plain before his view. Reality is - there is no such thing as a secret sin, there were only delusional sinners who arrogantly pretend that they can hide from view what God already sees as clear as day. And for Israel, as Moses was giving this psalm to them, they knew all too well what the words of verse nine actually meant -- for all our days pass away under your wrath we bring our years to an end like a sigh or a moan. You see Israel having turned against God while he was in the act of actually delivering them.

Don't forget the context. He is marching them out by his strong and mighty arm, freeing them from oppression and slavery and captivity in Egypt. And what are they doing? They're grumbling and they're complaining. He's providing the manna to eat the bread of angels mandate. Day after day after day, he resupplied afresh and anew for every day that they needed. Yes, he was taking care of them, even in the wilderness. And what were they doing? Complaining it was not good enough. They were complaining all the way to the point that God judge them and said, none of this generation will enter into my rest. And God pronounced his judgment on that generation of grumbling and complainers.

If estimates are right, some 2 million people came out of captivity in Egypt as God plundered Egypt and delivered his own people so that they might have the freedom to follow him. And if those estimates are indeed right, then some 2 million people died by the wayside without ever entering into the rest that God had promised and was providing. Only Joshua and Caleb got to enter in. Well, I can do math, and I enjoy doing math because it helps me kind of sort things out. If 2 million people die over 38 years, that means approximately 144 people died every day. And at the end of every day, impromptu cemeteries popped up as Israel buried their beloved dead. And every one of those impromptu cemeteries became something as a headstone marker for

the wilderness wandering of Israel. Because of their sin and God's justice, you can trace their rebellion against him as they wandered through that wilderness until they all wasted away.

But then a generation arose that would obey God and would love God, and they would trust God, and they would enter in. And it's no wonder that it's in this context that Moses, who is God's chosen leader and deliverer for this nation, is watching people die day after day after day after day after day, that Moses would say, what is our lifespan but 70 years? Maybe 80 at best, because he's watching people drop off like flies along the wilderness journey, even though he himself lived to be 120. The reality is people die every day. And I think even for us, if we live 70, 80 years, even if we managed to make it to the 120 mark of a Moses, what really is our life here compared to the eternity to come? See, because of the fall, because of Adam's sin which plunged us all into that same eternally judged state of condemnation, every day and every year that we live is a day in a year that is filled with frustration and judgment from God. Even those days that we think are the best days, those days that are joy filled and they really are in comparison with the sum total of our lives and the impact this sin has taken. They are nothing but toil and trouble.

So with this thought in mind that Moses poses the question of verse 11, he's calling us to actually evaluate our lives from God's perspective. Who considers the power of your anger and your wrath according to the fear of you? So God is the just judge of mankind's rebellion and mankind's sin. He is the righteous judge of all of Adam's sin. He is the righteous judge of Adam's posterity, and he is the righteous, holy, perfect judge of all of your sin. And he is the righteous, judge and holy, pure God that judges my sin. He must judge sin or he is not God. Wrath repeatedly describes God and how he judges our sin. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, that great Prince of Preachers from the 19th century, put it this way. *Holy Scripture, when it depicts God's wrath against sin, never uses hyperbole. It would be impossible to exaggerate it.*

The power of God's anger is in hell, and what it would be on earth were not in mercy restrained. No man living can rightly conceive.

So where does that leave us? This morning, when we look into the reality that there's an eternal, holy, just God who is absolute in all of his perfections and just in all of his judgment, where does that leave us? But I think exactly where Moses takes us next in light of seeing God and His holy perfections, and in light of seeing ourselves and all of our sinfulness and deserved wrath, we can turn only to God to find a heart of wisdom as we seek and plead for his favor and blessing. The Song of Moses now reaches a crescendo peak. He turns to God for help. Look again at verse 12. He says, *so teach us to number our days, that we may get a heart of wisdom.* I love that he turns this way because learning to number our days is not something that comes naturally to us. We tend to think that this life is going to go on forever until suddenly we're put face to face with the reality of death. But this is a blip on the screen. Eternity lies ahead. So Moses cries out, God, in light of your perfections, in light of your holiness of all the attributes of who you are, that you have revealed yourself to be. And in light of my rebellion and my sin,

teach me to number my days. In other words, teach me to live this moment as a moment that will count for you and for your glory, not only now, but for all eternity.

You know, it's so easy for us, isn't it, just to get caught up in the daily routine and try to make ends meet? And I'm not saying that any of this is wrong. Do we have things that God has given us that we do need to do to take care of our families and provide for them from day after day? But, you know, we have to look beyond just today if we're going to actually find fulfillment and purpose and meaning in our lives as we go through our day. It's not just about, what I accomplished today or how did I help someone else today? No, it's about Lord, did I live this moment? Did I live this day as a as a man or woman or a child who knows what it means to realize eternity comes soon, and I want to live it in such a way that it makes a difference in other people's lives and counts for all eternity.

Moses tells us. *So teach us to number our days.* Do you catch what he's saying? God alone is the one who can teach us to number our days. Because if we want to gain a heart of wisdom, God is the source of wisdom itself. He is wisdom. So when we say, Lord, teach us to number our days, we are saying, God, I submit to your rightful role. You are my teacher. I am just the student. I have so much to learn. I'm so inept. But teach me anyhow. Let me live today with an eternal mindset in view. But whenever we do see life as we should, and we willingly submit to God to be our teacher, we can then gain a heart of wisdom once we surrender to God as our loving and sovereign Lord. Once we humbly turn our eyes upon Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, the things of this earth indeed do grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and his grace.

Where is our mindset today? What is our perspective? Where are we looking as we go through this day? Are we living within eternal default or are we living just for what pleases us this day? For those who live for God within eternal default Psalm 90, I believe, changes tone. You know, if we didn't continue and finish the psalm, you'd walk out of here going, man, that was a hard sermon, and I'm kind of depressed. But Moses, under God's inspiration, is about to turn this Psalm into a beautiful solace of joy. This sweet song now comes to the believer, because the wrath that God has just revealed to us has already been paid in full. When we come to this chapter and we see all of this very hard teaching about God's wrath and God's justice, and how he is holy and perfect and pure, and we are not so therefore we actually earn his wrath and his justice. We also know that we have someone who is our mediator. We have one who has already paid the price for us, for everyone who by grace through faith has turned to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Your debt is paid in full. There is no wrath of God. We can actually appreciate what Paul says in Romans 8:1 even more clearly.

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

Why? Because Jesus Christ paid it all. So when a brother or sister comes to the moment of death in this life and our hearts are heavy because we miss them, for the Christian, it's not the end. You know, when God brings me to that moment and He himself brings me home, it be the end of my life. It is simply the beginning because to be absent from the body is to be present



with the Lord. We will, each one of us, unless Jesus comes back and claims his bride collectively at once, face the moment in which we take a last breath in here, and we exhale it there, either in his presence, where there's fullness of joy, or in the presence of his eternal wrath.

It all hinges on what we have done with Jesus. So as I come alongside many of you, as you have said, farewell for now to someone you love, I want to encourage you because we know where your loved one is. We know that when God brings his saints home, they are precious in his sight. And because they are precious in his sight, he lovingly says, welcome home, good and faithful servant. Well done.

So we can now look at the rest of this Psalm, and we can actually see it and sing it as a refrain, beginning in verse 13 to the end. Listen to what Moses tells us to sing.

*Return, oh Lord, how long have pity on your servant. Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us for as many years as we have seen evil. Let your work be shown to your servants and your glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us and establish the work of our hands upon us. Yes, establish the work of our hands.*

This is where we see in this Psalm of Moses -- it's not only just a prayer, but it's also a lament. He cries out. He sees the reality, the judgment. He's watched what's going on in Israel around him. And he cries out, how long, oh Lord, how long? How long until the frowning providence of God smiles upon us once again? But he doesn't say it. In desperation I think he says it rejoicing because he knows God has promised that he will do what is right and good for us. He's already done it for us in Jesus Christ, his Son.

You see, we already have his favor. His **hesed** Now, if I were to say, has said the way that it should be said in the original language, there's no one on the first five rows is beyond my spitting distance to say, **hesed** the way it is meant to be said. But to unpack what it means is actually better.

**Hesed** means the long suffering, gentle kindness, loving, merciful, redeeming love of God. We don't have an English word that unpacks that word has it clearly enough. And God longs for us to look at Jesus as we are, as if we are little children in the morning saying, God, do it again. Aren't you glad for the loving kindness of Jesus Christ poured out on us, so that we might have peace with God? He is our hope. God in love has taken pity on us, his servants. He has turned to us for our good by sending Jesus, His son. And because of his forgiving, redeeming love, we can actually rejoice even in God's judgment of sin, because we know it's already been paid in full for us. And that will compel us to want others to know the same.

The heartbeat of evangelism, the heartbeat of missions, is simply worshiping God and knowing who he is for who he is and all that he has done. And if you're overwhelmed by all the enormity and the beauty of what God has done for you, how can we remain silent while others still do not know him?

The delight fullness of the Lord our God is where Moses now ends. He returns to that phrase but he adds to it the name Elohim. Elohim, the delight fullness of him, will be upon us. He will establish the work of our hands. Yes, he will establish the work of our hands. It's like Moses is saying, don't forget it.

Though it may not seem true at the moment, it is true nonetheless. When we live with an eternal mindset, when we look to God and we number our days to make them count for his glory, do you know what he promises to do? He says, I'm going to establish what you're doing. I'm going to establish it personally. I'm going to establish it in your family. I'm going to establish it collectively as you, together as a church, come through life together, lifting each other up and building each other up and advancing the kingdom of heaven.

We're told that God has prepared great works for us to do beforehand in Christ Jesus, and I long for us to see God establish the work of our hands. Even as we look through this time of transition, and we trust God to guide us and lead us to show, to reshape us and mold us so that we're prepared to do the good works that he still wants to do through us.

In the next chapter of the history of Briarwood Presbyterian Church. So, I'd like us now just to return briefly to the thoughts from the beginning. Do we want to be a people, individually and collectively, that are known as those who have a heart of wisdom? Well, I've waited until now to give you a good working definition of what wisdom is, but a good working definition. And I give attribution to Ligonier in my own thinking as I cobbled this together. **Wisdom is the truth of God's Word, applied in the real time situations in every area of our daily lives.** I'm going to say it again because I hope it sinks in. It's not just mere knowledge. It's not just knowhow or intellectual prowess or street smarts or business acumen. Wisdom is the truth of God's Word, applied in real time situations in every area of our daily lives. So practically, how do we gain a heart of wisdom?

Proverbs tells us the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. When we see God for who he is, how holy is, how just he is. When we see ourselves as he sees us, then the fear of the Lord is a natural response.

By the way, if you want the best definition of the fear of the Lord, I'm going to encourage you to go out and buy the big book. Don't look it up online. Go out and get that big green Webster's 1828 dictionary and look up "fear" and you're going to find that in a normal dictionary back in that day a description of the fear of the Lord to be the best I've ever read.

The fear of the Lord is when I see Him in His awesome holiness, and I love him so deeply for all he is and what he has done, that I will not do anything to violate His Holy name. That's the fear of the Lord, and that's the beginning of wisdom. But where else can we get wisdom? James tells us, if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given to him. You ever thought of that as just some magic wand? It doesn't work that way. When James says, **if you lack wisdom, let him ask God**, that's true. We should go to

God saying, Lord, I need wisdom right now. Please bring to mind the Word of God that I've already been seeping myself in so that I have the wisdom I need for this moment.

Let me encourage you to dive into the Psalms. Stay there a long time, even Psalm 119. Break it down -- 176 verses. All the different ways that God talks about sin, all the ways that God talks about Yeshua's salvation. Look at the Psalms and look for wisdom, because it will guide you. If you're feeding yourself with the wisdom of God's Word, be in prayer. Study His word, but also realize that you gain wisdom from your real time life experiences. You know some of the best lessons I've ever learned about life that gave me wisdom about how to live, have become from the times I've fallen flat on my face in failure, you realize failure can be a great teacher of wisdom as well as success.

Sometimes I think failure can be a better teacher because then we're actually looking for the truth we need. While we're at it, this also look around us and let's listen to those who are our brothers and sisters in Christ. You know we gain wisdom by being iron sharpening iron. We gain wisdom by a spouse lovingly speaking truth in love into our lives, saying, but honey, that doesn't seem to make sense. We gain wisdom every time a child is bold enough to say, mom, dad, Papa, grandma, that doesn't add up. We gain wisdom every time we're willing to come alongside and from a lifelong friendship or from a friendship. Maybe that's newer because God's just put that person in your path, but they still love God, they love His Word, and they love you enough to say what God says and help you get stronger. That's where wisdom comes from. And as we gain hearts of wisdom, my prayer is that we may be wise in the ways that we act, making the most of every opportunity that God gives us so that he will establish the work of our hands. Who knows what God yet has in store for us as his church abroad, we Presbyterians.

So let's keep encouraging one another, all the more so as it is today. Let's keep building one another up. Let's lift each other up before the throne of God. And collectively together would you join us and be in prayer during this time of transition, as we seek not only God's leading for the next man to become our lead pastor? But you know what? There is great ministry still lying ahead of us that we haven't even begun to do. I don't know what it is, but God does, and hearts of wisdom will discern what are the next ministries, that this church will be used of God to take into the world and advance the kingdom of heaven, as though hell cannot stop us until Jesus returns. Let's pray...

Father, please help us to be that church. Help us to be those who love you so much, who believe you are who you say you are. You are holy. You are pure. You are just. You must judge sin. But Lord, let us rejoice, because for all of us who by faith know the love of God in Jesus Christ, His Son, our debts been paid in full.

But Lord, that's just the beginning. Let us sing the refrain that says, Lord, how long continue the Lord, while we struggle and strain against the hard things of this life, still continue to do your work and continue, oh Lord, to raise us up. Give us a heart of wisdom. Establish the work of our

hands, not for anyone to look at us, but for everyone to look to you and to you alone, to give you the glory, the honor and the praise. Then we will have done what you have called us to do.

In Jesus name, Amen.