

Proverbs 1:8-19 – Warnings of Wisdom

8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

9 They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.

10 My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them. 11 If they say, "Come along with us; let's lie in wait for someone's blood, let's waylay some harmless soul; 12 let's swallow them alive, like the grave, and whole, like those who go down to the pit; 13 we will get all sorts of valuable things and fill our houses with plunder; 14 throw in your lot with us, and we will share a common purse"— 15 my son, do not go along with them, do not set foot on their paths; 16 for their feet rush into sin, they are swift to shed blood. 17 How useless to spread a net in full view of all the birds! 18 These men lie in wait for their own blood; they waylay only themselves! 19 Such is the end of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the lives of those who get it.

Last week we began to look at the book of Proverbs. Proverbs is about wisdom. Being wise means to live with understanding in God's world. The beginning of wisdom is to remember and fear the greatness and glory of our Creator, and to remember that all our lives are in his presence. Without that foundation, we cannot begin. But now we have laid that foundation; how do we go forward?

Proverbs begins with a father teaching his son. The Bible tells us that the first, most important teachers of children are their parents. It is not firstly the state and its schools. It is not firstly the clan or tribe. The main responsibility for training children and young people is with their mother and **especially** their father. He has final responsibility for what they learn and how they are taught and corrected. If he decides to use a school, then he is the one who is finally responsible for what his children learn there. A man is the head of his family. He must answer for all that happens there. He must make sure that his children learn the right ways; that they are corrected and warned against mistakes. Again and again in Proverbs we read ("My son..."). See Proverbs 1:10, 18, 2:1, 3:1, 3:11, 4:10, 4:20, 5:1, 6:1 – and many more! Also Ephesians 6:4, Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Today people think that the government should do everything for them. But Christianity spreads through the world **mainly** through godly homes and godly families. (So marry wisely!).

The father warns his sons against temptations from the wicked. Pressure comes to the young through other people. They are beginning their way in the adult world, and they want to get on. They feel strong desires to be liked by others. This way, many young people are drawn into wickedness. In these verses, the temptation is join a life of crime; to join an evil gang. The wicked make promises; come, join us, we will be safe, we will do well together, we will enjoy life, nobody will stop us! But Solomon tells us that the promises are empty. If we choose an evil and selfish life, then God will bring it down on our own heads. God will at last, even if on the day of judgment, severely punish us. Wickedness often comes openly; but do not let it take you. Those who live by evil will die by it. Life is more than getting. A bird is wiser than to fall for these temptations. But many young people rush in; so be warned!