

When Wisdom Owns You! – 2:10-22

INTRODUCTION

Verse 10 captures the heart of the child of God in relation to God's holy and precious Word. This verse describes a believer's heart and soul that have been possessed by Wisdom. God's Word is in him. Wisdom controls him. There is a stark transformation in his thinking, motivation and life; he is significantly different so that his loved ones and friends can see it vividly.

This internal assimilation of God's Word is the work of the Holy Spirit. That is why it is not a question of "if" but "when." This is a supernatural experience of every true believer. It is not for a select few "super" Christians. This experience is the norm rather than the exception. Wisdom enters his heart and remains there. God's Word now rules and Christ reigns in his life. The transformation has begun. It is the start of a journey of continuous change. It is not a renovation of the old but a complete displacing of the old nature. It is a ministry of the soul as described in **Jeremiah 1:10 (KJV)**, "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." The rooting out of old sins and habits, the pulling down of addictions, the destruction of sinful ways and desires, the throwing down of all sin causing "places" and enticements must occur first before the rebuilding can begin in this new life. The building and the planting carries on from strength to strength. It is not aimless growing but a growth to become more and more like Christ. Christ is God. In other words, the believer's conduct will become more and more like God so that when others see his good works, they see Christ and glorify God.

Another way of putting it (verse 10) is that God's knowledge is pleasant to the believer's soul. The word "pleasant" means "to be sweet and agreeable." He loves godly things. Things that are sweet are very agreeable to him too. These godly things are biblical things. These godly things include: he loves to read and study God's Word; he has the highest esteem for God and His precious Word; he makes time to study God's Word; he communes with God constantly through prayer; he loves to tell people about Christ; he loves to go to church and worship with God's people; he loves to hear the preaching and teaching of God's holy and perfect Word; he is prepared to suffer for Christ and for the defense of God's Word; and he is prepared to sacrifice his job, family, ambitions and freedom, even his life, for the cause of Christ.

When Wisdom captures the heart of the sinner saved by grace, his whole life is transformed. The power of Wisdom permeates into the very core of the sinner. He would despise and hate the sinful things he used to do and places of sin that he used to visit. However, what he used to detest or did not have the slightest interest in, like going to church or reading the Bible, he now loves to do with all his heart, soul, strength and mind.

The evidences of one who owns Wisdom are as follows --

I. Does Not Start Sinning – 2:11-19

- a. Guard (v 11) – There are two sentries in his new life now. The first is called "DISCRETION." This word has the idea of a planned purpose. His life is not aimless. It has a direction given by God. This first sentry preserves him. The word for "preserve" means "to guard something precious or valuable." Now his life is precious to him. He lives with a sense of purpose that he did not have before. This purpose is to glorify God. There is no purpose more significant and blessed than this heavenly purpose which God gives to every believer the moment he becomes a believer.

The second line is a synthetic parallelism. The idea is nearly the same but with a slight addition. The second sentry is called "UNDERSTANDING." The word "understanding" refers to insight. The believer looks at the world with new eyes. The sin-sick world has not changed, the believer has. In addition, he sees a higher calling and purpose for his life that he never knew existed but which he now possesses. This insight will keep him. The word for "keep" means to "guard from danger." The first word "preserve" is to guard something because it is precious. The second word "keep" is to guard because of the dangers around the believer. He is kept safe by the insights God gives to him through His precious word.

b. Deliver (v 12-19) – There are two deliverances from this passage.

- i. The first is in verses 12-15. This is a deliverance from the evil man. It is not so much the man per se but rather the influence this man will have on the believer. The deliverance is from the way or path of the evil man. If the believer is not delivered from it, then the evil man's path will become the believer's path. This is the danger and subtlety of the way of the evil man who is characterized by evil. His modus operandi is made known to every believer so that he can be avoided and his way of life will not ruin the believer and his testimony for Christ!

The marks of the evil man can be seen from: - his speech (v 12b); his manner of life (v 13); his delight (v 14); and his paths (v 15).

His speech is characterized by froward things. The word for "froward" means "perverse." The perverse things that come forth from his mouth are more than just filthy and uncouth words. They are blasphemous words against God and his truth! Remember the Bible is first and foremost a spiritual book and not a book for the flesh. The perversions will be measured by the perfect Bible. It is not a subjective definition where it is a perversion to one but not to another. The perversion is from God's perspective and not man's. Man's attacks on God's truth and the testimony of Christ sum up very well what the perversions are.

The downward slide would be from speech to lives. Using seductive and perverted words, the evil man leads many astray. Many walk with him, sincerely believing that he is right when in fact, he had left the path of righteousness which is according to the precious and perfect Word of God. All who follow him will tread the same path and will end in destruction like him. The only way to discern and not be deceived is to have the highest view of God's perfect Word. A low view of God's Word will be the death nail to every discerning mind. The evil man does not care which version of the Bible he uses, even though he knows and admits that the versions greatly differ from one another! He reasons to his own detriment that it is only a matter of preference and should not become a measure of orthodoxy. He reveals his delusional intent and has already departed from the path of righteousness without realizing it, thereby walking on the path of darkness.

A timely example is the man who teaches "convincingly" that the Bible was perfect in the past but now it has mistakes. Could such double talk even sound right? How can truly born again believers believe that the Bible they hold in their hands has mistakes and not feel upset by this so-called teaching? It is mind boggling! Do they not know that their eternity is at stake? Whether they end up in Hell or Heaven depends on the Bible. If someone teaches that this Book of books has mistakes, and that these mistakes are somewhere out there and no one knows exactly where all the mistakes are, how can

believers know that the very gospel they believe in is not in error? Do they not know that every doctrine of the Bible is under this subtle and very effective attack? When a man has a low view of God's Word, it means he has a low view of God. The next step is to have a low view of his Christian faith, followed rapidly by a low view of his life. He becomes carnal and then sinful and evil. This gradual decline cannot be avoided. That is why the LORD has revealed to His children that He has magnified His Truth even above His own Name (Psalm 138:2).

The evil man delights in things that are characterized by evil and the perversion of the wicked (v 14). Error becomes truth. Evil becomes good. Perversion is regarded as obedience. The conscience is seared. Sins are not sinful but are dressed up with euphemistic slogans to make them more palatable to the unsuspecting.

The LORD's judgement is that their ways are crooked (v 15). This is a synonymous parallelism. The word "forward" literally means "turn aside or twisted". The meaning here is different from that of "forward" used in verses 12 and 14 which has the idea of "evil". This word in verse 15 simply means "crooked". The evil man cannot be upfront in what he says and does. He may say one thing but does another. His word is meaningless and whatever he says cannot be trusted. His yea is nay and his nay is yea. His life is twisted but to him it seems straight! Unless he sees that his life is twisted, he will not repent and turn to the straight and narrow path of truth and righteousness.

Life is ruined by believing in wrong teachings. The world view of life is erroneous and the life is lived wrongly unless Wisdom owns him.

- ii. The second deliverance is in verses 16-19. This is a deliverance from the strange woman. The word for "strange" means "one who is a stranger." However, when used as an adjective to describe the woman, it refers to a harlot. This is a strange woman who is not the man's wife. It does not refer to a stranger in terms of not knowing the person's identity or name or not having met the person before. It could refer to that insofar as it is used in other contexts. When used with reference to a woman and the context of the next few verses, it argues for a harlot. The strange woman's intention is to lead the foolish man into the sin of fornication or adultery.

Her modus operandi is by way of flattery (v 16b). Her words are deadly! The word for "flattereth" comes from the root word for "plunder or divide." In other words, her intent is to divide the married man's relationship with his wife or the single man's fellowship with God. Flattering words have a devastating effect on foolish man whose ego can be reduced to silly putty. When flattery is used, the foolish man will believe in a lie and he will be drawn into a world of virtual reality. Whatever the strange woman says will become a reality in his deluded mind! This diabolical method has worked time and time again. Man, with his intelligence, is helpless against her flattery. The strange woman considers it a challenge to break his devotion to his wife. His stature in life is powerless against her wily words. With her flattery she strips him of his importance and he becomes impotent under her charms. Her seductive snares have killed many a foolish man and ruined many lives and careers.

The strange woman forsakes, i.e. leaves behind, her husband whom she has been married to since her youth (v 17). She lures other men into sin by her flattering words. She (probably an Israelite) forgets the marriage covenant of her God. The proverb warns us of women who are within the faith! She was betrothed to her husband and was married and

now commits the sin of adultery with other men. The sin of adultery is worse than the sin of fornication. The sin of fornication is a sexual sin committed by a person who is not married, whereas the sin of adultery is a sexual sin committed by a married person. The adulterer breaks the marriage covenant as well. It is a double sin compared to the fornicator who commits only the sin of the lust of the flesh.

Her house inclines or sinks down or leans towards death. Her paths incline to the dead. If a man wants to die, then hers is the path to go! She will destroy his life and kill everything that he has worked so hard for. His entire life will crumble before his eyes. Sinful men are numbed to this sin because of the commonality of the sin of adultery. Hollywood movies make billions of money by portraying it as something normal and harmless. Countless lives have been destroyed by this evil. The death of relationships and lives is the end result.

All that go to her shall not return (emphatic) and they shall not take hold (emphatic) of the paths of life. This is a description of a lifestyle of sin rather than a one act of weakness of sin where repentance follows. There are those who call themselves Christians but live a lifestyle of sin. They are the ones referred to here. They embrace her way of life by forsaking their wives and families. The end result is that they are not born again and they will end up in Hell. For a moment of carnal happiness, they will spend eternity in Hell where there is gnashing of teeth and great weeping. A person is NOT a Christian just because he says he is. He is also not a Christian just because he listens to the preaching of God's Word. He is a Christian only if he does the will of the Father according to Holy Scriptures.

Life is ruined by sexual promiscuity leading to grave immorality. The strange woman will lead foolish men into their deaths unless Wisdom owns them.

II. Stays Healthy – 2:20-22

- a. Right Living (v 20) – When wisdom owns the believer, discretion will protect him. He will walk in the way of good men. The synonymous parallelism used here drives home the importance of the right path of life. Life is a journey that we travel only once through. There is no second chance if we walk the wrong path. It is of the greatest importance that this path is carefully tread upon. The Bible says to look for the way of good men. Following the wrong path is to follow evil men and strange women.

The end is death and destruction. Age is no protection against the wiles of the devil. Young and old have been ruined likewise.

- b. Right Result (v 21-22) – The LORD's desire is that all would walk the path of good men. The result is to dwell in the Land of Promise. Another synonymous parallelism is used here for emphasis. The Land of Promise signifies God's presence and pleasure. As long as Israel can dwell in the Land, it means that they are walking right with God. When they live in sin and idolatry, the LORD sends oppressors to punish Israel to turn her back to the LORD. Ultimately when the sins of Israel are full, the LORD will remove them from the Land of Promise. In our case as believers, one of the marks of the believer is his desire for holiness in accordance with God's holy Word. He repents when his sins are pointed out to him. When there is no repentance, the person's salvation is in question because he has no desire for holiness, i.e. to be right with God.

The wicked will be cut off when they reject the way of good men and walk the path of sin and wickedness. The LORD will cut them off from the earth. Another synonymous parallelism is used here for emphasis. The wicked will not prevail. They might appear to prevail while they live on earth but when they die they will face the final judgement of God. They will be sent to Hell for their sins and wickedness because they do not have a Redeemer.

CONCLUSION

Wisdom shouts from the housetop for all to listen and embrace. When Wisdom owns the believer, he will live a righteous and holy life. The end result is life. His path is that of a good man. He is righteous and his life is righteous because His God is righteous.

On the other hand, the foolish will succumb to the sin of wicked men and strange women who will destroy and ruin their lives. The foolish man has no desire to repent. His is wilful and lives a life of sin and finally dies in his sin.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you are overseas and alone, what would you do if you are tempted to commit the sin of the lust of the eyes or the lust of the flesh? How would you overcome the temptation?
2. Confronted with a tempting offer to be paid \$100,000 by carrying a package into Singapore, would you take the risk and accept? \$10,000 is given to you upfront and you will be given another \$90,000 after the job is done. Would you do it?

Who are those who would most likely take such risks? How can you avoid succumbing to such temptations?

3. "To climb the ladder of success in business and to 'make it' in this world, one has to be 'crooked' and practise situational ethics." Is this statement true in your life?

"In this competitive age, students need to forge ahead and excel by stabbing the backs of fellow students". Is this a valid statement?

4. Which of the two sins listed in Proverbs 2:12-19 is more deadly and damaging? Which of the two affect you more?