

## The Way of Wisdom

KSBC Oct. 18, 2009

Our Crisis of Confidence

Proverbs 30:1-9

**Intro** Do you trust your Bible? Would you be more comfortable saying that your trust is in God and not your Bible? What is the difference? God and his words are difficult to separate. We as a church and along with the larger group of Bible believing Christians around the world and throughout history are on record as having a strong level of confidence in the written words of God, our Bible, the Holy Scriptures. Our church statement of faith has an article on the scriptures that reads . . .

We believe the Holy Scriptures to be the very Word of God, the product of the breath of God and thus verbally inspired in all parts. Therefore, the Holy Scriptures are without error as originally given by God. They are altogether sufficient in themselves as our only infallible rule of faith and practice. In addition, they are the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried.

There is an ever present danger of confidence in our lives and church ministry. We may at times seem unsure, tentative and confused as to what we are supposed to believe, do, think and say. Wisdom, the skillful living that comes from a submissive relationship to the Lord God, is absolutely dependent on revelation. The wise person has their attention, every receptor of their being, tuned toward the mouth of God (Prov.2:1-6). Confidence in the truth that God has spoken and we have his words recorded for our use is basic to wisdom.

This morning we look at the autobiography – the personal story – of one wisdom writer as he is quite transparent about his struggles with confidence in knowing and not knowing, learning but not understanding and the weariness of trying to make sense of things way beyond his reach. Honesty this morning forces us to acknowledge we have been in the same situation. We become weary of trying to know and understand what is happening in and around us. Sometimes we use the weariness and despair of not knowing as an excuse or reason to turn away from God's words. We develop our own ways of thinking and reasoning about why things happen the way they do.

Let's listen well to Agur's story of lost confidence and where he turned to find wholeness for his life and world.

### Read Proverbs 30:1-9

The pathway to confidence includes:

1. The despair of not knowing – a pressing awareness of your ignorance. 1-4
2. The source of knowing – a stated acknowledgement that God speaks. 5-6
3. The certainty of knowing – a productive trust in and love for God. 7-9

### **1. The despair of not knowing – a pressing awareness of your ignorance. 1-4**

Note that Agur's story begins with clearly expressed awareness that he does not have the answers to his despair. There are all kinds of things he does not know, would like to know and yet has worn himself out in his fruitless search. The early part of his story is expressed in a

personal confession of his ignorance and a bold assertion that defines his problem as relational rather than knowing facts.

A confession of ignorance acknowledges that . . . 1-3

- I am weary trying to figure things out. 1
- Wisdom is beyond my grasp. 2-3
- God's ways are beyond me. 3

Two assertions that give direction to despair . . . 4

- My questions lead me to God.

Rhetorical questions all answered by 'no one but God.'

- My despair is relational not informational.

Questions beg for a personal response and experience.

I want a name, the name of his son, I want to know him.

Cmp. Job 42:1-6

1Corinthians 8:2-3

## **2. The source of knowing – a stated acknowledgement that God speaks. 5-6**

Note Agur's story of his search for truth becomes redirected to a humble acknowledgment and acceptance of God's words. To truly know as a human being, you must know the Holy One, God himself. God is knowable through his self disclosure. Human reason is not final or reliable.

God has spoken – he is self revealing. 5 – every word of God

God's self disclosure is propositional in substance and verbal in form.

God's words are trustworthy. 5

Perfect - pure/flawless – what they are

Reliable – shield/refuge – what they do

God's words are authoritative. 6

Handle them carefully – do not add.

Test everything by them – rebuke and prove

cmp. Deut. 30:14

Psa. 18:30-33

Matt.11:25-27

### **3. The certainty of knowing – a productive trust in and love for God.**

**7-9**

Agur's search for understanding and wisdom begins with his confession of his own limitations and ignorance. His own complex questions draw him to the words of God where he finds a personal relationship with God that satisfies the emptiness of his soul. Knowing God in this way replaces the despair of not knowing with intense god ward desires and affections.

Certainty of knowing God produces . . .

An intense dependence on God for your every need. 7

An intense recognition of your personal weakness. 8-9

An intense desire for your life to honor God. 9

Cmp Luke 11:2-4

Deut. 8:3

#### **Transition to Table . . .**

1. Acknowledge, confess, repent . . . of your wearied attempts to figure your life out on your own or in your own way.
2. Bring your questions and despair to the revealed word of God, the Bible and submit to God's authority in Christ and the scriptures.
3. Express and celebrate your trust in and love for God through prayer and songs of dependence, weakness and praise.

Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:3

John 1

## Study Questions

1. What concerns, questions or observations do you have from this study on Proverbs 30:1-9?
2. Read and review the Statement of Faith section on the Bible copied in the notes. Is that what you believe? Why? What does it mean? What concerns or doubts do you have about the Bible?
3. How do you identify with the weariness and struggles of Agur in wanting to know what is going on in your life and world? Are there areas of your life or belief system that are uncertain, tentative or confused?
4. Review the first 4 verses of Proverbs 30. Share with the group what impressed your heart and mind the most about Agur's confession and assertions. How do Job 42:1-6 and 1 Corinthians 8:2-3 connect with the despair of not knowing?
5. Where should a person begin if they want to know God? Is it possible to know God without him first choosing to reveal himself to the seeker? How, in what ways, has God revealed himself to people? Support your answers with scripture.
6. What are some of your favorite passages of scripture about the scriptures? Why? Read them together.
7. What are some examples of questions or complexities that cause people to despair but the answers are found in the Bible? Provide Bible answers for these questions . . . Why is their injustice? Why do the wicked prosper? Why do the innocent/righteous suffer? Why does it seem like God is far away?
8. What are Agur's concerns as stated in 7-9? What do his concerns say about his soul's satisfaction in knowing God? Compare his passions after submission to the scriptures with his despair of searching for answers without Gods words.
9. What do you want to do, use or remember from this study this week?