

The Pursuit of Wisdom

by Art Katz

The sermon emphasizes the importance of pursuing wisdom through character and divine revelation, as illustrated by the life of Daniel and the teachings of Proverbs.

Duration: 52:30

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11, Matthew 7:24-27, Matthew 22:37-39

Topics: "Wisdom"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a willing and attentive heart to hear the word of God. He shares an example of a powerful message given to a black congregation in Savannah, Georgia, based on Proverbs chapter four. The preacher highlights that God's guidance is available to everyone, regardless of their background or social condition. He also discusses the need to approach the word of God without filtering it through our own understanding, and instead, seek obedience and direct communication with God.

Transcript

I know that we need to get into chapter 2 of the book of Proverbs that speaks about wisdom, knowledge, and understanding that so distinguished Daniel before the book of Proverbs was compiled. He already knew the realities of which it speaks and probably obtained them in the same way in which the book describes its being given to those who are upright. There's always a conjunction between character and revelation that comes out so conspicuously in the life of Daniel for which we need to be reminded because that conjunction has been lost to us in our own age.

Character is not often discussed except as a kind of left-hand compliment where we call somebody a character. But the concept of character as something to be desired, something to be attained and wrought upon by God is not too familiar with the contemporary church. I'm just looking at a few spots here where the Babylonians themselves were obliged to acknowledge the remarkable character of Daniel and his giftedness.

And that came up in yesterday's response to the message that it's an embarrassment to the church that Babylonian pagans are more quick to recognize the godliness of God's messengers than the church itself. And the way in which it's stated here is interesting in chapter 5 of verse 11 of Daniel where the queen remembers that there's a man in the kingdom, a crisis has arisen because the present incumbent in the midst of a pagan celebration in which he has used the cups and articles taken out of the treasury of the

temple are employed by him for his concubines and guests to drink out of the holy vessels in a pagan celebration. And in the very drinking and the misuse of those sacred things, there's a hand that writes on the wall in a language unknown to the king or to those people and there's a terrible fear that afflicts him.

It says that his knees knocked when he saw the hand writing on the wall and none of the sages of the court, the magicians, the wise men were able so much as to read, let alone interpret. But we read in verse 11 there's a man in your kingdom who is endowed with a spirit of the holy gods. Of course, the gods were pagans is always plural.

In the days of your father he was found to have enlightenment, understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods something above what can be expected in men. Your father King Nebuchadnezzar made him chief of the magicians and chanters, Chaldeans and diviners because an excellent spirit, knowledge and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve problems were found in this Daniel whom the king named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called and he will give the interpretation.

Of course, he's absolutely confident that he will and of course he does but we're not going to read that now or consider it now. I'm just wanting to pick out a few of the places where pagans themselves exist. In chapter 4 verse 8 Daniel came in before me who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god and who is endowed with a spirit of the holy gods.

Interesting how they describe Daniel's special character and ability. They know it's transcendent. It's not to be explained naturally.

It's some divine supernatural endowment and I told him of the dream O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians I know that you are endowed with a spirit of the holy gods and that no mystery is too difficult for you. Again in verse 18 of that chapter This is the dream that I king Nebuchadnezzar saw. Now you Belteshazzar declare the interpretation since all the wise men since all the wise men of my kingdom are unable to tell me the interpretation.

You are able however for you are endowed with a spirit of the holy gods. Isn't that remarkable? So it's more than just one tribute but again and again this acknowledgement of Daniel is repeated at the highest levels of this pagan Babylonian civilization which was one of the wonders of the ancient world. So where did Daniel obtain this remarkable character that was so visible even to the pagans around about him.

Again in chapter 2 of verse 11. These things that the king is asking is too difficult and no one can reveal this to the king except the gods whose dwelling is not with mortals. So we need to recognize that the wisdom for which Daniel is famous is not some human accomplishment it's not some Jewish attribute.

If there is some measure of that it's the very thing that Paul declared as done. This is the divine equivalent that exceeds the human and that was so with Daniel that they could be confident that if everyone else failed of the sorcerers and the enchanters and the diviners of the Babylonian court Daniel will surely be able to read that language and interpret it accurately as he has in the past divine dreams and the given counsel and so on of a remarkable kind beyond that which is human. So now we want to look at the proverbs and see what the source of that is because if it's only a distinctive of Daniel it would be for us a curiosity and we would just applaud him for the uniqueness that he enjoyed but if it's something for which we also will have access and will meet as urgently in the last days in the confusion and the bewilderment of it and things unforeseen that will paralyze so called wise men with fear and leave them without any direction and not a confusion there needs to be those who will shine as bright as stars and be able to turn

many to the way of salvation as Daniel himself speaks in the last chapter of his book.

So I'm reading for my seminary bible which often leaves us wanting and you look at your version and where you have a better expression of any of these verses in Proverbs chapter 2 please share it because we want to plumb this that begins with my child or my son if you accept my words and treasure up my commandments within you making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding if you indeed cry out for insight and raise your voice for understanding if you seek it like silver and search for it as hidden treasures then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God for the Lord gives wisdom from his mouth come knowledge and understanding he stores up sound wisdom for the upright he is a shield to those who walk blamelessly guarding the paths

of justice and preserving the way of his faithful ones then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity and every good path for wisdom will come into your heart and knowledge will be delightful or pleasant to your soul prudence will watch over or keep you and understanding will guard you it will save you from the way of evil from those who speak perversely who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil those whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways what think ye of that text now you have to borrow in because in chapter 9 of Daniel which we will turn to later it begins by Daniel borrowing in to the book of Jeremiah in the first verse in the first year of Darius son of

Hasuerus my birth and me who became king over the realm of the Chaldeans in the first year of his reign I Daniel perceived in the books the number of years that according to the word of the Lord to the prophet Jeremiah must be fulfilled for the devastation of Jerusalem namely 70 years a whole something is set in motion out of Daniel's reading of the scriptures and when you will hear the tape tomorrow from yesterday's message we spent a bit of time on this this is not a man just playing spiritual roulette with the bible and just fingering the text at will or out of curiosity this is a man who systematically probes the word of God and understands the scripture as the word of God and sees in it clear statements pertaining to Israel's future that guides him in the present so if we are going

to be the Daniels of our generation as the chapter 9 begins with Daniel borrowing in to the scriptures and the prophetic text in Jeremiah we need to borrow in the chapter 2 of Proverbs and all the things that will be before us these days in scripture so what are you getting what can you see from this text in Proverbs that gives us some clue to what it is and to whom it's given what purpose it serves what is the distinguishing character of this wisdom by which Daniel became so celebrated in the Chaldean kingdom and was able even to upright to upgrade and berate its kings with complete courage and even see himself in a lion's den by not at all changing his conduct and his course by which he prayed three times a day to the Lord looking out the window facing Jerusalem who will cry out for

wisdom I mean when have we ever had occasion to cry out for wisdom because it's on the basis of that cry it says God gives as if he's waiting to hear a cry I think we need to understand that the Daniel of which we're reading in the kingdom of the Medes and the Chaldeans was not formed there he was formed in Judea and in Judah and in Jerusalem he has a whole history that God does not document that evidently must begin with this disposition that commences the second chapter of Proverbs he already had an inclination already had an attentive ear he was already a candidate for the wisdom of God prior to coming into captivity prior to exile so this is not the acquisition of a moment this is the statement of a lifetime what if the word is demanding like the child rearing thing that I'm citing

what if the word is painful not only to consider but to believe and to walk out so I think this is not a little luxury God's word is a requirement and the preliminary condition the first condition for being able to receive a gift of wisdom and understanding is a disposition that will receive God's words whatever the implication or the requirement and Daniel was evidently such for one though God doesn't tell us how or where we can be assured that if he came into the latter part of this Proverbs he had to come begin with it as it begins people will nod as I'm speaking as if they're hearing and agreeing later on through circumstance and conversation I find out that what they were doing was taking the word and filtering it through a certain what's the word? a filter? a grid the grid of their

subjectivity and when it comes through the grid they have filtered out the harsh aspects that would be in some way threatening to them and turned it into a word acceptable within the framework of the status quo of their present life have you ever seen that phenomenon? have you ever performed that phenomenon? have you seen it in yourself? you're hearing the word, you're nodding as if in ostensible agreement but what you're doing is taking the word and sifting and refining it to make it acceptable to your present understanding this is what God is talking about if you will accept my word without transmuting it to make it acceptable to yourself but take it in the intent with which it is given even and especially when it will be inconvenient to you and threatening to things that you already

understand and want to see preserved and unviolated if you're not on that ground, if you have not that disposition and you have not that willfulness, you can forget all the rest and I believe this is why we don't find that Daniel-like wisdom in the church because they've not met the first and initial requirement that God gives in the beginning here I think it would be inclusive of the Ten Commandments and the Mosaic requirement but I think that everything that God speaks should be looked upon as an injunction that will result in an obedience he doesn't titillate our ears with aimless speaking everything that God speaks is a requirement in fact I've said, if your speaking as a preacher does not bring a requirement that's not a valid speaking there's not a time that I can remember that God

has spoken through me that does not make a requirement of the hearer that's the very nature of God's speaking he doesn't speak to titillate he speaks to call, to obedience and to challenge that there be a direct communication between God and man without having to be interposed or transmuted through a subjective grid but the first step would be to acknowledge that it's been with us and too often has sublimated the word of God taken the harsh edges off and it's almost an unconscious process I've watched people, I can almost look at their faces I can watch their wheels turning as they're taking the word and processing it to make it acceptable and nodding and they'll thank you on the way up for the good word that you brought but what they have received of it is altogether other than what God

intended so this is, you're touching something really significant here and we're going to be the Daniels of our generation step one, recognize that there's a subtlety of heart that does not hear or desire to hear the word of God objectively and unequivocally as it is given but there's something almost always operating that seeks to sublimate it into the framework of our existing values and interests and accommodate it to that so to avoid that what would be the answer? the answer is not to have a vested interest and a corpus of self-serving consideration however much you have justified it that would in any way affect hearing the word that is to say, you have to be without any self-serving interest or any status quo that has been built up however religiously ordained or condoned and bring

it to death or give it up you have nothing to defend you have nothing that needs to be fitted into something existing you don't have any existing status quo that needs to be guarded, preserved or cherished now how

do you come to that place and I'm not talking about carnal material possession I'm assuming that all of us are far beyond that point I'm talking about the things that are yet more difficult to give up that constitutes the status quo our religious and spiritual interests and values and categories that are dear to us and have been established over the course of time they may even actually at the beginning been given of God and have come into a certain kind of body of consideration that takes on the need to perpetuate or to preserve something like the church itself has become a

self-perpetuating institution it began as a brave radical feeling for apostolic origins and is seeking to affect that in our generation, that was its beginning but then as it continues to succeed and obtain greater membership and property and it takes on an institutional character and becomes an entity in itself that now becomes the foremost consideration that needs to be protected, preserved and perpetuated and that's why a church in that condition can no longer hear God as it did at the first remembering that God's word is not our word or his thoughts are our thoughts so we're opening up for something completely outside our own interest but altogether his so an adjustment on earth needs to be made with a wisdom from heaven is it a character that speaks of something already formed and

already has substance or is he asking for a disposition like for example, if you will be attentive this is not character this is a disposition of heart and will that assumes I'm saying that any man is capable of this disposition it's the issue of heart are you willing to be attentive are you willing to hear a word from heaven that will be totally other than your own understanding and may make an adjustment of a kind painful are you willing will you dispose your heart and dispose your ear that's available to you one of the greatest messages they ever gave a black congregation in Savannah Georgia out of Proverbs I think it was chapter 4 if you will set your eyes straight ahead if you will only look at the path of your feet the most practical advice for walking that I can say to this black

congregation it doesn't matter your background, your race, your history your social condition, your education whether you're illegitimate, whether you have one parent or two here is foundational guidance given by God that you can do, if you will do it he'll take you off the dung heap and make you to sit with the princes of his people here is the basis for human elevation and it begins by the simplest things to do how to set your eyes and how to walk with your feet and if you begin with that counsel and continue in obedience to that kind of counsel God will elevate you beyond anything that can be understood despite your social origins it was a powerful word and there was like spontaneous applause, I came back to the pew a brother from Venezuela was with me and he said cats for president

they would have hoisted me on their shoulders and carried me right to the White House because it was a liberating word and it's in Proverbs in the simplest requirement of what to do with your eyes and your feet which if you will dispose your heart, you're free I don't care what your background is, don't tell me you're black and you're a victim of society and you're on drugs your parents who are on drugs, you're illegitimate you can read these simple words these are given by God, will you choose to do them will you choose to follow what he says with your eyes and your feet if you'll make that beginning, God will make of you a mensch he'll take you off the dung keep and make you to sit with the princes of his people and make of you a prince of his people and the word was totally liberating

but it has to do with a willingness to set your eyes and your feet so his character is the result of that walk but it commences character commences with inclination what is your disposition keep your heart it says in Proverbs it's interesting it's in the same book keep your heart with all diligence Proverbs chapter 4 I think it's verse 30 for out of it proceed all the issues of life whatever we can say about men, whatever their

social conditions whatever their origins, whatever their histories however depleted, however much victim they have hearts that they can keep and guard keep your heart with all diligence if you'll not keep your heart if you have not that kind of stewardship over the central thing of your own being how are you even a human being this is the elementary consideration

for humanity itself if you have not a heart to keep and a heart to dispose and to incline, who then are you and what are you you're so degraded, you're so beyond any possibility of being human if you can't keep your heart that's yours to be diligently to protect and keep and not open it for this and that but guard it, it's the main spring it's the locus of reality itself so we're talking about coming to full humanity Daniel was a mensch, you know this word in Yiddish and in German, M-E-N-S-C-H a mensch is a person who is accountable a mensch is a person who is a person he has responsibility and integrity he's thoughtful, he can be called upon if he says something, he'll do it Daniel was an exemplary mensch and even the Chaldeans knew it because they elevated him to the highest post of

their nation, because he had these qualities our question is, where did he obtain them and where did it begin, if not here even as a boy, in the earliest stages of consciousness, these words could be understood and appropriated that he could be like other kids or he can dispose his heart and be attentive, in fact my addition here doesn't begin with the word my son it begins with my child God is speaking to children and children are able to hear this and to respond even at that earliest stage of life if they'll not start at that earliest stage, when then will they begin if you'll not begin as a child, when then will you begin if you already lose your childhood by walking in the way of the world, contrary to God you may have lost your innocence and your childhood forever so God is

addressing something at the beginning, my child if, there's that conditional, if you will accept and receive my words implying that they may not always be convenient in fact they will rarely be convenient and treasure up my commandments within you is something more than just biting your lips and condescending to follow the commandments because God has given them if you treasure up my commandments don't think that I'm sharing something that I've deliberated over I'm looking at it so to speak as a first time with you and I'm purposely withholding preparing myself because I want you to see the process by which I myself come into the word, in the same way that we're doing now by actually probing and examining how God chooses to express himself why does he say treasure up, why didn't he just

say obey commandments that's ordinarily the kind of language that we hear when the word commandment is cited here he goes beyond mere obedience, he talks about treasuring up that means that you have a certain not only a respect for the commandments of God but a reverence that they are dear to you beyond the issue of whether they're convenient that God gave them in and of itself is reason for your esteem have we come to that level ourselves or do we feel that obedience to commandments is some laborious grievous thing that we have to perform because God said so and if we think that orthodox Jews are in that belabored condition where they're struggling under a weight of law, we don't understand them the orthodox Jews that I'm meeting delight themselves in the law of God his commandments are

a delight you wonder why having that disposition they haven't come all the way but I think that they will so we need this is not arbitrary language every word that proceeds from the mouth of God he could have said something beside the word treasure he could have said respect honor and that would have been perfectly appropriate but to treasure up goes so far beyond mere acknowledgement mere obedience, mere honoring even as little as that is today observed this is a something more and it's a something more that we need to see if we're going to move in the Daniel direction what about wisdom is so desirable that it's

worth that investment and that sacrifice we're talking around and about but we haven't identified wisdom itself what is this wisdom that is so desirable that it's worth every

cost, every expense, every investment and even evokes a cry out of our beaks to obtain and properly enjoy the wisdom of God we need a little understanding of wisdom as wisdom per se, what is wisdom itself if wisdom of God is the highest supreme form of wisdom, what is wisdom itself that is such a desirable phenomenon especially when no previous experience will answer to the crisis of the present moment and you need the unique and particular application of the mind of God to a present or future circumstance for which nothing of your past will have to pay how's that for definition, that's what I'm fishing for and even if something of the past were given of God you cannot merely make that application because of the similarity, you need what is appropriate now, the present truth as it is in

Christ Jesus for this situation which is altogether unique and not before given nor will again come and all the more compounded when the issue of it is not your convenience or your enjoyment but life or death or even eternity itself for another I'll take that until a better definition comes along, I'll live with that one, you got that?

Wisdom is what God himself gives out of his own mind and heart and will and the appropriateness that only he can recognize and answer for a situation that has not previously come that cannot be answered by any past experience and needs the present now understanding of God to resolve and what is at stake is not an issue of convenience or even success but the issue of life or death or eternity itself or in the last analysis the issue of the glory of God himself did you get that?

I'm tacking that on, it's the issue of the glory of God himself, that is to say if we will not hear and receive an answer of that magnitude not only will there be a suffering of loss humanly but there will be a loss to God's glory eternally as if it's a once and for all that will not be given again, you say Art you're describing a situation that I can't even conceive would ever come up in my lifetime, well then you're conceiving, leave something to be desired here's the point, even if such a situation should never arise in your lifetime we ought to be anticipating such a moment, even if it does not come up we ought to live in anticipation that somewhere in the last days crisis situation of kind will arise for which no previous experience or human wisdom or previous knowledge of God will suffice because the issue is life death, eternity and the eternal glory of God, that if we don't get it from him the moment is missed because it's once and for all and will not be given again now that's a heightened way of having expectancy and in fact it's a heightened way of living but I'm willing to venture that Daniel had that very mindset and that is every moment was lived as if it had this eternal quotient about it pertaining to God's glory and that's why he could go into the lion's den, that's why he could risk his life because he saw everything charged to the uttermost insignificance if you don't see life as significantly as that and you're seeing it only humanly and conventionally you will be living beneath the glory of God and at that level you can live adequately out of your own mind but when you see in the heightened way the significance of every moment as for example in the class today and even right now or the morning prayer time or going overseas or taking anger into the city in once and for all situations we have to say with Paul who is sufficient for these things and he's made unto us wisdom, sanctification, redemption and power but he's made those things unto us to the degree that we cry out for them and deeply respect and appreciate what must uniquely come from God because we're living in a very heightened sense which is to say we're living apostolically which is to say we're really living which is to say we're living humanly in the way that God intended by making us in his image and for the want of which mankind is dying.

Got all that?

Daniel is witness to the collapse of the nation called of God to make him known as God by failing to do this very thing to heed what he speaks, to obey it, to cherish his commandments and he sees the judgment because as Virgie has already pointed out there's a deadly consequence for the forsaking of this wisdom this wisdom is not for dilettantes, you know that word? a dilettante is one who likes to adorn his coffee table conversation with interesting asides and sophisticated observations the wisdom of God is not given for dilettantes who want to adorn their conversation the wisdom of God is given for the grit of life itself and the absence of it is death because we see into the psalm for wisdom will come into your heart, verse 10 knowledge will be pleasant to your soul, prudence will

watch over you and understanding will guard you it will save you from the way of evil we know what the end of that is, is death from those who speak perversely, who forsake the paths of righteousness to walk in the ways of darkness who rejoice in doing evil, the light perverseness of evil whose paths are crooked, there's a practical consequence that saves you from the antithesis of wisdom which is perverseness the way of the world, violence, death so it's not a luxury therefore you cry out for it if it's only just to enhance your coffee time conversation, you'll not cry but if it's the alternative to wickedness, perversity and death you'll cry out for it, which evidently from this from this chapter it is but I wonder if you need to know that wisdom is God's provision against death in

order to cry out or just learn that it's the benefit that it comes to you of itself you understand what I'm saying? you're not seeking wisdom as a protection for your life like an insurance policy you're seeking wisdom because it's God and because you're attentive to him because you love what he has to say because you know he does all things well and there's no imperfection in him and because you know his thoughts are not our thoughts they're so much higher, you love it for its own sake you desire it to be pleasing and then you find out that in the course of it, it will save you from perversity and from evil and from death something like that so it's not that you're making a pragmatic expedient choice I guess I have to seek wisdom in order to avoid perversity it's seeking wisdom for its

own sake for God's sake it's a thing in itself to be desired because it's the mind of the Lord and Paul says in Romans 11 who has known the mind of the Lord who has been his counselor I think that's where the song of Proverbs wisdom cries out in the street wisdom is a woman wisdom is personified and saved from being abstraction by being presented to us as a woman or identified as a person to be sought, to be embraced, to be loved which you can't do for an abstraction so God uses the language of personhood it's a woman crying out in the street cries out to us wisdom is very God himself and we who have the benefit of the Holy Spirit need to find for a model of inspiration among unsaved orthodox Jews who have a greater delight in the commandments of God than we it would be wisdom on our part

to esteem them even in their unsafe condition for the qualities which they exhibit that are lacking in us and humbly express that acknowledgement to them just as we need to recognize that there is an unconscious grid by which we filter words that come to us to make them acceptable there is an unconscious disposition as Americans against commandment we don't like to be commanded we like to be freewheeling entities who call our own shots so more than the issue of what we should receive as commandment I think something that precedes that is the recognition do we have a heart that is desiring to be obedient to commandments when God will show us which of them are valid if not all are we willing to be commanded is what I'm really saying Daniel we can say is transcendent and above not only the

culture of Babylon but even the culture of fallen Judah he's in a transcendent and heavenly place and therefore applicable to us I remember something from basic training where among the humiliating things we had to do was to dig a hole at some arbitrary spot designated by a sergeant and then fill it up again or dig another hole and then take the dirt from that hole and fill the first hole and it staggers you because what reason what purpose is being served we are Americans who will not give ourselves to something unless there is a justifying explanation to which we agree but merely to follow orders because they are given even when they are totally arbitrary and do not make sense to us is the issue of being a soldier and that's why we had to dig holes and fill them up with the dirt from

other holes that we have dug that are equally as senseless because the army recognizes that we are the product of a civilization and culture that has so celebrated individuality and its freedom that has no disposition to obey at all and until that is wrought in us it could be our death in a battle situation where we have to follow an order that is given that does not make sense so in these very first lines God is probing for something very deep not as a finished product but as a disposition of will and heart how many Christians argue with God because they can't understand that what he is requiring and doing to them does not make sense and yet he is wanting an obedience to that situation without explanation what the Lord is really calling for is death you are not going to obtain wisdom

unless there is a death that comes with even seeking to be attentive and seeking to find your heart there is a death to the things that would uproot and make even that inclination possible here is what I am thinking probably the greatest reason why we have not obtained the Daniel like wisdom is that we have made it a cheapie and just to pray out Lord give me wisdom without recognizing what needs to precede it by our very disposition and inclination which is really a calling for death and resurrection is not to obtain it we have made wisdom a cheapie as we have made the word grace a cheapie as we have made the sacraments a cheapie as we are making now the words apostolic and prophetic a cheapie but this is instructing us that wisdom is so ultimately desired it cannot be cheap it will

require a life and that is why God has not answered and could not answer when we prayed Lord give me wisdom and we did not get it because we did not begin to realize what must precede it not only is death a requisite condition for the beginning of the root to wisdom but the receiving of it will also require a death because it is very likely to be so contrary to what we would have thought appropriate, what we would have considered to be an appropriate wisdom and that the acting of it out or the employing of that wisdom will bring reproach, misunderstanding and opposition so are we willing for the wisdom of God that is not going to give us a soft answer and one in the performance of which we will win the respect and esteem of others around us quite the contrary to act out the wisdom that is

given is likely to bring upon our heads a reproach and misunderstanding and not just from strangers but from those closest to us so we need to know what we are asking when we are asking wisdom it is death both to prepare yourself to obtain it and it is death in order to fulfill it ok if you indeed cry out for insight and raise your voice for understanding if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures then here is God's promise you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God for the Lord gives wisdom and so on so I would have to say on the basis of this testimony of God and the assurance that he is giving he will not allow us to fall into another trap by seeking the thing that he genuinely wants us to desire and to obtain his grace will attend

to it if he hears our cry he will not give us stone if we ask blood we have to trust him that we will not go off onto another tangent and raise up another grid if we forsake the one that is now obstructing us and if you

indeed cry out and raise your voice I am concerned as I have said before you will be hearing probably on other times for the issue of authentic personhood human personality in the image of God if you raise your voice if you cry out, if you seek I want to say that until we have come to this depth of cry and seeking we have not yet come we are living superficially we are at the periphery of life and even of ourselves we have not made contact with our own truth so for example if you guys can understand that who have had occasion to speak publicly for the Lord or will often

times in fact invariably you always feel out of it in the moment of that responsibility when the call comes and I myself will hesitate the people don't even know what's going on and the audience they watch the man come up on the platform come to the microphone what I need to do first before I even open my mouth is to find my own center I've got to connect with the real me and laugh off any extraneous thing that wants to impede itself I need to make contact with my true life where God is before I can open my mouth and speak truly so this is what God is after He is waiting for a cry and seeking because these are the deepest existential statements of reality in being a human being and there is little in the world that would invoke a cry or a search that's true for me in my first 35 years of

life with university background and teaching and all of that stuff, Marxism any of the things that attracted or occupied me never required a totality of being in order to seek or to find that began with God so I'm appreciating what God is after but we need to cherish what this wisdom is and this understanding in order to seek it as if it were treasure and to cry out for it by raising our voice, then you'll understand God says if you'll find the existential root of your own being and from that point sound out to me from where you are in yourself as real I'll hear you from that place and then I will give you that's his promise, you know why? because he's a deep calling unto deep because he's an authentic God calling unto authentic man and wants to break the power of superficiality and

wisdom as convenience, wisdom as expediency wisdom as a clever little answer to get us through the perplexity of the moment that we could be eased of it he wants to give us a wisdom not by which we'll be saved from the embarrassment of looking foolish but a wisdom that will glorify him so I have to say that if we will meet God on the level that he's indicating he will meet us and his then will be answered then you'll understand and the most basic, the fear of God because you've come to me in your depth you'll catch glimpse of me in my depth and that fear will attend every consideration that henceforth will issue from you he's got to bring us to an intractable situation beyond any ability to resolve in ourselves where the stakes are very great and he loves us so much that he will see to

that crisis and some of us are in it presently if not we will be this is so exquisite equality that as we read in the beginning the Chaldeans described it as Daniel having the spirit of the gods of Joseph the Pharaoh had to say can we find such a one as this in whom the spirit of God is so this is so transcendent equality this is so much very God himself that this is the way that the Babylonians recognized it in Daniel he has the spirit of the gods they didn't say he's clever or what a remarkable Jew or what outstanding human qualities this is so sublime, so transcendent, so above anything could be humanly understood or obtained that they rightly recognized it as being the spirit of the gods because they're speaking in plural because they saw a multitude of deities but they knew it was

divine and that's what God is putting before us and in order to obtain it this death is altogether appropriate and this is what we're going to need and even to display to our Jewish kinsmen as precious as they are they have not this divine quotient and their predicament will be of a kind that only the divine wisdom will answer to their predicament and when they shall hear it coming out of Gentiles that will be the ultimate

astonishment and they'll recognize in Gentiles what the Chaldeans have recognized in Daniel you guys, you Christians whom we have denigrated as dumb-dumbs, rednecks, fundamentalists what's issuing from you in counsel to us and understanding of our situation and even affecting the line of our flight and safety and refuge is from God is from the Most High, you have the

wisdom of God and that's exactly, nothing less than that will suffice in that crisis time, but we'll not have it in that moment, unless we're on the way to it in all our moments, beginning now by a very inclination of heart and a willingness to forego anything that would impede, and willingness to cry out, raise our voice, seek it, search for it as for hidden treasure, not only because it will serve the purposes of God toward men even toward his own kinsmen, but because what it is, in essence, is very God it's to be desired for its own sake it's God, God is wisdom and we delight in that let's take a little break Lord, thanks for turning over a few spadefuls of encrusted earth and breaking in to categories and considerations that have not ever begun to appear to us we had prayed for wisdom

and wondered why it is we didn't receive it, we wanted a quickie a fix, an expedient answer for a moment but we didn't want a condition of being we didn't want a mode of life and being which is in you and which is you and probably instinctively, we shrank from it if we sensed what it would cost both to obtain and what it would cost to act out, so we bless you Lord, Daniel evidently did not hesitate and was formed in this my God, and so we know that flesh and blood can acquire you didn't lead him off on a wrong tangent or a deep end, you brought him to the very wisdom of God, which even the pagan captors had to recognize beyond anything which they themselves had so thank you Lord for this beginning, continue to break in use your pickaxe my God, and show us the kinds of things that are

unconscious in us that impede even the inclination and we thank you Lord for painstaking attention to this and your love for this is your desire for us, it's your wisdom for us, and we thank you for it in Jesus name Amen

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