

Book of Proverbs

Our first readings this week will be taken from the Book of Proverbs. This is probably one of the more unfamiliar books for many Christians. A short overview might be helpful so as to glean some understanding from the book.

First, most of the book is attributed to King Solomon. Scholars dispute whether certain sections of the book were from Solomon, or authors who wrote under his name. The sections written by Solomon, if any, would have been in the 10th century B.C. (1,000 years before Christ). Some believe that the book reached its final form by about 600 B.C.

Overall, Proverbs is not concerned about how to get rich, but rather about learning the skills to make a life. It focuses on situations and understanding what to do and how to do it at the right time in the right way. Proverbs offers sayings meant to guide one through the twists and turns of everyday life. In short, it is focused on experience and practical living rather than speculative world of academics.

The foundation for all wisdom is the "fear of the Lord." This punctuates the book from beginning to end. Since wisdom ultimately comes from God, one can hardly be called wise who fails to revere the Lord. Practically speaking, fear of the Lord means having a profound respect and love for God. It means submitting yourselves or committing yourself to God's will.

Today, we can look at just one line. The author says, "*When dealing with the arrogant, he is stern, but to the humble he shows kindness.*" The arrogant or proud are those who possess excessive self-esteem or self-love. They seek attention and honor and set themselves in competition with God. Thus, God is stern with them.

The humble, however, are those with a modest opinion of their importance. God shows great kindness to the humble because He can work with them.

For us, one of our core beliefs is that Jesus Christ is the embodiment of Wisdom. Just as He fulfills the Mosaic Law and in some sense embodies the law, so He is embodies Wisdom. By submitting to Jesus and cooperating with His grace, we can put the everyday insights from the Books of Proverbs into practice.