

**Proverbs 30: 1-6; “God is our Shield”, A sermon delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall, on  
May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, the 1<sup>st</sup> week we were able to return to worship  
at church, following the coronavirus restrictions.**

During this time of the coronavirus restrictions I have wanted to communicate to you the fact that I believe the Bible teaches, that at such times as this, God would have us to take the time as Christians to examine ourselves. He would have us to see where it is, perhaps, that we have not lived up to all the grace and truth that we have been given. God would have us to repent of our sins where we need to. He would then have us to seek Him fervently, so that He might help us greatly to follow Christ more closely, and learn from Him, in our everyday walk with Him. It may indeed be true, that our country may have come to experience this coronavirus as a judgment of God upon us for our many sins. But if you are a Christian, you should understand that there is no eternal condemnation for you; Christ has born that on the cross. But what you may need at this time is His kind teaching and discipline of you as His child; that is, His teaching your spirit some things which are necessary to your being more useful to Him with your life. Sometimes that is what He sees that we need.

No, for the Christian, a time like this is a test. It is a test to you to see how you will use your time, and what you will try to learn from God, and about God, during this time. And so, as we look at this text, I would show you that there are 3 thoughts which God would have you receive if you would know His help to you as a Shield as you walk through this life. Let me list them for you. 1<sup>st</sup> of all – God will be a Shield to those who see themselves as stupid, if they will confess their ignorance. 2<sup>nd</sup> – God will be a Shield to all those see Him as all-powerful, and who call upon His name. And 3<sup>rd</sup> – God will be a Shield to those who will hold fast His words and not add to them. These are the 3 thoughts that God would have you consider with me now. And if you will keep them in your mind and heart, you will be spiritually shielded as you trust in God. And if you do not know God, you can come to know Him, if you will believe in these truths and act upon them. So let us consider them together.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – God will be a Shield to those who see themselves as stupid if they will confess their ignorance.** (verses 1-3)

“The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, his utterance (or his prophecy).” “This man declared to Ithiel – to Ithiel and Ucal: Surely I am more stupid than any man, and do not have the understanding of a man.” “I neither learned wisdom nor have knowledge of the Holy One.” Now I hope that you will understand that I am not trying to be insulting when I talk to you about my stupidity or yours, but you need to see that this man Agur, who was a holy man and a prophet, and a teacher of others, he said this of himself for a reason. And you will notice that he thought that it was so important a thing that he had learned, that he had it written down by his students, Ithiel and Ucal, so that that they would hopefully learn the lesson for themselves, as well.

Agur had learned that when you are proud of what you know, it may lead you to think that somehow you do not have a lot more to learn about God, or from God, at this time in your life, or anytime in the future, about how you could communicate the truth of His word to others. He looks at you, and He may see that you have become a high and mighty judge of people. You have good spiritual discernment, and you can plainly see whether they are orthodox or not orthodox in doctrinal truth. And rather than pausing to think of how you might help them with what you have learned, of how you might glorify God helping them to understand by your great knowledge, you think badly of them, and you are content to let them hold to their mistakes, and secretly you think that you know much more than people around you. You are proud that you have studied the matter out and you are proud of yourself for doing so. You will not make their mistake, but you do not see others in their blindness in terms of what you could do to help them.

Every Christian must be wary of pride of intellect. It leads you to think of how smart you are, and what you think that you have attained to, in terms of learning, and you are satisfied with that so much that you do not think that you need to grow much in wisdom in relation to what you have learned. You may have even come to the place where you look down upon others who don't see things as clearly as you do. But Agur is challenging us with this thought: Are my thoughts approved of by God? Jim Elliot, the missionary who went to preach to the Auca Indians in Ecuador in the mid-1950s, and who was slain by them as he was trying to reach them with the gospel, once said, that the only degree that he was working toward was the degree of A.U.G. – Approved unto God. And this is what we should be striving for as well, beginning with our thoughts about our own understanding of things.

You see, this is one of the great mistakes that some very gifted Christian people sometimes make, in relation to their walk with God, and their being disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. A disciple is a learner. And who is their teacher? Their teacher is God Himself, and the teacher is evaluating every pupil of His, no matter how smart they are. In Isaiah 54: 13 it says – “All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children.” The reason that pride of intellect is such a great mistake is that it makes too much of the learner accumulating the knowledge, and not enough of the teacher who has a purpose in teaching it. The purpose of God's giving you knowledge is to conform you to the image of Christ; not to glorify your own image. The Divine teacher would have you to glorify Him, through humble, holy, loving thoughts, and behavior. If you do not see this, and you are a Christian, then God will over time bring you to the place where you, like Agur will confess – Surely I am more stupid than any man.

Now, I believe, from Agur's statement here, that he would have us all come to the same conclusion about ourselves. Without God's giving us wisdom and grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ we are ignorant and stupid in terms of really knowing God and the same applies to our knowledge of ourselves. We all fall short in many ways it says in James chapter 3, verse 2. We all stumble in any things. It is sometimes true that those who engage in this pride of intellect often study to store up their knowledge, and it is a very good thing to store up Biblical knowledge. But I am saying that sometimes a person may store up their knowledge not so much to know God and His ways better, or themselves and what they further need to learn, better, but so that they might be seen by other people to be knowledgeable and wise in a worldly sense; that is, they are looking for the approval of men, or they desire to be popular or famous. But have you ever seriously asked yourself the question – God, is my life pleasing to you? Sometimes for the Christian, the gathering of knowledge becomes a competition for them. They think that the Christian who has learned the most didactic truth is winning the game of the Christian life. Knowledge is intended by God to bring us to have better spiritual discernment. By nature we are all morally and spiritually sottish.

But the Christian life is not a game of he who has the most truth wins! It is learning to be wise and mature in relation to living out and sharing the truth which God has revealed to you in His word. Agur, I believe, had once played this game of competing in knowledge, and he now saw his stupidity in having played it. He wanted to correct his sinful mistake by confessing it before God, and especially to those who were now looking to him as their instructor. The principle which we are considering is stated plainly by the apostle Paul in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 8: 1 – Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge.” “Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.” “And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.” “But if anyone loves God, this is known by Him.” Let me ask you very plainly and simply – Have you made an idol of your own being more knowledgeable than other people?

This is possible. You know that to have knowledge is to have power. You may not have eaten meat which was offered to idols, but have you become puffed up by the accumulation of your knowledge of all sorts; and perhaps even your accumulation of Biblical doctrine and the truth of the Bible? Now, the Scriptures themselves commend their knowledge and the wisdom that comes from that knowledge in many places. It is only fools who despise wisdom and instruction. But I

am asking you to examine yourself to determine whether you are proud in relation to the knowledge that you have. Do you find it easy to be critical of other Christians and hard to love them and be patient with them because you think that they have not studied the matter hard enough so that they can come to the right conclusion? Perhaps you forget that all people are morally and spiritually blind by nature, and that even for the Christian that it takes God's revealing truth to them to grow up into Christ?

But, from this perspective I must ask this question. How can you have peace, and be a peacemaker, as the fruit of the Spirit, if you have this pride of intellect? Well, you cannot. Why can't you have peace? It is because you are always worried that there is someone who has learned something more than you have learned. You are always looking to find that person who knows something more than you do, so that you can contribute to your stock of knowledge. And when you find that person, you may unfortunately come to think too highly of them. You find yourself boasting in a man. You boast in the strength of his observations, and his knowledge, and thus you really do not understand what God is trying to teach you which is that true understanding leads to humility not pride. But you should remember that that man who is more knowledgeable than you are, he needs to be taught by God everyday, as well, by the Spirit.

And he too needs to learn humble and learn more, day by day, in terms of the way that he communicates that knowledge of God and the practical wisdom of living the everyday Christian life to the glory of God, to people around him. When you are inclining your heart to the Lord's teaching your spirit in connection with the truth of His word, you shall indeed have great peace, if you abide in that teaching. God's teaching, by the Holy Spirit's instructing your heart and mind, shows you very practical things that you can do, to have closer fellowship and communion with Christ, and how you can build up and edify others with the Biblical knowledge that He reveals to you from the Scriptures. This revelation, of how to apply the truth of His word, this wisdom which comes by the Spirit's working in your heart, has power accompanying it, to both enlighten your mind, and to give you wisdom and insight into how to truly help others to understand God's truth better. This is not a game; it is the reality of life of a disciple of Christ.

This working and power of the Holy Spirit, to very practically lead you and guide you into all the truth are something that you should pray for and expect, each and every day as a Christian. When you have this wisdom which comes by walking in the Spirit, you will rightly be able to apply Biblical knowledge to all the various situations of your life, and you will learn, by consciously being sensitive to His leading, to truly know how you can help other people as well. You will in this holy way find joy and peace in believing in Him. You providentially may go through many trials and tribulations, that He will lead you into, and through. But you will really come to know the peace of God which passes all understanding. You begin to pray more, for other Christians to know Christ better, even as you pray to know Him better yourself.

You pray the prayer of the apostle Paul for the saints in Ephesus. Ephesians 3, verse 17 – “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height – to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” You see, when you come to the place where you will consciously seek this Spirit taught wisdom, you will also be able to say with Agur, “Surely, I am more stupid than any man.” “I do not have the understanding of a man.” (That is, of the godly man that I should be) I have neither learned wisdom nor have knowledge of the Holy One.”

The knowledge of the Holy One is the knowledge of Christ. Yes, even in Old Testament times, those who knew God, knew that they needed to every day attempt to learn more of the knowledge of the coming Messiah. But in their lives sometimes there would come a crisis point in which they would learn this very practically. Agur had come to this place, and so he confessed his stupidity in order that he might truly be taught more about himself and about God. Dear Christian, have you done the same. For if you do, you will never regret it.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – God will be a Shield to all those see Him as all-powerful, and who call upon His name.**

“Who has ascended into heaven, or descended?” “Who has gathered the wind in His fists?” “Who has bound the waters in a garment?” “Who has established all the ends of the earth?” “What is name, and what is His Son’s name, if you know?” Now, I believe that Agur made these amazing prophetic statements, asking them as questions, for a reason. They follow the confession of his own stupidity which I have interpreted as being his ignorance of the real knowledge of the Holy One, that knowledge which he very much needed so that he could quit playing the game of trying to act as though he was smarter than other people around him. He was showing forth his repentance in this regard; a repentance over the mental sin of pride and assuming that he knew more than others; a sin which led him not to consider the real need of true knowledge and wisdom which others around him needed, so as to truly help them to a better understanding.

In order to promote the true knowledge of the living God, he would focus our attention on the glory and majesty of God’s wisdom and power in relation to His purpose to exalt His name and His Son’s name in all the earth. Let us always remember and declare this fact to others, that there is only one true and living God. And He has given the Lord Jesus all power and authority in heaven and earth to rule and reign in righteousness over all peoples, and all the nations of the earth. For who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Is it not the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not the Father, at least in bodily form, for it was the Father who sent the Son to fulfill all His will concerning mankind, through His ministry upon the earth.

Turn with me over to John chapter 3, verse 1. It says here – “There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.” “This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” “Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’ “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes.” “So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” “Nicodemus answered and said to Him, ‘How can these things be?’” “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Are you the teacher of Israel, and you do not know these things?’” “Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.” “If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?” “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is the Son of Man who is in heaven.”

You see, Jesus was showing Nicodemus the truth about himself, that even though he was a very religious man, a teacher and ruler of the Jews, that he must be born again to see and to enter the kingdom of God. Nicodemus knew that Jesus couldn’t do the signs that he did without God being with him, but he truly did not understand how very great Jesus was. He tells Nicodemus about the earthly spiritual need of all men; to be born again. And he says that if Nicodemus could not understand that, then how could he understand and believe when he told him of the heavenly things; of His being God made manifest in the flesh, unique among all men in that He could ascend to heaven in His spirit and be on the earth, all at the same time. The Father and He were one. And this what accounts for the fact that both God the Father and the Son are both said to ascend into heaven and descend in our text in verse 4.

It helps us to understand how Christ gathers the wind in His fists, and how He binds the waters in a garment, and establishes all the ends of the earth. He is both God and Man. These verses are proclaiming the truth of the Triune God, the three Persons of the Divine Trinity in the Godhead, whose purposes are one, and whose working is all together One, in accordance with their purpose. And these verses are describing the actions of God’s Son, our Lord Jesus Christ who came down from heaven in His Incarnation, and did the will of the Father perfectly. They lead us to think of how they were fulfilled in His calming the winds and the waves when they were tumultuous, and

binding the waters in a garment when he walked upon the sea. They show us how He established all the ends of the earth, by His laying down His life for sinners, so that when He was lifted up on the cross that He would draw all men unto Himself. He fulfilled all God's holy law. He went about doing good to all men. He took upon Himself their sorrows, their burdens and the load of all of their sins and cares, and He went to the cross, where He died there a sacrifice for sin.

He who descended to the lowest parts of the earth in His death, was raised from the dead, was victorious over sin and death, and He ascended to heaven where He sits now, at God's right hand. He says in John 17: 2 that the Father had given Him authority over all flesh that He should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given to Him. This is why you should not think, O Christian, that you could ever do anything more to please God yourselves, in order to merit your salvation, or the grace and help which He bestows, than what the Lord Jesus has already done for you if you will believe in Him. You cannot keep God's law perfectly. But Jesus did, and since He rose from the dead, He walked upon the wings of the wind, all the way to the heavenly places, so that He might one day bring you there to Himself.

Moses writes about the righteousness of the law, 'the man who does those things shall live by them.' "But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, 'Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (That is, to bring Christ down from above) or, 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).'" "But what does it say?" "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." "For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.'"

Sometimes in our Christian life, we come to crisis points where we see the stupidity of the things that we have done in trying to force the outcome of what we want in relation to all that has been shown to us and all that has been given to us in terms of our life, our gifts, and our abilities. We haven't realized that God has been watching us all along, and He is our teacher, as well as our Savior and Lord. Let's think together about Jacob wrestling with the Angel; the pre-Incarnate Son of God, at the fords of the Jabbok. He wrestled through the night with this Angel, into the early morning, it says in Genesis chapter 32. And it says in verse 25, that when the Angel saw that He did not prevail against Jacob, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him." "And He said, 'Let Me go, for the day breaks.'" "But he said, 'I will not let You go unless You bless me!'"

I want you to see, dear Christian, just how much the Lord Jesus really loves all of His elect people. He is willing that you should prevail in your prayers, in your wrestlings with Him, once He sees that your heart is right. Let me ask you whether, when Christ comes to your spirit to wrestle with you over the issues of your life, do you pray this way? Do you pray – I will not let You go until You bless me? The Lord had to weaken Jacob's strength in the way in order to bless him. He had to touch the socket of his hip so that the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. He would limp for the rest of his life because of this encounter. Sometimes the Lord may have to weaken your strength in the way, so that your relationship with Him will be established in all the righteous ways that He knows that you need to learn.

Fleshly strength of mind and body, He knows, sometimes must be weakened, so that you will understand; so that you will not remain stupid, indefinitely, about His teaching leading you into all the truth about Him, and all the truth about yourself; where you need to change to become more humble, more loving, and more discerning of what He is looking for in your life. You may need to be weakened in order that your spiritual discernment and strength will increase. But Jacob learned wisdom in wrestling with the Angel. He came to have knowledge of the Holy One. The Angel said to him – "What is your name?" "He said, 'Jacob.'" "And He said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.'" "Then

Jacob asked, saying, ‘Tell me Your name, I pray.’ ‘And He said, ‘Why is it that you ask about My name?’ ‘And He blessed him there.’ ‘So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: ‘For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.’

You see, that was the Lord teaching Jacob real humility. He wrestled with Jacob to show him more of His way of doing things, and then He let Jacob prevail over Him in order that Jacob would receive the blessing, which was to know His ways and receive the godly inheritance of walking more closely with Him, by faith in Him. Jacob never did learn the name of the Angel who blessed him that day, but you and I know His name, don't we? His name was Jesus and He was applying New Covenant blessings to this man who was unworthy of the least of His mercies. Jacob was no longer stupidly trying to control situations and people around him. He was no longer boasting in his cleverness or his fleshly wisdom. Christ was teaching him to trust in Him, and he was now learning wisdom in relation to wrestling through the problems and difficulties of his life in relation to his past stupidities. Is this what you are doing dear Christian?

**3<sup>rd</sup> – God will be a Shield to those who will hold fast His words and not add to them.**  
(verses 5 and 6)

‘Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.’ ‘Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.’ Oh, what precious and powerful truth; that we should see every word of God's written word the Bible, as pure. There is nothing to object to in it, for it perfectly portrays for us the one and only, true and living God. His word is pure because He is pure and holy; He is righteous, kind, compassionate, and good. No one who is trusting in Him will be left without a Shield, unprotected in the eternal sense, if they trust in His Christ. No one will be able to face the coronavirus or all of the trials and difficulties and dangers of the Christian life, without this Pure and Perfect God as their teacher, Savior, Lord and Helper in their heart.

One of the things that I believe that God would have us to learn as a country, both as Christians and unbelievers, during this time, is that, in general, we are a very proud people who think that somehow we know everything that we need to know about this mighty God and His word, when actually, we have barely scratched the surface. Such was not the attitude of this man Agur, the son of Jakeh. Even though he knew so many spiritual truths and doctrines, even though he was a prophet and a teacher, and evidently was overseeing a school of the prophets, when He thought of the many things that God was trying to teach him, he thought of himself as stupid. This, my beloved brethren, was a correct and wise analysis he had of himself. And I believe that every Christian must come to it if they would be a stronger Christian, spiritually speaking. If you see this truth, you will not add to His word, but you will receive it, and take a long look at yourself, and say – ‘Lord, teach me what I do not see; if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more.’ I pray that each of you will come to see the Lord as Your shield. Let Him teach you, lead you, and guide you, into all the truth, and how you might minister that truth to others.