

Soteria Church, February 28, 2010
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Glory – 2 Sermons
Proverbs 30 and 2 Chronicles 6

Proverbs 15:31-33 *the ear that listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise. Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence. The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor*

1 and 2 Chronicles was written around 400 BC, by whom no one knows. Maybe Ezra
The Temple had been built, after 9 years and 4 months of labor. 90 feet x 30 feet
Now in 2 Chronicles 6 we read of the dedication and Solomon's prayer to God

2 Chronicles 6:12-13 *Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands. ¹³ Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the court, and he stood on it. Then he knelt on his knees in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven,*

Notice Solomon's position. He knows who the real King is.

Psalm 18:27 *for you save a humble people, but the haughty eyes you bring down*

All of us seek some sense of personal glory
In our looks
In our talents and abilities
In our accomplishment
In our connections and relationships
In our titles and roles

But we'll all agree, seeking our personal glory and true humility are antithetical

Proverbs 25:27 *it is not good to eat much honey, nor is it glorious to seek one's own glory*

Proverbs 30 speaks to this:

Proverbs 30:1A *the words of Agur son of Jakeh. The oracle...*
No one knows who either of these guys are

An "oracle" is a weighty message
Something the speaker has to "bear" or "lift up"

Proverbs 30:1B *the man declares, I am weary, O God; I am weary, O God, and worn out.*

Why? Given the context, is the writer tired from trying to acquire glory for himself?
Personal glory is usually based on false assumptions and unmet dreams
Personal glory never lasts, is instantly gone, and seeking it wears you out

Proverbs 30:2-3 *surely I am too stupid to be a man. I have not the understanding of a man. I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the Holy One.*

Agur is calling himself “ignorant,” meaning “brutish” or “dull-minded”

He states that he has less than human intelligence

And this is all due to not really knowing the infinite God

2 Chronicles 6:14-15 *and said, “O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart, ¹⁵ who have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day.*

Proverbs 30:4 *who has ascended to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in his fists? Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son’s name? Surely you know!*

This may be his response to someone who was puffed up in self glory

Or it may be Agur’s own reflections that cause him to be humbled before God

In any respect, the answer to the question in verse 4 is God, and Agur really wants to know him

2 Chronicles 6:16-21 *Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, ^dif only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk in my law as you have walked before me.’ ¹⁷ Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David. But will God indeed dwell with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this house that I have built! ¹⁹ Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O LORD my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you, ²⁰ that your eyes may be open day and night toward this house, the place where you have promised to set your name, that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. ²¹ And listen to the pleas of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen from heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.*

Solomon prays that they will not mistake a building for God’s presence

That Solomon himself will be faithful

And that God will hear and answer his prayers

This is the kind of humility that dependence forces on any of us

Proverbs 30:5-6 *every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar*

God has revealed himself in his Word

The written Word, the Bible, his promises and commitments kept

The living Word, Jesus his Son

God rebukes and calls a liar anyone who tries to add more than what God has chosen to reveal about himself

2 Chronicles 6:22-35 *“If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house, ²³ then hear from heaven and act and judge*

your servants, repaying the guilty by bringing his conduct on his own head, and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness.

²⁴ *“If your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against you, and they turn again and acknowledge your name and pray and plead with you in this house,*
²⁵ *then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them again to the land that you gave to them and to their fathers.*

²⁶ *When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against you, if they pray toward this place and acknowledge your name and turn from their sin, when you afflict² them,*
²⁷ *then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel, when you teach them the good way³ in which they should walk, and grant rain upon your land, which you have given to your people as an inheritance.*

²⁸ *If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar, if their enemies besiege them in the land at their gates, whatever plague, whatever sickness there is,*
²⁹ *whatever prayer, whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel, each knowing his own affliction and his own sorrow and stretching out his hands toward this house,*
³⁰ *then hear from heaven your dwelling place and forgive and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways, for you, you only, know the hearts of the children of mankind,*
³¹ *that they may fear you and walk in your ways all the days that they live in the land that you gave to our fathers.*

³² *“Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for the sake of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm, when he comes and prays toward this house,*
³³ *hear from heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.*

³⁴ *“If your people go out to battle against their enemies, by whatever way you shall send them, and they pray to you toward this city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name,*
³⁵ *then hear from heaven their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause.*
³⁵ *then hear from heaven their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause.*

Solomon prays:

- That the innocent would be found innocent
- That the guilty would be found guilty
- That God would be merciful when they're deservedly defeated in war
- That God would be merciful when they face disasters
- That foreigners would find God in their midst
- That God would grant them success in their battles

Solomon acknowledges their need for God's mercy because of their own sin

Proverbs 30:7-9 *two things I ask of you: deny them not to me before I die: remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, “Who is the Lord?” or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God*

Here is Agur's prayer to God, admitting his humble state

Two things he asks God for, related to two areas of personal weakness:

Protection from lying

Provision for daily sustenance, without the temptations of poverty or wealth

Because wealth might cause him to dishonor God's provision
And because poverty might cause him to dishonor God's character

Proverbs 30:10 *do not slander a servant to his master, lest he curse you and you be held guilty*

This may seem like a strange insertion

It tells us not to poke our noses into someone else's domestic affairs

Likely, it is an introduction to what follows

Proverbs 30:11-14 *there are those who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers. There are those who are clean in their own eyes but are not washed from their filth. There are those – how lofty are their eyes, how high their eyelids lift! There are those whose teeth are swords, whose fangs are knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, the needy from among mankind.*

1. Those who curse those in authority over them
2. Those who think they're morally pure before God, but in fact are not, therefore are hypocrites
3. Those who are haughty, prideful toward anyone they deem less than themselves
4. Those who oppress the poor, who in their pride believe that what they get and have is to be enjoyed only by themselves

Proverbs 30:15-16 *the leech has two daughters; Give and Give they cry. Three things are never satisfied; four never say Enough. Sheol, the barren womb, the land never satisfied with water, and the fire that never says, Enough!*

Personal pride is never satisfied with glory – pride always wants more glory

The grave wants to add more dead; fire wants to burn up more things

The womb wants a child, dry earth wants water, and fire wants to burn everything

And a dissatisfied person always wants more

Proverbs 30:17 *the eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures*

Pleasant!

Sort of like verse 10. Speaking to arrogance in the prideful

Proverbs 30:18-19 *three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a virgin*

Agur admits he doesn't understand any of these things, again stating his humility if not his ignorance

-each is mysterious

-each is un-traceable; they leave no tracks or trails

-each seems to master an element that seems quite difficult

-each go where there are no paths

Kind of like what it is to walk with Jesus and be led by the Holy Spirit

Proverbs 30:20 *this is the way of an adulteress: she eats and wipes her mouth and says, I have done no wrong*

Contrasted with the woman mentioned in verse 19

Verse 19 is the presumed moral relationship

Verse 20 is the immoral relationship

She eats them up like lunch, wipes away the evidence and assumes
nothing wrong with any of it, in defiance to God

Proverbs 30:21-23 *under three things the earth trembles; under four it cannot bear up: a slave when he becomes king, and a fool when he is filled with food; an unloved woman when she gets a husband, and a maidservant when she displaces her mistress*

Agur is stating his inability to understand how unqualified and incapable people rise to positions of authority, assuming that in doing so they mess up society around them

He isn't necessarily saying its wrong when something like this happens, he's just saying he doesn't understand why it should happen; again stating his ignorance

Proverbs 30:24-28 *four things on earth are small, but they are exceedingly wise: the ants are a people not strong, yet they provide their food in the summer; the rock badgers are a people not mighty, yet they make their homes in the cliffs; the locusts have no king, yet all of them march in rank; the lizard you can take in your hands, yet it is in king's palaces*

Here is wisdom triumphing over physical strength

Two thoughts: God will allow the humble to overcome obvious limitations

God protects and provides for even his most humble creatures

Will he not do far more for his own people?

2 Chronicles 6:36-40 *If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to a land far or near, ³⁷ yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captivity, saying, 'We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,' ³⁸ if they repent with all their mind and with all their heart in the land of their captivity to which they were carried captive, and pray toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, ³⁹ then hear from heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their pleas, and maintain their cause and forgive your people who have sinned against you. ⁴⁰ Now, O my God, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer of this place.*

The writer is writing with the perspective of history – he perhaps experienced first-hand the captivity in Babylon and Persia

Solomon was saying “if”

The writer here is saying “it did”

And both would account for that captivity and exile as God's rightful response to their individual and collective sin

True humility before God is always marked with respect, and with repentance

The contrast

Proverbs 30:29-31 *three things are stately in their tread; four are stately in their stride: the lion, which is mightiest among beasts and does not turn back before any; the strutting rooster, the he-goat, and a king whose army is with him*

The first three are the way they each are because God made them that way
But people can emulate any of these in the way we choose to carry ourselves around
other people

But notice that the king is only “stately” when he has his army around him
This is why gang mentality is what it is – strength only in numbers
This is why prideful, arrogant people like to have other people see things the
way they do, and get frustrated if they don’t
We strut only when we think we have something worth strutting

After all this, here is Agur’s warning to himself, and to us who read these words:

Proverbs 30:32-33 *if you have been foolish, exalting yourself, or if you have been devising evil, put your hand on your mouth. For pressing milk produces curds, pressing the nose produces blood, and pressing anger produces strife.*

The one who struts is really the fool

The fool is someone described as spiritually imperceptive and insensitive

Exalting oneself is to plot evil; he causes trouble

It never ends up with blessed relationships

It never results in satisfaction in God and his blessings

“Put your hand on your mouth” means to stop, breathing if necessary, for that would be
better than continuing in the same fashion

Pride and anger work against humility

Driving a wedge between you and your God

2 Chronicles 6:41-42 *and now arise, O LORD God, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. Let your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let your saints rejoice in your goodness. O LORD God, do not turn away the face of your anointed one! Remember your steadfast love for David your servant.”*

Proverbs 15:31-33 *the ear that listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise. Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence. The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor*