

Kingdom Perspectives in Proverbs: Wisdom Changes Everything

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Date: 29 July 2012

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[0 : 00] I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion. The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil, pride and arrogance, and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.

I have counsel and sound wisdom. I have insight, I have strength. By me, kings reign, and rulers decree what is just.

By me, princes rule and nobles, all who govern justly. I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.

Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver.

I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice, granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries.

[1 : 14] The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

When there were no depths, I was brought forth. When there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth.

Before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world. When he established the heavens, I was there.

When he drew a circle on the face of the deep. When he made firm the skies above. When he established the fountains of the deep.

When he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command. When he marked out the foundations of the earth.

[2 : 18] Then I was beside him, like a master workman. And I was daily his delight. Rejoicing before him always.

Rejoicing in his inhabited world, and delighting in children of man. And now, O sons, listen to me. Blessed are those who keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise. And do not neglect it.

Blessed is the one who listens to me. Watching daily at my days. Waiting beside my doors. For whoever finds me, finds life.

And obtains favor from the Lord. But he who fails to find me, injures himself. All who hate me, love death.

[3 : 19] This is the reading of God's word. Good morning. How are we? Alright, so I'm, this is my second time now preaching at Watermark.

And I have to say, I just love the support that everyone gives to me when I come up here. You know, last week, Millen told me, don't puke on the stage, and any mistakes will go on YouTube. Yesterday, I was talking with another friend.

I told him, I'm preaching at Watermark today. And he said, oh great, what are you preaching on? And I said, wisdom. And he goes, dude, wisdom comes with age, and you're so young, you're probably the least qualified person there to speak on that.

And he's probably right. But I'm hoping that the wisdom of God's word, which is greater than any of our wisdom, will come through much louder than my lack of it.

And so, let's jump in and look at wisdom today. In the past few weeks, we've been going through a series on Proverbs. And we've sort of had this illustration running throughout of an oriental rug.

[4 : 14] Can we get that on the screen? And we said that with an oriental rug, when you look at the back of the rug, you can see a little bit of a design there. But you can't see the full picture.

You can see knots and loose strings hanging all over the place. And it's sort of a big mess. But you can see enough to know that there's something there. What you can see, the incomplete picture on the back, points towards a completed picture on the other side.

And we said that as we live in the world, our vision of God's kingdom is like looking at the back of an oriental rug. That we can see bits and pieces of what he is doing and how he is doing it.

But in the end, the complete picture is not something that we can see yet. But it's something that God can see. And as he rules the world, he sees this complete picture.

But we don't quite have it yet. And we've been talking about what it means to live with this incomplete picture. And in light of that, what has been revealed to us to live in obedience to God over the past few weeks.

[5 : 20] And today, we're going to sort of metaphorically turn the carpet around and look at how we gain a more complete understanding of the front of the rug. Of this complete picture.

And ultimately, I'm going to spoil the ending right here. The way that we do it is through Christ. And so, Teresa just did a great job reading from Proverbs 8 about wisdom.

It's the big theme of the book of Proverbs. And it's a huge subject. We're not going to cover all of it today, obviously. But we're sort of going to build to the big part, which is the title, that wisdom changes everything.

So, we're going to take some time and build a foundation so that we can actually get to that point where I can say wisdom changes everything. And you'll understand what that means. And the first starting point that I want to start with is that wisdom is rooted in a proper relationship with God, which is ultimately found through the gospel.

If you look at the book of Proverbs and the Bible in general, it says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. I think in our day, we've lost a lot of the significance of what the fear of the Lord means.

[6 : 36] We don't like fear in our culture. We like manageable fear. So, we like horror movies that you can go and have some fictional account of something horrific happening. And you can get up two hours later and be like, God, that's not real life.

But we don't like real fear. We like to avoid it. And we definitely don't want a God who is fearful. We want a God who is a genie in a magic bottle.

You know, you find your glass or golden lamp and you rub it and Robin Williams' voice comes out and says, I'll give you three wishes. And that's what we want our God to be. We don't want God to be someone that inspires fear for us.

And so, we take this term, the fear of the Lord, and we sort of dumb it down and we say it's awe and it's reverence. But if you look throughout the Bible, when people had encounters with God, they were terrified.

One example would be the Israelites. They were slaves in Egypt. They got set free through God's powerful work. He leads them through the wilderness to Mount Sinai, where he is going to speak to them and reveal to them his commands for them.

[7 : 39] And they come to the mountain and God starts to speak to them in a loud voice through the thunder. And the people are there and they hear the voice of God speaking and they are terrified.

And they go to Moses, their leader, and they say, hey, Moses, we don't want God talking to us because we're afraid that he'll kill us if he does. So, how about you go talk to God for us and then bring back his messages and just tell us everything that he said.

They were terrified. They had a fear of the Lord. Another example in the Bible would be in the book of Isaiah chapter 6. The prophet Isaiah was the voice of God to his people.

And in Isaiah chapter 6, he says, In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on his throne. He has this vision where he sees God. And he is terrified.

God's prophet to the nation actually calls down a curse upon himself when he sees God. He says, woe is me, I am ruined. Just kill me now. It's over. Because I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips and my eyes have seen the king.

[8 : 49] The man whose lips deliver God's words to the people when he actually sees God says, My lips are dirty. They're filthy. I deserve to die because of what has come out of my lips.

And he is in fear in the presence of God. And yeah, yeah, that's the Old Testament. What about the New Testament? Okay. We'll go to the book of Luke.

Jesus is teaching this big crowd of people. And the crowds are pressing in on him and pressing in on him. And Jesus is backing up trying to find some space to breathe. And he gets to the shore of the lake.

And he can't go back any further. So he finds a boat. And he says to the guys in the boat, hey, let me step onto your boat. Go out a little bit into the lake so that I can talk to the crowds without getting smushed.

And so these guys let him onto their boat. He sort of backs out into the lake a little bit. And he keeps teaching the crowds. And he turns to the guys in the boat. And he says, hey, take your nets and set them down over the side of the boat.

[9 : 49] And this guy on the boat, his name is Peter. You've probably heard of him. He says, you know, Jesus, it's been a long night. We've been fishing all night. And we haven't caught anything.

And right now is not really the prime time of the day to do fishing. So that's probably a really bad idea. But you said to do it, so I will. And he drops the nets over the side of the boat.

And more fish than the boat can hold start swimming into this net. And Peter turns and looks at Jesus and falls on his face and says, depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man. He sees the power of God in Jesus.

And he is afraid. Or again, in Mark chapter 4, Jesus and his disciples are on a boat. Again, Jesus on boats. And there's a storm that comes.

And Jesus is asleep. And the disciples are not. And the disciples are terrified of the storm. And they come to Jesus and they wake him and they say, save us.

[10 : 48] Don't you care that we're all going to die? And he wakes up. He turns and he looks at the storm and the wind and the waves and the rain and the thunder. And he says, peace, be still.

And it does. And the Bible says, not that the disciples stopped being afraid when that happened, but actually that they became more afraid. Because now instead of, oh, there's weather that can kill us, there is a man on the boat with us who can control the weather.

And that terrified them. And they became more afraid of this man on the boat with them than they were of the weather itself. In the Bible, anytime someone has an interaction with God where they get to see him and his power on display, there is a genuine, legitimate fear.

And I think that understanding this is essential to our understanding of wisdom. And this is not a crippling fear. This is not a fear that just traps us and holds us and won't let us go.

But it's actually, the Bible says, a fear that leads to life. I know that may seem like a paradox for us. But if you think about it, the disciples on the boat with Jesus, when he calmed the storm, they were afraid of this man on the boat with them.

[12 : 04] But when they realized that they were afraid of him, they realized that there was nothing else they needed to be afraid of. The things that they had previously been afraid of, the wind, the rain, the seas, this guy controls those.

Why would we need to fear those? And the fear of Jesus, the fear of the Lord in that situation, freed them from all the other fears that they were experiencing.

So when we properly understand the fear of the Lord, it actually liberates us and frees us from all of our other fears. But also, it's not a fear that just takes us and holds us in its own grip.

Because the fear of the Lord is actually the way that we enter into a relationship with God as well. See, as long as we take the fear of the Lord and sort of reduce it to awe, reverence, warm, fuzzy feelings about God inside our hearts, we're not going to understand the basic message of the gospel.

Which is that God created us as worshipers of himself. That he created us to live in this relationship with him in this good thing. And our sin completely wrecked that.

[13 : 17] There is a void between us and God because of our sin that we cannot bridge on our own. And as long as we think the fear of the Lord is this awe, reverence, we'll think, oh, there's something I can do to fix what's wrong.

It's not until we realize how big God is, how perfect God is, and how high his standard for us is, and how far short of it we have fallen, that we realize how desperate we are for something other than ourselves to bridge that gap.

And the fear of the Lord makes us aware of our need for something else, something other to bridge this gap, and ultimately points us to Christ. So through this we can see that our fear of the Lord, that wisdom has its root in the gospel, in Christ, and that that is an essential part of us properly

understanding what wisdom is.

As we move on, we see also that God's wisdom, the true wisdom, is different than the world's wisdom, although they are not mutually exclusive.

The definition of wisdom that I'm working with today is that wisdom is a system of beliefs and practices developed to help us live the good life. A system of beliefs and practices developed to help us live the good life.

[14 : 41] I think this is something that we sort of miss out on in our day and age, that ultimately in the Bible, wisdom, such as the book of Proverbs, was not written as, this is how you have to be, or else.

But it was written as an instruction to help live the good life. Solomon says, don't go mess around with your neighbor's wife, because you don't want your neighbor out for your head.

Solomon says, you don't want to rob people because you want to live in a world that is safe, where you don't have to worry about people robbing you. Like, the key to the good life is to live in obedience to God's commands.

And let me show you what those are. It's basically the premise of Proverbs. And in the Bible, the fear of the Lord, living in obedience to his commands, trusting Christ, is repeatedly portrayed as the path to the good life.

And the world also has a definition of the good life. The world says the good life is get as much money as you can. Get as much power as you can.

[15 : 45] Have as much sex as you can. Pursue happiness at all costs as much as you can. And because of this, the world has a definition of wisdom that is different than God's because the definition of the good life that they're basing their definition of wisdom upon is different than God's definition of the good life.

So the world's collection of wisdom could look something like this. Work as hard as you can from an early age. Get into the best school that you can so that you can get the best job that you can so you can get the most money possible and be happy because of it.

It's okay to lie, cheat, and steal to get more as long as you don't get caught. If you're not really fulfilled in your marriage relationship, it's okay to seek more fulfillment outside of your marriage relationship as long as you don't get caught.

Do whatever it takes to make you happy. To fulfill yourself. And that is the path to a good life. That is what the world tells us. But God gives us a different message in terms of wisdom because he gives us a different definition of the good life.

God says, ultimately, the good life is found not in this pursuit of pleasures that are going to go away, but in a relationship with me. So God says, pursue me.

[17 : 15] Pursue the things that draw you closer to me. So the Bible's definition of wisdom and collection of wisdom says things like, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It says things like, love your neighbor.

Don't use them. It says, yes, work hard. That is a good thing. But don't let your work define you. Take a day of rest every week. And so we can see that God's wisdom and the world's wisdom, they're different, but they're not mutually exclusive.

And what this means is that we shouldn't automatically accept or discount wisdom simply because of the source that we receive it from. So for example, if a non-Christian relative walks up to you and says, you need to work hard, we shouldn't look at them and say, oh, you're not a Christian.

Nothing you say can be any good. We should say, okay, what does the Bible say about this? According to God's word, hard work is a good thing. You are right.

But according to God's word, my work should not define me. And so I shouldn't just work hard blindly, but I should work hard with a view of why I'm working hard, that I'm doing it for God's kingdom and his glory.

[18 : 25] It also means that we shouldn't just blindly accept something that people tell us because they're Christians. Yes, the Bible is correct, but Christians aren't always correct. So for example, one time I was listening to a sermon.

I've listened to a lot of those over the years. And I heard this preacher say, if you want to have lasting change in your life, one essential step is to reward yourself for the change that you make. And he had a passage in the Bible that he used to support that point that had absolutely nothing to do with that claim. And then he had this illustration to show exactly what he meant by making this

claim.

And he said, imagine that two men decide to lose some weight together. And they set this goal to each lose 20 pounds. And at the end of two months, they achieve that goal.

And so to reward themselves, they go out together to buy a nice big juicy steak. Now, if we carry that illustration over and apply it to dealing with sin in our lives, we see we avoid sin for a couple months, and then we have a right to indulge in it.

[19 : 33] That's not in line with the Bible's wisdom. So although a pastor said this wisdom, when you weigh it against God's word, ultimately it doesn't hold up. And so we have to let God's word be the standard to define our wisdom, not necessarily who tells it to us.

I mean, another example is when I was in high school, I grew up in a place where there were not many Christians. And so a decent number of people in my high school knew that I was a Christian. And when they had questions about Christianity or about God, they'd ask me, they'd be like, Eric, what do Christians believe?

What does the Bible say? And I had this reputation for being a smart guy. And, you know, didn't want to say, I don't know. So I would guess sometimes. Sometimes I knew the answers.

Sometimes I would guess. And some of my answers that I gave, I found out later on were not quite right. But the people in my school believed that's what the Bible says.

That's what Christians believe. Because the only Christian I know said that that's what they believe. And so, again, we have to weigh our wisdom against God's word. Just because a Christian says, I think this is in the Bible, or a pastor says, this is what's right, ultimately doesn't mean that they are right.

[20 : 45] Ultimately, God's word has to be our standard of truth, not the source that we get it from. And ultimately, the contrasting wisdom between God and the world and the contrasting definitions of the good life that they lead us to give us an awesome opportunity to live missionally in the world.

Missional is basically a word that means that in our daily lives, we are living with a missionary mindset. The thoughts and actions that we would have if we were in a foreign culture as missionaries, trying to reach out to them with the gospel are directing the way that we approach our work, our friendships, our relationships with the unbelieving world around us.

And so when we realize that ultimately God's commands are not this oppressive, burdensome thing, but they're the path to the good life, it frees us to start shaping how we live around them.

Ultimately, when we realize that God gives us his commands out of love and out of a desire to see us grow in our relationship with him and our love for him and in our joy in him, we have much more of a desire to follow those commands.

And the world, operating from its different definition of wisdom, still has no desire to follow those commands. And so as we let God's commands and God's definition of wisdom begin to shape us and how we live, it will provide differences between us and the world around us that give them opportunities to see how God is shaping us.

[22 : 21] And a lot of times, these lead to conversations like, you know, why is it that you're going to church on Sunday instead of sleeping in? Or, you know, what is this community group thing that you're going to? And I'm not saying that we have to add in all these extra programs to our lives in order to make this impact.

It could be something as simple as, you know, they want to slightly cheat a little bit on the numbers to help the company make a little extra money and you're not willing to do it because we're walking in obedience to God.

And these things start conversations. These things make people ask why and these things give us opportunities to share with them the reason for the hope that we have. And so these different definitions of wisdom, they give us this contrast that ultimately helps us to live as lights within the world.

And now I think we've reached a point where I can say that wisdom changes everything and sort of have that foundation laid to build on top of. As we look at the book of Proverbs, I think a lot of times we look at it as a book on a lot of different stuff.

A book that talks about marriage, a book that talks about wealth, a book that talks about wisdom, a book that talks about our work. But in reality, Proverbs is not a book about a bunch of different things, but it's a book about one thing.

[23 : 41] It's a book about wisdom. And everything else that the book of Proverbs talks about falls under the umbrella of wisdom. So when Proverbs talks about our family, it's not talking about the

family in and of itself, but it's talking about how should our understanding of wisdom shape the way that we approach our family.

When Proverbs talks about work, it's not talking about work in and of itself, but it's saying how should our approach to work be impacted by the fact that we have wisdom.

And so wisdom is not just one thing among many in the book of Proverbs that are discussed, but it is the thing that the book of Proverbs talks about. And as we move forward into the New Testament, we see that the New Testament draws these unmistakable parallels between wisdom in the Old Testament and the person of Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

So we read in Proverbs chapter 8 that wisdom was the first among God's creation. It was with God in creation.

And as we look at Colossians chapter 1, verses 15 through 17, we see that Paul actually draws an amazing number of parallels between wisdom and the person of Jesus Christ.

[24 : 58] So he says, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through him and for him.

And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Paul uses language here that points directly back to Proverbs chapter 8. In his discussion about Christ, he draws in the language used of wisdom so the people reading his letter cannot miss it.

He says that Christ is the firstborn of creation, the exact same phrase that was used of wisdom in chapter 8. And now that doesn't mean that Jesus is a created being. It's a big phrase that we don't have time to get into right now, but it shows that Paul is trying to draw these connections between the person of Christ and wisdom.

Also, both Paul in this passage and Proverbs chapter 8 describe Christ and wisdom as agents of divine creation. They say that the world was created through wisdom and Christ.

And it says that both wisdom and Christ are the power by which kings reign. Colossians 1.16, you know, all things are made by him and for him.

[26 : 16] Thrones, dominions, rulers, authorities, it all exists through Christ. And then Proverbs chapter 8 says that wisdom is the power by which kings reign. So Paul, unmistakably, draws these connections between Christ and wisdom.

And he does it again in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 30. It says that Christ became to us the wisdom from God. That this wisdom from the Old Testament came to us in Christ.

And Paul's not the only one in the New Testament who draws these connections between Christ and wisdom. The Apostle John also does it in the book of John, chapter 1, verses 1 through 14.

He says, in the beginning was the word, talking about Jesus. So he was in the beginning, just like wisdom, in chapter 8. He goes on and he says that all things were made through him, in verse 3, just like all things were made through wisdom, in Proverbs chapter 8.

And then he says in verse 4, in him was light, and that light, or in him was life, and that life was the light of men. Again, pointing back to Proverbs chapter 8, describing Christ as a life-giving force, just as wisdom in Proverbs 8 was this life-giving thing.

[27 : 29] So when we look forward to the New Testament, when we look around the other side of the carpet, and we see them talking about Christ, not just about wisdom, we see it embodied in a person, it's himself.

We see that wisdom ultimately points us to and leads us to Christ. That wisdom, it's not the same thing as Jesus, but that it's fulfilled in Jesus.

So this lens through which we view all of life is ultimately interpreted through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Around Watermark, we have this phrase that we use a lot that says the gospel changes everything.

Everything. We believe the good news that God saves us, even though we were separated from him, should impact every area of our lives. It should impact how we use our money.

It should impact how we view our jobs, how we raise our families, how we interact with the people around us. And it has strong calls on how we live. It should transform the things that we do.

[28 : 36] It should transform, you know, not just who we interact with, but how we interact with them. Are we interacting with them to use them or to love them? And as we see that wisdom is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus and that Jesus ultimately points us towards the gospel, we see that wisdom also must change everything in our lives.

That ultimately, our actions, our thoughts, our mindsets, towards everything, must be transformed transformed by this call of wisdom upon our lives.

And this isn't something that happens immediately. It's a process. So it's not like pray and become a Christian and automatically you have all the wisdom in the universe unlocked and right here.

But it's something that God teaches us through time. So in my own life, I've been a Christian since I was a little kid. A couple years ago, I moved to Hong Kong to work at a church here. And I really wanted to help this church.

I really wanted to make an impact in the youth of Hong Kong. And I got here. I started working. I was really excited. And a couple months in, I started to sort of re-evaluate why I came to Hong Kong, what my motives were.

[29 : 54] I realized that, yes, I did want to help this church. Yes, I did want to teach youth about Jesus and see them come to know him and love him. But that not all of my motives for coming were right.

Ultimately, yes, I did want to see these youth come to know Jesus. But at least part of that was sort of a personal pride issue where I was like, I feel better about myself if there are 50 kids in the youth group instead of 10. And yes, I did want to see these kids grow in their spiritual faith.

But at least part of that was, I feel like I have more value and worth if I'm doing a good job at my job than if I'm not. And I looked around more at the gospel's call in my life and I realized that while I lived, while I loved the church and the people in it, I didn't really love the city of Hong Kong.

I was more here just to use it, get what I could off of it, get some extra stuff on my resume so I went back home. I could get a better job because of my time here. And I started to think about what does the gospel say about the attitude that I have towards the church, towards the city of Hong Kong, towards the people here.

And I saw that ultimately, you know, I shouldn't be finding my worth in my job, in my success or failure at it. I should be finding it in Christ. Ultimately, I shouldn't be using the people around me and the city around me to gain some cool life experiences, get extra stuff on my resume and help me have career advancement further down the road, but that I should be investing in the city and loving the city regardless of how long I'm here.

[31 : 30] And these realizations started shaping me and changing my mindset and really have had this understanding of how the gospel and wisdom changes everything have played a big role in the fact that I've stayed in Hong Kong for two years now.

Originally, it was, I'll be here 14 months and then see ya. But now, I've been here for two years and that's largely because of this transformation that's happening in me in my understanding of what it means to walk in wisdom and follow the call of the gospel.

And so, it is a continual process that God will keep doing in all of us, helping us grow in him, helping to understand him more. And so, as we read the book of Proverbs, as we look at wisdom, let us not just think that it's one thing among many, but let us see that ultimately, it is the thing.

Ultimately, it finds its interpretation in Christ. That ultimately, it's not just a little part of our life that, you know, can kind of have its time and space, but that ultimately, it's the thing through which we must interpret all of life.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for today, for this chance to come together as your people to study your word and learn about you. We thank you for your word, for revealing your wisdom to us in it, and for sending Jesus to be the fulfillment and embodiment of that wisdom for us.

[32 : 56] Thank you for the fact that you have purchased us with a price and that we are now yours and that everything in our lives can now be lived for you.

That your call to us is not just to live a life of burden and of blind obedience, but a call to pursue the only true good life.

that is available. So we pray that as we go throughout our weeks we would understand more clearly what your call is for us, that we would continue to grow in our obedience to you and what you want us to do with our lives and that we would truly know you.

And in Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Let's stand and just celebrate what God's done on our behalf.

We're just going to sing about who he is and I hope that in order to live out what Eric's told us, we need to just be in his presence and reflect on him.

And he's so powerful, he's so amazing, he can do anything in and through you if you'll just let him. you can be seated. I have just a couple quick announcements for us.

[34 : 08] One, we do not pass an offering plate here at Watermark, but around the sanctuary and in the entrance over there, we have offering boxes. We believe that offerings should be our response in worship to what God has done for us.

We have envelopes, you can just fill out the back, stick your money in there and stick it in the box if you would like to give. If you're not a Christian here or a visitor, don't feel compelled to give, we want our offerings to be a response to what God is doing in us and for us.

The second thing is community groups. If you are not a part of a community group and you would like to get involved in community group, we will have a desk outside where you can learn more about community groups after the service.

We would love for you to get plugged in to community groups and the life of the church. VBS is coming up August 7-13? 13-17, that's what it is.

I knew there was a 7 and a 13 in there. I just forgot the one in front of the 7. VBS is coming up August 13-17. It's for kids ages 5-10. If you would like to sign up your kids for VBS or if you're interested in volunteering, there will be information about that at the table outside by the coffee after service as well.

[35 : 17] Or you can contact Melanie and Natalie. And now I would like to invite Mike up for a special presentation. My name is Mike.

I work with university students here. There's something really interesting about Watermark. Actually, being on the staff team with Watermark, it makes me feel really old. Having people like Eric around.

I wonder how God viewed that staff team from his perspective. because we have a lot of fuzzy edges and lacking experience a lot because we're all these young guys that try to go on this journey of planting churches and seeing what God is doing in the area.

And so God must have looked down on the couple perspective on this church and said they just really need some experience. So about a year ago, God spoke to someone to just basically show up in the office, talk to them and say, God really puts on my heart that I should come alongside you. And so Pastor Chua showed up a year ago and he has several years of experience in church planting and leadership development. So he has been with us for this past year in like two different terms.

[36 : 31] Just come alongside the church and come alongside the staff and leadership development and just very helpful in a lot of things that we were lacking. And so since Pastor Tobin can't be here, we have a little video with Pastor Tobin on because we want to say thank you to Pastor Chua for what he has done.

There's one thing that really stuck with me from what Pastor Chua shared and he has shared a lot with us, but there's one thing that he shared, that he said that many Christians start well, but they don't end well.

Very few really run the race to the end. And so I think that's a great encouragement for you as a congregation, for all of us, to even say, you know, maybe when you came to Christ first, you had an excitement in you and maybe that has faded.

And so I think there's some great encouragement in just asking ourselves, what does it mean to finish well? And Pastor Chua has been a great encouragement for us in just seeing how he aims to finish well.

He has a lot of speaking assignments coming up and traveling to Nigeria and Singapore and London. And so we just want to invite Pastor Chua up on stage. And also I would like to invite the elders and the staff on stage to pray for him because we want to pray that as he is finishing his race well, that we want to pray for his journey, for all the things that are coming.

[38 : 00] So please come up. Yeah. Kingling, would you please come up as well? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So the actual gift is in the box, but just so that you can actually see it, it's basically Jesus washing the feet of his disciples and you have been helping us and the staff team and you have been serving the church in so many different ways and not just leadership development, but also developing the prayer team and so many different ways and Kingling was part of that as well.

And so we are really grateful and thankful for all you have done. So we just want to pray for you. So you want to lay on hands. Father, we are just grateful that you see the big picture and you know what our church needs and this young church that you have called into being here two years ago

and sending people like Kingling and Pastor Chua to us to come alongside our young team and the church and the church members and just knowing that we need a ministry of prayer, a heart for prayer, that we need people to be developed and it's just someone with experience who has seen more of how your kingdom is coming about in this world.

So we are just thankful for just sending him here and his family and thankful for Daniel and his family as well and how they are serving. So we just want to pray your blessing over Wehan and Kingling and as they travel, may you go before them.

May you be in him. May you just keep his back and may you point him to your kingdom to come. May you use him in every step that he walks to finish his race, that you give him many steps to walk and many steps to impact people around him as he has done for your kingdom for so many years. So Father, we're just thankful again for you, how you see everything, how you see our needs as a church and a staff and how you respond and help us to finish the race well as well.

[40 : 33] So we just again want to look at the cross and look at your son Jesus and how he came into the world and died for our sin and that even there it is a picture of coming into the needs of the world that you also send other people to wash the feet of others and having a servant heart and so we thank you and bless you and pray this in Christ's name.

Amen.