

“Words of Wisdom”

Proverbs 1: 1-7a

Before I begin this sermon, I want to invite everyone to think about some of the life transitions that we've all experienced over the years. Whether they include the first day of school or graduating from high school. Maybe the life transitions that come to mind include getting married or retiring from a job after thirty years of work. Or maybe some of the life transitions that come to mind involve bringing children into this world or maybe sending the kids off to college and realizing that the nest is empty. Take a few moments and think about the changes and transitions that life brings. Were these moments easy or hard? Were you excited about the new adventure or did the thought of these transitions send you into a spiral of panic? Take a few moments and think about the transitions that life brings to all of us.

And as we think about these transitions, I also wonder if someone offered some words of advice during these transitions, words that were given in hopes that they would ease the panic and worry that can surround these life-changing transitions, words of wisdom from someone who had already been there and done that?

Do you remember these words of wisdom today? Have they stayed with you over the years? What makes these words of wisdom stand out to you in contrast to all the other conversations you may have had during your lifetime? As I was preparing this sermon, I was thinking of all the various words of wisdom that have been shared with me during some of my very own transitions in life. For example, like the first time I had to do laundry on my own at college. I was completely unsure of what I should do. So I called up my mom and she gave me the best words of wisdom for doing laundry: Be sure to separate your whites from your darks otherwise you'll have a mess. Or another time was when Mike and I first got married. I don't remember who told me this but they are words that have stayed with me: Never go to bed angry. Or another time was when I first held my daughter Hannah in my arms and one of the nurses told me: Enjoy these moments. They go by so fast.

All of these words of wisdom were given to me at certain times in my life to give me strength, to give me comfort, and to help me know that I was not the first one going through some uncharted waters alone.

All of these words of wisdom were given to me by ones who had been there and done that.

So this morning, I invite you to think about some of the words of wisdom that have been given to you as you have traveled along life's pathways. What words have

stuck with you over the years? What words of wisdom at the time they were given did you think were completely useless and off base until you realized that there was some truth behind them? What words of wisdom do you live by today as you continue along life's journey?

As I was reflecting and preparing for this sermon, I realized that the funny thing about all these words of wisdom is that if we were to collect all of them, all the words of wisdom that were given to us over the years, all the words of wisdom given to us through all of life's transitions, we would essentially have a manual for living, a how to live book for all of life's ups and downs, a manual for living made up of words that would inspire us when we were down in the dumps, words that would comfort us when we thought we were alone, words that if we really listened to them would help us avoid some of life's pitfalls and dangers along the way, words of wisdom that would remind us daily that life is not static but a journey full of ups and downs, twists and turns, unexpected surprises, and wonderful fulfilled expectations. If we combined all of the words of wisdom given to us over the years, we would have a manual for living filled with the collective knowledge of those who have been there and done that, a manual that would help us go through life, strengthened and comforted. We would have a manual for living that would help us and guide us to become the people we were created to be, a manual for all times.

The wonderful thing for us this morning is that we already have this manual for living. We don't have to create it. It already exists and it is probably sitting on our shelves. We just know it as the Bible.

Our bible is already a manual for living that is filled with words of wisdom to guide us and strengthen us along all of life's ups and downs. It is filled with words of wisdom for all of life's good moments and not so good moments. It helps us become the people that God created us to be by telling us stories of people who have already been there and done that. It teaches us how and what it means to love our neighbors as ourselves. It challenges us to really think about our calling as the people of God and how we are called to be in true relationship with God and with one another. It pushes us to become aware of God's presence in our everyday lives and fills us with hope about the possibilities of the Kingdom of God in our midst.

We already have our manual for living. It is not necessarily a how to book filled with detailed instructions but a book compiled of life-transforming experiences of God's love and grace for God's people.

In our very own Bible, we have our manual for living, true living, real living, a manual that calls us to live in a community with our neighbors. We have a manual for living that teaches us about God's peace, about God's love, about God's grace. We have a manual that shapes us and forms us into the people that God created us to be. And it is full of words of wisdom that all boil down to one

thing: Remember to start with God. Remember to start each day with God.

Remember to start each new beginning with God. Remember to start with God.

Our passage today reminds us that as people of faith regardless of what life brings, we are called to start with God, to remember what we know about our God, to remember what we've experienced about our God in our lives. Because when we start with God, we know that nothing is impossible! We know that through all of life's ups and downs, and that through all of life's transitions, our God is there, our God who is slow to anger, our God who is steadfast, our God who is faithful for all generations, our God who walks beside us, our God who loves and has claimed us as his own.

We are called to start with God each day, truly words of wisdom to live by as we travel life's pathways.

The beauty of our text this morning is that it reminds us that at no point in our lives, do we ever reach a point where God is not with us, at no point in our lives, do we ever reach a point where we know all we need to know about God, at no point in our lives, do we ever reach a point where the grace and love of God doesn't have the power to amaze us.

Our text reminds us that these words of wisdom that fill our Bible are for all ages: for the young and old, for the ones on the threshold of adult life and for the

ones that have lived a very long time. There never comes a point in our lives when God's Word will cease to amaze and transform us.

God's Word is a timeless wisdom that calls us to know ourselves, to squeeze out every moment of life whatever lessons it holds for us. It is a timeless wisdom that calls us to be open to all possibilities and to learn what life is really about for us as people of God. It is a timeless wisdom that is available to all who pay attention to their lives and where God is already working in their midst. It is the basis and encouragement we need to continue learning and seeking knowledge.

Everything starts with God! Words of wisdom for us to live by!

As people of faith, as we go through life, seeking knowledge, looking for truth, All we need to do and know is to start each and every day with God. Because as we search, as we continue to grow in our faith and in our learning, we will discover that in the matters of everyday living, nothing, absolutely nothing takes precedence over God.

These are the true words of wisdom that we are called to live our lives by as people of faith. Start every day with God. Start every new adventure with God. Start every decision with God. We have a manual for living that will help us become the people that God created us to be and we will discover once we embrace these words of wisdom, As we go along life's pathways, we will be ready for all of life's ups and downs.

Because God is always there for us, guiding us , leading us, pushing us, challenging us to discover that life is not static, that life is full of changes and transitions, , that life is a journey full of ups and downs, unexpected twists and turns, that that life is adventure when fully embraced, but most importantly of all, when we start each day with God, we discover that we are not alone! God is there with us, encouraging us to become the people God created us to be as we continue our search for learning and knowledge.

May we always embrace our true manual for living and listen to its words of wisdom as we travel along life's paths. Amen.