



Proverbs chapter 10:1-11:31

Taught at our Sunday evening service, 3rd October 2021 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

Reading: Titus 2:1-10

Good evening. Let's pray.

Introduction

Last week in the book of Proverbs we concluded what is really the first section of the book that goes from chapters 1-9, where Solomon contrasts wisdom and foolishness. And tonight, we'll study chapters 10 & 11, which begin a series of 14 chapters written and set in order by Solomon himself.

As mentioned in our opening study, in these chapters we often see one thought coupled with another - and that is because it is Hebrew poetry. Not with rhyme or meter as our poetry often does, but with two ideals in parallel. And it does this in three main ways:

1. The second thought expressing the **same** thought in a different way
2. The second thought is saying the same truth but from the **opposite** point of view (to contrast)
3. The second statement **developing** the thought of the first

At times, we'll see clear links between consecutive verses, while at other times it will seem quite random - but that's just like life, for we seldom have to deal with one matter at a time, or in the order we wish. But I encourage you to consider the themes that come up, as the more I look at these chapters and verses, the more links I see between them.

If we consider the progression through life that we've talked about in this book, we'll see the young man is now enrolled in the school of wisdom, where he is given guidelines for his life. But he needs to turn up to class. And he needs to apply what he learns. For if wisdom doesn't make it out of the classroom, it has no real value. And he needs to keep learning - indeed, everyday is a school day.

And the same will be true for us. If you've shown up to class this evening, great! But don't let what you hear stay here.

Themes in chapter ten

Effort - How much will you put in? (v4-5, 26)

Legacy - How will you be remembered? (v6-9)

Reward - What will be the outcome of your actions (or inaction)? (v2-3, 15-16, 22-25)

Words - What you say matters (v18-21)

Themes in chapter eleven

Handling money (v1, 3-4, 24-28)

Words (v9-14)

Roots & shoots (v18, 28, 30)

Chapter ten

As we begin chapter 10, Solomon pours out instruction to all those who will listen:

Proverbs 10:1

The proverbs of Solomon:

A wise son makes a glad father,

But a foolish son is the grief of his mother.

Oh how we should seek to obey our parents! 'But what of bad parents?', you may ask. Look at what we read in Ephesians 6...

Ephesians 6:1-3

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honour your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

We are to obey our parents **in the Lord**. And as we'll see in Proverbs 11:29, Solomon has clear words to give to parents too.

Proverbs 10:2

Treasures of wickedness profit nothing,
But righteousness delivers from death.

It doesn't matter how much wealth you accumulate - you can't take it with you. Look at how the Egyptians buried vast wealth for the afterlife - it's still here!

So we need prudence. We need to look ahead to see the end result of what we're doing. And rather than chase earthly riches, we should pursue the riches of Christ. Don't invest in the wrong currency, for one of them will soon be worthless. Rather, we read...

Proverbs 10:3

The LORD will not allow the righteous soul to famish,
But He casts away the desire of the wicked.

That is, the righteous SOUL. This is not a guarantee of food on table. But that the hungry soul will always be satisfied in Jesus. But contrary to that, the hopes of the wicked will be found to be empty hopes. In verses 4-5 we read...

Proverbs 10:4-5

He who has a slack hand becomes poor,
But the hand of the diligent makes rich.
He who gathers in summer is a wise son;
He who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame.

We've seen this topic before in Proverbs. And in a way, this summarises what we read in Proverbs 6:6-11 where Solomon writes about the the diligence of the ant, and the laziness of the sleepy man - the sluggard as he calls him.

But as Christians we are to serve. That is the example that Jesus left us. There should be no such thing as a lazy Christian, for we are to work with diligence, not looking for the minimum we can do, but the maximum we can give. In our workplaces, our homes, and our ministries.

Proverbs 10:6-7

Blessings are on the head of the righteous,
But violence covers the mouth of the wicked.
The memory of the righteous is blessed,
But the name of the wicked will rot.

It shouldn't come as any surprise to us, but our reputations, our legacy, will be based on what we say, **and** how we act. And the name of many does indeed rot - how many Ahabs, Jezebels or Adolfs do you know? Lucifer is a rare choice. As is Judas.

What did these folks have in common? Their conduct was horrific, yes. But where did that start? A lack of wisdom. Rather than living as they should, they played the fool. And we read...

Proverbs 10:8

The wise in heart will receive commands,
But a prating fool will fall.

This is about the heart, not the head. Not just listening, but hearing. The Bible - not just part of it, but all of it - must take effect in our lives. Just as we saw last week in chapter 9...

Proverbs 9:9

Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser;
Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

Rebuke, correction, and instruction are not always comfortable to hear - but we are indeed foolish if we don't take these things to heart. Not in the sense of being offended, but so that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. That is the what the wise man will do.

But conversely, the prating man is the man who has no control over his mouth. Who is always talking. We'll come back to this point.

Proverbs 10:9

He who walks with integrity walks securely,
But he who perverts his ways will become known.

It has been well said that integrity is doing the right thing while no-one is watching. And indeed when you know how you should act, and you do it - both in public and private - then you have integrity. And that is how we should be as Christians. Paul writes to Titus:

Titus 2:6-8

Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

Honesty is always the best policy. We might think we can hide things away from God in the way a child thinks they can hide their untidiness by pushing everything under the bed, or into the wardrobe. But God knows every thought and intent of our heart.

The Godly man is never afraid of detection, because he never acts in deceit. Yet, the wicked man can be sure that their sins will find them out. If not now, certainly then - when they give account of their lives before God.

Proverbs 10:10

He who winks with the eye causes trouble,
But a prating fool will fall.

The idea here is that the eye and mouth should be in agreement. JVM note: When you see a man say something and wink, it means he doesn't mean what he said. His mouth and his mind are not in agreement. When they are not in agreement, it will cause a great deal of sorrow.

Note how that builds on Proverbs 6:12-15. Next verse 11 partly repeats verse 6:

Proverbs 10:11

The mouth of the righteous is a well of life,
But violence covers the mouth of the wicked.

Wouldn't it be great for there to be depth and help and life in OUR words. Rather than our actions speaking so loudly that people can't hear what we're saying anyway.

Proverbs 10:12

Hatred stirs up strife,
But love covers all sins.

How does hatred stir up strife? Words. That is gossip, slander, lies. Whether knowingly or not, gossip is bullying someone who isn't there. And we are not to do it. Rather than brawl, we are to love - such as we are instructed in 1 Peter 4:8 and James 5:20. In fact the word cover here implies that we are overwhelm with love.

While hatred looks for confrontation, love looks for reconciliation. And we are provided examples of this throughout the Bible - including Joseph toward his brothers, Jesus toward us, and Paul in seeking to reconcile Onesimus to Philemon.

There WILL be times we need to correct, to rebuke. There may be times that we even need to publicly deal with sin amongst ourselves. But that is never an excuse to slander, and never an excuse to not love.

Proverbs 10:13-14

Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding,
But a rod is for the back of him who is devoid of understanding.
Wise people store up knowledge,
But the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.

If we are to be wise, we need to store up knowledge. As humans, we collect some pretty odd things, right? Wisdom is never odd, and always useful. So be sure you're collecting that as you go!

And note the contrast here - understanding leads to wise words. But if you are devoid of understanding - if you have failed to gather it - your words will be quite the opposite.

Proverbs 10:15-16

The rich man's wealth is his strong city;
The destruction of the poor is their poverty.
The labor of the righteous leads to life,
The wages of the wicked to sin.

Wealth isn't necessarily good - it depends how you use it. Whether to help others in life, or to hoard to yourself. It's not wrong to have money. But it's a problem when money has you.

Proverbs 10:17

He who keeps instruction is in the way of life,
But he who refuses correction goes astray.

Yet again, Solomon underlines the need to receive, apply and keep instruction and correction. And it's good for us. He writes in Ecclesiastes:

Ecclesiastes 7:5

It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise
Than for a man to hear the song of fools.

Sadly though, rebuke will only do the wise any good, for we'll read...

Proverbs 17:10

Rebuke is more effective for a wise man
Than a hundred blows on a fool.

Nevertheless, it is the job of the pastor/teacher to faithfully teach the instruction of God's Word. Paul exhorts Timothy...

2 Timothy 4:2

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching.

Back in Proverbs we read...

Proverbs 10:18

Whoever hides hatred has lying lips,
And whoever spreads slander is a fool.

Let me ask you this: How would you look if everything you said in private about others in this church, your family, or your workplace was publicly shared?

Finnis Dake comments: It is unusual for one to talk constantly without sinning and defaming someone's character. The control of the tongue is a show of wisdom. And we read...

Proverbs 10:19

In the multitude of words sin is not lacking,
But he who restrains his lips is wise.

We have two ears, and one mouth, so as a general rule listen twice as much as you talk. And consider the words we read in Ecclesiastes:

Ecclesiastes 5:2

Do not be rash with your mouth,
And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God.
For God is in heaven, and you on earth;
Therefore let your words be few.

Verse 20...

Proverbs 10:20-21

The tongue of the righteous is choice silver;
The heart of the wicked is worth little.
The lips of the righteous feed many,
But fools die for lack of wisdom.

Think about this: Do the things you say add value to anything, any conversation, any person? Or does your heart seek to take away value from others?

Do your words feed or destroy? Do you teach and proclaim truth? In 2 Timothy we read that 'The servant of the Lord should be apt to teach. Not all in a pulpit (in fact we read that many should NOT be teachers). But in the home. In your friendships. In discipleship.

Proverbs 10:22

The blessing of the LORD makes one rich,
And He adds no sorrow with it.

There is no blessing from God that doesn't benefit us. You can be sure of that.

Proverbs 10:23

To do evil is like sport to a fool,
But a man of understanding has wisdom.

The fool gets up with evil on his mind, he competes for evil, and rejoices at others' evil achievements. However...

Proverbs 10:24-25

The fear of the wicked will come upon him,
And the desire of the righteous will be granted.
When the whirlwind passes by, the wicked is no more,
But the righteous has an everlasting foundation.

The wicked can expect the worst, the righteous can look forward to the best. Does that mean we always get what we want? Well, who is righteous? We are righteous in God's sight, because of what He has done, and He may add practical blessing with that. But if our desire is for Him, we shall not be disappointed.

Psalm 37:4

Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

Whether the whirlwind here, or the rain in Jesus parable, it is the foolish man and his house that will not stand - for they have no foundation. But the man or woman, who seeks after Jesus will not be disappointed. They will have Him as the firm foundation to their lives.

Proverbs 10:26

As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes,
So is the lazy man to those who send him.

Solomon comes back to the topic of effort. You may have seen various meme's with the words 'You had one job!' Like where someone paints around or over something they could have easily moved. Or puts back a drain cover the wrong way round. You get the idea of how frustrating it is when simple tasks are not done.

But I challenge you - do you walk past an overflowing bin here and fail to change it? Or after Sunday services, are you one who leaves coffee cups, bottles of water, and sweet wrappers for others to clear up? If so, pay attention - for that shouldn't be the case!

In fact, we are to be diligent in service to our Lord who sent us. (David Livingstone, good roads!).

Proverbs 10:27-29

The fear of the LORD prolongs days,
But the years of the wicked will be shortened.
The hope of the righteous will be gladness,
But the expectation of the wicked will perish.
The way of the LORD is strength for the upright,
But destruction will come to the workers of iniquity.

Do you want prolonged days, gladness and strength? Or do you prefer your days to be shortened, your expectation to perish, and destruction to come your way? That's the stark results of the choice that is being laid out for us here.

Proverbs 10:30

The righteous will never be removed,
But the wicked will not inhabit the earth.

Just as in verse 25, our foundation is secure. But be sure Jesus is your foundation.

Proverbs 10:31-32

The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom,
But the perverse tongue will be cut out.
The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable,
But the mouth of the wicked what is perverse.

It was an ancient custom in some nations to cut out the tongue for blasphemy, lying, treasonable speeches, and other vocal crimes. Sadly, I think if that happened today, it would make us think more about what we say. But rather, let us aim for righteousness so that we know what is acceptable.

Chapter eleven

As we move into chapter 11, we'll see Solomon frequently describe the character of the righteous and wise man, compared to the character of the wicked and foolish man.

And we'll see him build on themes already mentioned in earlier chapters, including further instruction regarding our words. But first he writes...

Proverbs 11:1

Dishonest scales are an abomination to the LORD,
But a just weight is His delight.

Now, I don't know about you but at times I wish my scales were dishonest!! But this isn't talking about our weight, but about fair exchange rates. About not ripping people off. Just last Sunday morning in John chapter 2, we were looking at Jesus driving those out of the temple that were doing just that. And perhaps a helpful example to explain this is one of a farmer and baker...

Every day, the farmer delivered a pound of butter to the baker. But the baker began to notice that the pound of butter was becoming smaller and smaller and smaller. "My goodness," he thought, "I'm being systematically cheated." So he reported it to the town constable.

The baker and the constable went to the farmer's farm, where the farmer was accused of shortchanging the baker.

"But the butter I give him weighs one pound," the farmer insisted.

"What are you using for a weight?" the constable asked.

"The baker's one-pound loaf of bread," the farmer replied.

Thus, the baker was caught in his own trap.

You may be neither a farmer or baker, but are you honest in your business? Or do you take more than is fair from your employers, your customers, or your employees?

Wouldn't it be great if Christians were the most employable people because of our reputation! And if everyone wanted a Christian boss because of their reputation! And if everyone wanted to buy from a Christian business because of their reputation!

Proverbs 11:2

When pride comes, then comes shame;
But with the humble is wisdom.

Some are so riddled with pride they don't realise it. But rather, we should wait to be asked up - just as Jesus describes in Luke 14. Likewise, ministries are not to be forced into because of our pride or preference. But instead we should act well. We read...

Proverbs 11:3

The integrity of the upright will guide them,
But the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.

Again, we should know what to do, and how to live when we're on your own. For unfaithfulness is often in secret - as seen in previous chapters. But when you have your heart set on pleasing God, you'll be able to flee from sin even when it is staring you in the face, just as Joseph fled from the opportunity to sleep with Potiphar's wife. He was guided by his integrity.

And how do we know what to do? We need a torch to light our way...

Proverbs 6:23

For the commandment is a lamp,
And the law a light;
Reproofs of instruction are the way of life,

Returning to the topic of finances, Solomon writes...

Proverbs 11:4

Riches do not profit in the day of wrath,
But righteousness delivers from death.

So, what are you storing up? Are you proud of how far you've come? The house you live in, the car you drive? How will that help you either then or now? Note the anguish of the rich man in Luke 16. All he had worked for counted for nothing. Nothing.

Proverbs 11:5-6

The righteousness of the blameless will direct his way aright,
But the wicked will fall by his own wickedness.
The righteousness of the upright will deliver them,
But the unfaithful will be caught by their lust.

In other words, you'll reap what you sow. Look at the example of Haman in the book of Esther, who built a gallows to hang Mordecai on, but ended up hanging there himself. Or those who sought to put Daniel in the lions den, who themselves were later thrown into the den.

Furthermore...

Proverbs 11:7-8

When a wicked man dies, his expectation will perish,
And the hope of the unjust perishes.
The righteous is delivered from trouble,
And it comes to the wicked instead.

We will be delivered from God's wrath, but though the wicked man hopes to have many things the righteous enjoy, his hope will be an empty one.

Proverbs 11:9

The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor,
But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.

Building on chapter 3:29-30, Solomon once again contrasts the stupidity of foolish words to the gathering of knowledge - indeed we do well to listen, learn and apply.

Proverbs 11:10-11

When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices;
And when the wicked perish, there is jubilation.
By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted,
But it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

We know this to be true, don't we. No-one is sorrowful when the wicked are locked up, or die. In fact there is rejoicing. And that is true today, and of occasions throughout history - whether the deaths of Mussolini, Hitler, Sadam Hussain or the Emperor Nero.

But apply it to your life - are you a blessing to this town? Or does your mouth (including on social media) stir up problems?

Proverbs 11:12

He who is devoid of wisdom despises his neighbor,
But a man of understanding holds his peace.

Exactly as we read in Romans...

Romans 12:18

If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Verse 13 says...

Proverbs 11:13

A talebearer reveals secrets,
But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.

What does it mean to conceal a matter? Jon Courson notes...

Courson: There is no such thing as an idle rumor. When you speak against someone, it comes to life and takes on a life of its own. That is why the wise person chooses to let the rumor die with him rather than continue to give it life by passing it along.

Proverbs 11:14

Where there is no counsel, the people fall;
But in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

This is good in government, good in marriage, and good in church families - that's why the elders are there; to provide counsel to the pastor. But are we humble enough to get counsel in our own lives? I suggest we need to be. One example is in dating.

Like mountaineers rope themselves together, so that if one slips, they others can help them back up, so we need to be there for each other.

Proverbs 11:15

He who is surety for a stranger will suffer,
But one who hates being surety is secure.

Be careful who you vouch for. Financially or otherwise.

Proverbs 11:16

A gracious woman retains honour,
But ruthless men retain riches.

This is a contrast of attitudes into actions - are you gracious and generous etc, or harsh and ruthless? Look at verse 17...

Proverbs 11:17

The merciful man does good for his own soul,
But he who is cruel troubles his own flesh.

This is the result of our actions, which are a result of how our hearts really are. Again, we must consider the outcome of our actions...

Proverbs 11:18-19

The wicked man does deceptive work,
But he who sows righteousness will have a sure reward.
As righteousness leads to life,
So he who pursues evil pursues it to his own death.

There are two paths - the path of righteousness, or the path of wickedness. And they do not lead to the same place. We read...

Proverbs 11:20-21

Those who are of a perverse heart are an abomination to the LORD,
But the blameless in their ways are His delight.
Though they join forces, the wicked will not go unpunished;
But the posterity of the righteous will be delivered.

That is, you can shake hands, you can join forces with other evil men - but that won't protect you from the wrath and justice of God. You know, sometimes we forget how big God is. And we'd do well to remember that even a single angel is capable of killing 187'000 people in one day, as we see in Isaiah 37. And God is way more powerful than that!

Proverbs 11:22

As a ring of gold in a swine's snout,
So is a lovely woman who lacks discretion.

Here, in the middle of verses about righteousness and wickedness we have this at first seemingly random verse. But the reality is this is talking about the outcome of our actions too.

And ladies, this is particularly for you. And it's quite the picture, right!

But I want you to note something super important about it. You are not the pig. You're the gold ring. THAT is the value you have. So don't cheapen what you have by dressing immodestly, or sending suggestive or nude photos of yourself to others.

As has been well said; "Dressing immodestly is like rolling in manure. Yes, you'll get attention, but mostly from pigs".

Proverbs 11:23

The desire of the righteous is only good,
But the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

We read in Titus...

Titus 1:15

To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.

And the wicked can expect the full weight of God's wrath in the day of judgement.

Proverbs 11:24-28

There is one who scatters, yet increases more;
And there is one who withholds more than is right,
But it leads to poverty.
The generous soul will be made rich,
And he who waters will also be watered himself.
The people will curse him who withholds grain,
But blessing will be on the head of him who sells it.
He who earnestly seeks good finds favour,
But trouble will come to him who seeks evil.
He who trusts in his riches will fall,
But the righteous will flourish like foliage.

We are to both obtain and use money wisely. The Christian should be generous of heart, and of wallet. John Bunyan wrote the following challenge:

A man there was, though some did count him mad,
The more he cast away, the more he had.
He that bestows his goods upon the poor
Shall have as much again, and ten times more.

John Bunyan

But let us also treat our employees favourably...

Colossians 4:1

Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

And for further reading, look at James 5:1-6 on this topic.

We are not to withhold good when it is in our power to do so. Consider how Nabal angered David in this regard, compared to how Joseph fed more than Egypt through his diligence and fairness.

Even in business, we are to be fair. And this verse says that when we're not, people will curse us for it - much like we've seen toward those profiteering by raising their fuel prices in the last week or so.

As Solomon closes out this chapter, he talks about eternal stakes...

Proverbs 11:29

He who troubles his own house will inherit the wind,
And the fool will be servant to the wise of heart.

Fathers, you have a responsibility unlike any other. Whether Adam, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Esau, Joseph, or others - entire families have been affected by the actions of a single man. Don't underestimate the damage you can do by troubling your own house. Yes this can apply to women in many ways too - but fathers, you have a particular responsibility. So much damage is perpetuated throughout generations because a father was not a good one.

We are to be careful and righteous in our words, as we read in Colossians chapter 3:

Colossians 3:21

Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

But we are also to be righteous in training our children, and in our own actions, as Jesus warned:

Matthew 18:6-7

"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of offences! For offences must come, but woe to that man by whom the offence comes!

But in contrast we read...

Proverbs 11:30

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
And he who wins souls is wise.

How can we not read Psalm 1 again at this moment?!

Psalm 1:1-3

Blessed is the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.

There is nothing greater that you can do than to win souls for Christ! But, often this is far from our thoughts. Charles Spurgeon offered this chilling rebuke:

This sleepiness in the Christian is exceedingly dangerous because he can do a great deal while he is asleep that will make him look as if he were quite awake. We can speak when we are asleep / we can hear when we are asleep / we can walk when we are asleep / we can sing when we are asleep / we can think when we are asleep. The man who is asleep does not care what becomes of his neighbours; how can he while he is asleep? And oh! Some of you Christians do not care whether souls are saved or damned... It is enough for them if they are comfortable. If they can attend a respectable place of worship and go with others to heaven; they are indifferent about everything else.

Charles Spurgeon

This chapter closes, saying...

Proverbs 11:31

If the righteous will be recompensed on the earth,
How much more the ungodly and the sinner.

And that is the perspective we need. We're not just talking about how the righteous and wicked will be treated or rewarded on earth. We're talking about the eternal consequences of our actions in the light of a holy and just God.

1 Peter 4:17-19

For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

Summary

What can be said to summarise this? It's not easy. So instead, may these verses from Psalm 119, most of which we read last week, summarise our lives:

Psalm 119:97-100

Oh, how I love Your law!
It is my meditation all the day.
You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies;
For they are ever with me.
I have more understanding than all my teachers,
For Your testimonies are my meditation.
I understand more than the ancients,
Because I keep Your precepts.

Application questions

This week, there are four application questions I want to leave with you:

- Christians, are you honest and fair employers or employees?
- Church, do you gossip, or overwhelm people with love?
- Women, do you know your worth? Are your actions based on that or the worlds standards?
- Father's, are you troubling your house, or leading it in the ways of the Lord?

Let's pray.