

Watch Where You Step (Part 1)

Ephesians 5:15-18

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I want us to return this morning to our study of Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus and to a familiar passage that will begin to unfold, but one that I am confident we have not understood in its fullness and in its richness. I was thinking this week that I've often been struck with the thought that most criminals were apparently never honor students. A perfect example comes from earlier this month in England. I don't know if you read the story. It made many of the newspapers here in the US. A British man named Matthew Maynard was wanted in connection with a robbery of a house. So, South Wales police had a photo of him, and they gave that photo of Maynard to the local paper. It was part of their appeal for the public's help to catch this local criminal. When the picture actually appeared in the local paper, the twenty-four-year-old Matthew Maynard didn't like the outdated mug shot of him that the police had used. So, he decided, for publicity's sake, to send the newspaper an updated photograph of himself standing in front of a police van. He didn't think the one that they had printed was the best shot of him or presented him in the best light. So, the newspaper received this new photograph, this updated photograph, and obliged him by printing it on the front page of the paper. And with his current photograph, he was quickly spotted and shortly arrested. The police thanked him publicly for his help.

When we think of a definition of 'foolish', it's usually someone like that, a story like that that comes to mind. When we think foolish, we think in terms, informally, of someone who is utterly lacking in common sense. And in fact, this is how Webster's Dictionary defines foolish: "a person who lacks judgment or sense." But our informal definition or ideas about this concept of foolishness or Webster's definition – those are not Biblical definitions. That's not how God defines a fool. Those things are not what come to the mind of God when He thinks or considers something foolish.

Now the Bible has much to say about that which God considers foolish and those whom God consider fools. Let me just briefly delineate for you how a fool is defined in the

eyes of God. Sometimes, a fool actually denies God – either denies God’s existence or, by his behavior, denies that God exists. Psalm 14:1 says, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” But that doesn’t mean that he necessarily thinks there isn’t one because it goes on to say: “They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; there is no one who does good.” So, here’s a person who, either literally or practically, says there’s no God and behaves and acts as if one doesn’t exist. Sometimes a fool blasphemes God. Psalm 74:22 – “Arise, O God, and plead Your own cause; remember how the foolish man reproaches You all day long.” They mock sin. Proverbs 14:9 says, “Fools mock at sin...” Another proverb says it’s like a sport to them. It’s like a hobby, a pastime. They love sin. Proverbs 13:19 says, “it is an abomination to fools to turn away from evil.” The thing that they find an abomination is to turn from their practice of sin. But in spite of all of that, a fool by Biblical definitions has an incredible capacity for foolish self-confidence. Proverbs 12:15 says, “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes...”. Proverbs 14:16: “A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is arrogant and careless.”

But if you want to know how to identify a fool from God’s perspective, the primary characteristic of a fool in the eyes of God is found in Proverbs 1. Turn there with me for a moment as we begin our study together this morning. Proverbs 1. After Solomon introduces the book of Proverbs, in verses 1 through 6, he states the theme of the book in verse 7. Proverbs 1:7: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Here, he says, is the essence of what it means to be a fool. A fool will not receive God’s wisdom, God’s instruction, but instead, he delights in his own way.

Now, Solomon develops this even more beginning in verse 20 of chapter 1 as he personifies wisdom as a lady. So, here’s Wisdom (verse 20) shouting in the street. She lifts up her voice in the square. At the head of the noisy street she cries out. At the entrance of the gates in the city she utters her sayings. In other words, wisdom is available. It’s not like it can’t be had. She’s crying out, offering herself in all the public places. “How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers

delight in scoffing and fools hate knowledge? Turn to my reproof, behold [that is, repent, behold], I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you [notice wisdom comes by revelation, by words]. Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention; you neglected all my counsel, did not want my reproof; I will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, when your dread comes like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but they will not find me [here is the definition of a fool, verse 29 and 30] because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would not accept my counsel, they spurned all my reproof. Therefore they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, be satiated with their own devices. For the waywardness of the naive will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them.” The defining characteristic of a fool, in the eyes of God, is someone who will not receive His wisdom, His instruction given to us by revelation.

As Derek Kidner in his excellent commentary on Proverbs writes, “The fool is by definition one whose mind is closed to God (like the fool of Psalm 14) and whose mind is closed to reason, like Nabal of whom his wife said, ‘One cannot speak to him’. Since he, that is, the fool has rejected the first principle of wisdom which is the fear of the Lord.”

So then from God’s perspective, listen carefully, a fool is a person who will not have God’s wisdom, who will not have God’s revealed wisdom but has, therefore, a morally deficient character that produces spiritually irrational behavior. As one commentator defines it, “Foolishness is moral corruption from the standpoint of its impact on judgment and reason.” By that definition, most of western civilization’s greatest minds, greatest intellects, are fools in the eyes of God – men like Rousseau, and Hemingway, and Sartre, and Russell, and on and on the list goes. They may have had brilliant minds. They may have had great intellects. But from the vantage point of God, they were and are fools. So, then it makes perfect sense, doesn’t it, why the Scripture calls us as Christians to Biblical wisdom, to God’s wisdom? And that’s exactly what Paul reminds the Ephesian

believers of in the next passage that we come to in his letter to them. Ephesians 5:15. I'm just going to read four verses for you this morning that set the stage for this next section. And listen to Paul's call for us to pursue Biblical wisdom. Ephesians 5:15: "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit..."

The focus of this paragraph comes in the familiar language of the second half of this letter. Notice he begins with the language of walking. Now let me just remind you that in the first three chapters of this letter, Paul explains to us as well as to them our position in Christ; all of the spiritual blessings that have become ours because of what Christ has done. In those first three chapters, there's only one command. It comes in chapter 2, verse 11: "remember." But beginning in chapter 4 and running through the end of the book, chapter 6, Paul reminds us of the implications of that new position that we have in Christ. And it's filled with commands but it hinges on the first command he gives. Look back at chapter 4, verse 1. This is the theme for the second half of the letter: "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called..." He gathers up everything he said in the first three chapters and says, 'Because of those realities, walk in a way that's worthy of what you have come to enjoy.'

How? How can we walk worthy of our calling? How can we walk worthy of that new position we have in Christ? Well, as chapters 4 through 6 unfolds, Paul explains. We've seen it, haven't we? We can walk worthy by walking in unity (chapter 4, verses 2 through 16). We can walk worthy by walking in new life (chapter 4, verse 17 to 24). We can walk worthy by walking in love (chapter 4, verse 25 down through chapter 5, verse 2). And the last section that we just finished (chapter 5, verses 3 through 14), we can walk worthy by walking in sexual purity.

Today we begin to look at one last way that we can walk worthy of our calling in Christ and it's the longest section of the entire letter. It begins in verse 15 of chapter 5 and runs all the way down through verse 9 of chapter 6. When this section ends, then comes the end of the book. In fact, he concludes starting in chapter 6, verse 10 with the exhortation to put on the armor of God.

Now the theme of this long section that runs from chapter 5, verse 15 through chapter 6, verse 9 appears in the command of verse 15. Look at it again. Here's the theme: "walk not as unwise, but as wise..." If you want to walk worthy of your position in Christ, then walk in Biblical wisdom. Let me show you how this huge section unfolds. In the four verses I read, verses 15 through 18, you have the command to walk in Biblical wisdom. And then beginning in chapter 5, verse 19 and running all the way through chapter 6, verse 9, you have the consequences of walking in Biblical wisdom, the command to walk in Biblical wisdom, and then the consequences or the fruit or the product of walking in Biblical wisdom. And he develops it in a number of relationships in life. He starts by explaining the consequences for every Christian, and then for every Christian wife, and for every Christian husband, for every child, for every parent, for every worker or employee, and for every master or employer. All of those relationships are developed - how they look in a life lived in Biblical wisdom. So, you can see then, that we have quite a journey ahead of us. Although this is one huge section, and we have to keep that in mind as we work our way through it, we will deal with each part of this section on its own. We'll talk about the wives. We'll talk about the husbands and so forth as we walk our way through it.

But what I want you to see this morning is the fountainhead of all those wonderful, familiar texts. The spring from which they all flow is chapter 5, verses 15 through 18 and the command to walk in Biblical wisdom. Let's look at that command together. Verse 15: "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise..." Now the word 'therefore' may point back to the immediately previous section. Paul may be saying, 'In light of these huge differences between us and unbelievers (that is, that they are dead and living in darkness and we are now alive and light, in light of those huge

differences), therefore be careful how you walk.’ That may be what Paul is saying. But I think it’s more likely that this word ‘therefore’ points all the way back to chapter 4, verse 1. Many commentators take this position that Paul is now introducing a new section and he’s essentially going all the way back to gather that, that phrase that he began this section of the book with, “walk worthy of your calling”. Therefore, in light of that, here’s how I want you to walk.

Now notice Paul is again talking about our walk. It’s been a while since we’ve encountered that word so let me remind you that by our walk he means the paths that we take in daily life; that is, the paths our minds take, our thoughts take, the paths our attitudes normally take, the paths our speech takes each day, the paths that our behavior normally takes each day. We have paths. We have predictable patterns of behavior. We have habits, lifestyle. And Paul is saying when it comes to those patterns, those paths, those habits of thinking and talking and living, we are not to be like those that God would call unwise. On the other hand, we are consistently to be walking like those God considers wise. Notice wisdom here is about living. It’s not about what you know. It’s about how you translate what you know into how you live, how you walk, the paths you take each day.

As one commentator writes, Andrew Lincoln, “To live as a wise person is not just to have knowledge, but to have skill in living, to have the sort of understanding that authenticates itself in practice.” Now how can we do that? I mean, Titus 3 tells us we used to be foolish. How can we now consistently be walking as those who are thinking and speaking and behaving as Biblically wise? You know, here’s the incredible thing to me about Scripture. I never cease to be amazed by it because Paul here gives us a very clear command. If you want to honor Christ, you want to walk worthy of His calling in your life of what He has done for you, then walk as those who are wise. And then he turns right around and lays out the path. In the next four verses, Paul marks out the path to a life of Biblical wisdom. Do you want to live wisely in the world, in a way that God would consider wise? If you’re a believer, you do because God’s placed that within you. There is within your heart a desire to please Him, to walk in paths every day that honor

Him. How do you do that? Well, there are several crucial components of a life of Biblical wisdom. Today we'll begin to look at these components in just verses 15 and 16 - crucial components.

If you want to live a life of Biblical wisdom, the first component that must be true is this: examine your ways. Examine your ways. Look at verse 15: "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise..." The warning 'be careful', it's one of the common Greek words for 'seeing'. It's like Paul is saying, 'Watch out. Look out.' In this context, it means to contemplate, to think about, to weigh carefully. It's a command for every believer to carefully weigh, to contemplate, how he walks. Murray writes, "He bids them keep a close watch on the principles by which they are regulating their lives." I cannot tell you how important this is. This is absolutely crucial to every one of us as believers because one of the surest ways to ensure that you will live a life of a fool, is by never stopping to think about the paths you're on. Let me say that again. One of the surest ways to ensure a life of foolishness is simply never to think deeply about the course you're on.

There's a proverb that gripped my heart, many years ago now, that makes this point. I want you to look at it – Proverbs 14. Proverbs 14: 8. Solomon writes this, "The wisdom of the sensible is to understand his way, but the foolishness of fools is deceit." Notice he says wisdom, the wisdom of the sensible person - that is the wise person - is to understand. Here the word 'understand', the Hebrew word 'understand', means to give thought to, to consider. It's one of the Hebrew words that's sometimes used of meditation. One of the practices that distinguishes the wise is that he considers, he gives thought to, he meditates on, his way. Now, the Hebrew word for 'way' describes a well-worn path. When it's used metaphorically as it is here, it refers to one's habits, the path you take day after day, the ruts you make by your behavior day after day. And he's saying what makes a wise person wise, one of the defining characteristics of a wise person, is that he gives careful thought to, he meditates on, he understands his paths - the paths he takes day after day, or the way he takes.

On the other hand, notice the second half of the verse: “the foolishness of fools is deception.” One of the practices that distinguish fools is deception. What kind of deception? Well, you need to understand a little bit about Hebrew poetry. Hebrew poetry is not like English poetry. It’s not defined by rhyme. It’s defined primarily by parallelism, that is, there’s one line and a second line that somehow is parallel. Sometimes that second line is synonymous, that is, it just tells you more about the first line. Other times, it is antithetical, that is, it is the opposite of the first line and that’s what we have here. And so, you have these two juxtaposed. That means then that in the second line of our proverb we’re looking at, deception is the opposite of understanding or thinking or meditating. So, in other words, Proverbs 14:8 is referring to the fact that the fool refuses to think deeply about his way. He refuses to understand his way about his patterns of life and that leads only to deception – not the deception of others, but his own self-deception. He is self-deceived because he doesn’t think about his way, his paths. You remember back in Proverbs 1, the passage I just read for you, it ends in verse 32 by saying this: “the complacency of fools will destroy them.” In other words, they’re at careless ease. They just don’t care. They just want to have the next joy, the next pleasure. They never pause to think about anything deeply and certainly not about the paths they’re on.

Solomon makes this same point over in Ecclesiastes 2:14. He says, “The wise man’s eyes are in his head...” In other words, he’s using them. He’s looking. He’s seeing what’s going on. He’s seeing his path. He’s observant. “...but [verse 14] the fool walks in darkness.” The fool doesn’t have his eyes in his head. The fool isn’t seeing. He just stumbles ahead without thought, careless, complacent, just doing the next thing that comes.

Listen. Paul wants us to know in Ephesians 5 that if you and I are gonna live a life of Biblical wisdom, we must examine our ways. We must think deeply about the paths we’re on. If you want to live in Biblical wisdom, you cannot be one of the lemmings who follow the crowd to the sea. You must meditate on, you must give careful thought to, your way. Don’t deceive yourself. Don’t live an unexamined life. John Stott writes,

“Everything worth doing requires care. We all take trouble over the things which seem to matter to us – our job, our education, our home and family, our hobbies, our dress and appearance. So as Christians, we must take trouble over our Christian life. We must treat it like the serious thing it is.”

How practically do you do this? How do you examine your own ways? Well Biblically, there’s one primary tool that’s given to us to examine our ways. And that is by setting aside time, regularly, to read and meditate on and apply the Scripture. Why? Well, look over at James 1. James makes this very clear as to why the Bible is so important in our lives as believers, one of the reasons it’s so important. James 1. It’s in a section about receiving the word. In fact, verse 21, he says this, James 1:21 – “Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility (with a humble heart) receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.” Be receptive to the word and that word and a love for it has been implanted in your soul and it is what rescues you. But it’s not enough just to receive it in the sense of to acknowledge it’s God’s Word and to hear it. Verse 22: “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he’s like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he’s looked at himself and gone away, he’s immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides in it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.” The Word of God, James says, is like a mirror in which we see our spiritual reflection. Without the Word of God, we think we look pretty good, don’t we? I mean, we can begin to think that we’re okay, that we’re fairly spiritual, that we’re, we’re doing everything we ought to be doing. But the mirror of Scripture doesn’t lie. It shows us, when we look into it, our true condition. But without the mirror, our self-perception can be terribly flawed. As one author says: “Our self-perceptions are as accurate as a carnival mirror.” We need a true mirror.

You know, on Friday, millions of Americans went out on Black Friday to do shopping. Perhaps many of you were among them. I pity you. I’m sorry. Some of us enjoyed our

homes that day. In many cases, you were out for the best of motives - out looking for bargains and deals for gifts for others. In some cases, however, maybe you were out looking for some things for yourself, some clothing perhaps. And if you went into the store where there was clothing and you found some clothing you liked, perhaps you took that clothing and you took it into one of those little changing rooms and you changed into that new dress or that new shirt or whatever it was. And then you stood in front of a mirror. Maybe it was one mirror. Maybe it was a whole bank of mirrors. And you know what's interesting? As you looked at that item of clothing on all of your bumps and lumps, it didn't look nearly as attractive as it looked on that skinny little unrealistic mannequin out by the display. Why? Because the mirror brought a dose of reality. All self-deception is gone at that point. That's how it is with the Scripture. It's like a mirror for our souls. And when we look into it, ~~we examine~~ it examines our ways.

Or to use another metaphor, the Word of God is like a straightedge used in building. When I worked in the building trade, you could always check the level or plumb of a wall by a plumb line, a taut string next to that wall. And you could immediately see whether that wall was crooked or straight. The Bible is like that. Lay the Scripture next to your normal patterns of behavior and it will tell you whether your life is straight or whether it's crooked by God's standard.

So, examine your life and examine it by laying it alongside the Scripture. Let the Scripture be the mirror in which you see your reflection, your honest spiritual reflection. But don't live life unexamined. If you want to live in Biblical wisdom, you must examine your ways.

There's a second crucial component of a life of Biblical wisdom, Paul says, in verse 16. Seize every opportunity. Seize every opportunity. In verse 16, Paul is stressing the urgency or importance of pursuing Biblical wisdom. Notice verse 16: "making the most of your time..." We use this verse in a variety of ways and I guess that's okay because it is kind of a proverb. Even Paul uses it differently over in Colossians 4:5 – similarly, but different. So, what does the phrase mean here? How is it used in Ephesians 5? Well, first of all, notice that it's not the main verb of the sentence, but rather it's a participle. I

know I'm asking you to bring back distant memories but try to remember a little bit of English grammar here. It will help you understand this. This is a participle. It modifies the main verb of its clause. It explains how to walk wisely - walk wisely by making the most of your time.

Now, the English words 'making the most' translate just one Greek word. It's the word literally translated 'redeeming'. It's the language of the marketplace. It means to go into the marketplace and to buy up something. It's going into the marketplace and, in this case, buying up not some commodity but rather opportunities. And the Greek word for 'opportunities' is an interesting word as well. It's actually one of the Greek words for 'time'. There are two Greek words that really represent time. One of them is *kairos* and the other is *kronos*. You recognize *kronos*. It's the word from which we get words like chronology, chronicle. It refers, *kronos* does, to time as the passing, successive moments on the clock. It's like the way we use the English word 'time' in the sentence 'What time does the service start?' We're talking about time as those successive moments passing. That's not the word used here. The other word, and the word that's used here, is the word *kairos*. It refers to seasons or epochs. It's similar to how we use the English word 'time' in that famous sentence from literature: "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." Now we're not talking about successive moments, but we're talking about periods of time, seasons of time, windows of opportunity.

So, he's saying, 'Redeem those seasons of time.' This has led some to translate it like this: 'Snap up every opportunity that comes' or 'Take full advantage of every opportunity'. Paul wants us to know that if we're gonna walk in Biblical wisdom, we must redeem or buy up the opportunities that come our way. Time is so elusive. The seasons pass. I don't often quite Horace Mann favorably, but Horace Mann once wrote these intriguing words: "Lost, yesterday, somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours, each set with sixty diamond minutes. No reward is offered for they are gone forever." A foolish life is one that wastes precious time and opportunities. On the other hand, a person who lives in Biblical wisdom redeems the opportunities to pursue Biblical wisdom. Why is this so important? Well, look at the end of verse 16. Notice

the reason Paul gives: “(for) because the days are evil.” We are to live out a life of Biblical wisdom, seizing every opportunity to grow in wisdom, because we are surrounded by the foolishness of a world under the control of the god of this age, Satan himself.

As Harold Hoehner writes, “Believers are commanded not to let the god of this age intimidate them, but to take advantage of every opportunity in this immoral environment to live a life that pleases God.” It’s like Moses in the one psalm that Moses wrote, the oldest psalm in the Psalter. Psalm 90:12, he says: “Lord, teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” In other words, God, teach us to live in the light of the brevity of this life and eternity so that we can really pursue wisdom carefully and with urgency. If we want to live in Biblical wisdom, we can’t waste the opportunities we have to pursue it.

J.I. Packer writes: “The opposite of wisdom is folly (and listen to how he defines folly). It is the short-term self-indulgence which marks out the person who doesn’t think about long-term priorities and goals, but lives on a day-to-day basis asking this question: ‘What is the most fun thing to do now?’” That’s folly. The only way to live a wise life is to live on purpose, to determine what’s truly important, and to pursue those opportunities every day. And specifically in the context of Ephesians 5, this command to seize the opportunities, has to do with seizing every opportunity to pursue a life of Biblical wisdom.

What that really means, very practically, is what you do with your free hours. You ever thought about this? You have as much time as anyone in the world has ever had – as much time as Jesus had, as much time as Moses had, as much time as the President of the United States has. You have as much time as anyone has ever had. And there are certain numbers of those hours that are spoken for and there’s really nothing you can do about it. But there are other hours that are free. That’s the difference. Listen to J. Oswald Sanders in his book ‘Spiritual Leadership’. He writes, “After making a generous allowance of eight hours a day for sleep and rest (and few really need more than that), three hours a

day for meals and social interaction, ten hours a day for work and travel on five days, there still remain no fewer than thirty-five hours unaccounted for in every week. What happens to those hours? How are the extra two days in the week invested? The whole of man's contribution to the Kingdom of God might well turn upon how those crucial hours are employed. They will determine whether his life will be commonplace or extraordinary." What do you do with those hours? How are you using them? Are you buying up from those hours every available opportunity to grow in Biblical wisdom?

You say how can I do that? Well, consider the example of Jonathan Edwards. Jonathan Edwards, the great American theologian, Princeton theologian, wrote down a list of goals so that he could walk in Biblical wisdom. He called them his resolutions - seventy of them actually. This was fairly common for men at the time to compile a list of their life goals, their resolutions. He began writing his resolutions in 1722, less than a year after he came to Christ and when he was about eighteen years of age. He wrote twenty-one of the seventy in one sitting and he steadily refined them and wrote additional ones for about a year, completing them in August of 1723, before he was twenty years old.

Here are some excerpts from his finished set: "Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat Him by His grace to enable me to keep these resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to His will for Christ's sake... Resolved, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory and my own good profit in the whole of my duration (that is, my whole life)." He says, "Resolved, to live with all my might, while I do live...Resolved, never to do anything which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life...Resolved, to always be finding out fit objects of charity and liberality (in other words, people whom he could help financially)...Resolved, to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same...Resolved, never to give over, nor in the least to slacken my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be." Never give up, he said. And then there's this one: "Resolved, never to lose one moment of time, but improve it the most profitable way I possibly can." That's what it means to buy up the opportunities.

Resolutions are wonderful tools, but they're ineffective if you never look at them. And so, Edwards, at the beginning of his list, writes this: "Remember to read over these resolutions once a week." Elsewhere he writes: "Resolved, to ask myself at the end of every day, week, month and year wherein I could possibly in any respect have done better." Listen. A wise life is an examined life. It's a life in which opportunities to pursue Biblical wisdom are not wasted.

As we approach the Christmas season perhaps you're reading, as I am, some of those early accounts in our Lord's life. And I was struck with Luke chapter 2 where on two different occasions we're told, in His human nature, Jesus grew in wisdom. Not talking about as God – He was always perfect wisdom as God. We're talking about Jesus as a human. He grew in wisdom, so much so that when He comes back to the synagogue there in Nazareth and He speaks, all of the people that knew Him growing up said, 'Where did He get this wisdom?' That's the question, isn't it? Where did He get it for His humanity and where do we get it? Well, the answer is in the next part of this passage that we'll look at together next week.

Let's pray together.

Our Father, thank You for the call to a life of wisdom, daily paths carved in wisdom. Father, I pray that You would help us to embrace these crucial components of a wise life. Lord, may we carefully examine our ways. Don't let us be like the fool who deceives himself but, O God, may we understand our paths, our patterns of behavior. May we think about these things, contemplate them. And Father, I pray that you would give us Your grace to live in light of what we see reflected in Your Word. And Father, help us to seize opportunities, to buy them back. Lord, life is so short. Don't let us waste our time always on trivialities but, Father, I pray that You would help us to buy up the opportunities to pursue Biblical wisdom which matters both in this life and in the life to come. Father, as we look next week at the source of both Jesus' wisdom and the source of our wisdom, may we be diligent to pursue it. Seal these things to our hearts.

Lord, if there's someone here today who is living in foolish rebellion against You, may this be the day they lay down their rebellion, and bow their knee to You, and embrace Christ as Lord and Savior. And Father, for those of us who are in Christ, help us to take the call to walk wisely very seriously, as seriously as You do. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen!