

## Transcription of 16TM819

Proverbs 30:24-28

"Wisdom Illustrated"

December 28, 2016

If you have a Bible, let's open up our Bibles this evening to Proverbs 30:24. And if you've found that, or you already went to that, if you could find Luke 16 as well, we're just going to jump over there for just a moment (in a little while).

I don't know how often you have read through the Bible, but the poetic books really begin at the book of Job, and they run through the Song of Solomon. They are kind of concise, there, right in the middle. But they are written in most Hebrew poetry ways, and so they bring with them kind of a lot of rules of interpretation. But suffice it, tonight, to say that they are written in such a way that they are to be applied to present-day living. In other words, everything that you find there is in the present tense. It is designed to bring you today into that relationship with God. Not only that, but the poetic books presume that you have a desire to walk with God. In other words, the way that they are presented to us, it presumes the audience knows the Lord personally and desires to know Him better. So they are, like I said, almost exclusively written in the present tense, and they are interested in helping you today to walk with God. Less narrative, more wisdom, and put into small packages, if you will. That was certainly Solomon's desire when he sat down to write this book.

In fact, let me read to you in Proverbs 1. Solomon begins writing this book this way. He wrote this, "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, the king of Israel," and then he wrote this, "So that you would know wisdom and instruction, so that you would perceive words of understanding, so that you would receive the instruction of wisdom and justice, judgment and equity; that would give prudence to the simple, to a young man knowledge and discretion - a wise man will hear and will increase his learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, so he would understand these proverbs and an enigma, the words of the wise and their riddles. And the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, while fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Solomon's interest in writing the book of Proverbs was simply, at least in the first nine chapters, to communicate to his son how he could live a godly life. And if you read through the book of Proverbs, and I know sometimes it seems very detached, but the first nine chapters are all about, "Son, study to know the LORD. Get to

know His ways. It'll keep you from all kinds of problems." Beginning in chapter 10, and running through the middle of chapter 22 (verse 16), there are the proverbs of Solomon. Some of them are two and three verses long, some of them only one verse long. They are the wisdom that God had given him. Remember Solomon was the wisest guy that lived on the planet. And, as he was writing by the Spirit, that wisdom comes across. Beginning in the middle of chapter 22, through chapter 24, there are lists of otherwise sayings that Solomon had compiled; didn't necessarily mean he wrote them, but he loved them. He used them. He quoted them. They were contemporaries or folks that he looked up to, and he took what they said, and he wrote them down. Chapters 25 through 29 are other proverbs of Solomon that Hezekiah and some of his men compiled. After Solomon had come and gone, they went looking for the things that Solomon said. We do a lot of .... especially if you're a Calvary Chapel pastor, you quote Spurgeon a lot. He was like your patron saint, you know? He had so many good things to say at the time that he wrote them. And so a lot of folks do a lot of quoting Spurgeon. Well, Hezekiah did a lot of quoting Solomon. So you'll find that in those five chapters. And then finally, these last two chapters (here in Proverbs) were written by others - a guy named Agur in chapter 30, a fellow named King Lemuel in chapter 31. But he wrote down, he said, "This is what my mom taught me." But each one of the verses - every book in this poetic book area of your Bible - is designed to bring you into a closer walk with the Lord.

So tonight I picked five verses out, and they are some really wonderfully-written illustrated lessons on wisdom. And it comes from this fellow Agur. He wrote them out. He applied them to our spiritual lives, and I think that, because they have present-tense application, you'll learn a lot from them. We don't know much about the fellow who wrote this chapter. His name means "gatherer" or "harvester." I think he was a farmer. But he was an example of the fact that God would use folks that you don't know. You don't really find him anywhere else. His personal opinion about himself - if you just flip back to verses 2 and 3 of this chapter - he says this about himself, "Surely I am more stupid than any man, and I don't have the understanding of a man. I haven't learned wisdom nor do I have the knowledge of the Holy One." And so, as Agur begins to write, he makes no boast about his learning capacity. He doesn't say to you, "I've got special insights. You've got to listen to what I have to say." He's extremely aware of his limitations. He felt inferior to other more-learned men, and yet he wanted to speak as God gave him wisdom. In fact, he says (in verse 4), "Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters

in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if you know? Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him." So, he didn't think much of himself, but he thought plenty about the God that he served. And it is from that standpoint that he writes this chapter.

Now, a couple things we learn about him before we get to our verses. Number one - he was a pretty organized thinker. In fact you'll notice, as you read through these not too many verses of chapter 30 (what are there, 33 verses), he does a lot of lists. Notice in verse 7, "Two things I request of you," and there's a list. In verse 11, he says, "There is a generation that curses its father." In verse 12, "There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes." Verse 13, "There is a generation - oh, how lofty are their eyes!" Verse 14, "There is a generation whose teeth are like swords." He always loves to make lists. Verse 15, "The leech has two daughters - Give and Give!" Short list, but a list nonetheless. Verse 18, "There are three things, which are too wonderful for me, yes, four which I do not understand." You will find in Hebrew poetry that, rather than exclamation points, the way you make an exclamation point is you say, "Three, no four; five, no six; six, no seven," and you upgrade your numbers. And it implies to the reader, "No, no, no. Even more than that." It's the exclamation point, if you will. Verse 21, "For three things the earth is perturbed, yes, for four it cannot bear up." Verse 24, "There are four things which are little on the earth." Verse 29, "There are three things which are majestic in pace."

And so, this guy's a pretty organized thinker, and I wanted to just spend some time with you tonight in the little paragraph, beginning in verse 24, where he gives to us, by the Holy Spirit, four examples of creatures. And here's the definition or the context in which you have to look at this - four creatures that are little and weak; and yet, in their instinctive ways, they show themselves to be extremely wise, and they overcome inherent weaknesses in their lives by some other strength - through the wisdom that God provides.

Instinct, in God's work, is found in the animal kingdom. God made animals in such a way that they are guided to do what wisdom would dictate that's best for them, and they do it instinctively. They follow a path of wisdom because of God's creation. The "proverbist" or Agur, if you will, uses this to parallel the wise spiritual qualities that God would give to you and that you should develop and

become wise; not instinctively, because instinctively we're sinners. But being filled with the Spirit, that you might find yourself dwelling in the place of wisdom.

The introduction is in verse 24, "There are four things which are little on the earth, but they are exceedingly wise." That's the premise, if you will. We might say there are four things that are insignificant in comparison to their environment, but they show themselves quite wise in dealing with their inadequacies from an instinctual behavior that God has placed within them. Only for the fellow who's writing the proverb to say, "Now you, as believers in the Lord, show that same kind of wisdom; not by instinct but by choice, led by God's Spirit."

So here're his four examples, beginning in verse 25. "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their food in the summer." Remember - little on the earth but exceedingly wise. The ants are not a people that are strong, and yet they prepare their food in the summer. Ants are the most populous insect on the planet. Did you know that? I guess you would. They are so plentiful in number, God refers to them here as people in the sense that they're colonized, they're civilized in structure and survival skills. Anybody ever have an ant colony when you were a kid? I mean, those used to be the cool things before the Ipad and all that stuff. You'd watch ants crawl around behind Plexiglass. Each ant has a job to do, and they do it well in the colony to the benefit of the rest. You've got the queen, who lays the eggs; and you have the worker, who feeds the others; and the soldier ant who defends. And so it goes. It's a colony, isn't it? They're a society of ants. Ants have been found to be extremely wise, and yet how big can an ant's brain really be? Scientists who know tell us that the average ant is the equal in intelligence with the elephant, whose brain is certainly much larger. A bull with a similar-size brain as an elephant is much dumber. So an ant is up there as far as intelligence. But here's the interesting thing - they are exceedingly small and weak, but they make good preparation for the future. You know, ants are great communicators. If you don't believe that, just leave some food out on your table at home. And by the time you get up, they will have let the entire neighborhood know that you're offering them a picnic in your sink. But they're not strong. One debilitating attribute of an ant is their size. They're not strong. They are tiny. And if you step on an ant group, you could kill a hundred ants with your foot. "They're a people not strong." Individually, ants can pull 150% of their body weight. That's amazing, isn't it? That would be great if they weren't so stinking small. It'd be like a 200-pound man pulling 500 pounds around all day. That's a lot

of weight, but it's insignificant when you're just an ant. What's 150% of nothing?! Kind of still nothing.

But here's the first example that Agur picks to paint for us the wisdom of verse 24. Little but exceedingly wise. By instinct, ants make tremendous good use of the hot summer months to prepare for the days of winter, when they won't be able to prepare at all. If you have a pool at home, or you water, you will find oftentimes in the summer, ants don't like you watering. They will come up out of a hole with a million of them just yelling at you. If you listen carefully, that's what they're doing. They're screaming at you! Their gathering time is limited. Ants can't swim. Wet winters are their nemesis. Like I said, watering brings them up. They hate snow skiing, so that's not good for them.

But because of their instinctiveness, God would have us to learn from them - as we consider our labors - that it is good to gather while the gathering is good. The time is limited. There's only so much time that we have before the days of our opportunity are gone. And we are either going to be ready, or we're not. But either way, when time runs out, it's too late to start planning.

So we, like the ant, it seems to me, often display similar wisdom when it comes to temporal things. We plan ahead. We plan ahead. If we're going to retire, most people plan ahead. If you're going to go on vacation, sometimes the funnest part of a vacation is planning it. Seems to be over the minute it starts, but you can have weeks of fun planning it. We join savings clubs to make some money for Christmas time. But the application here is to be wise as you plan for the eternal things as they plan for the time of gathering. There's only so much time that the ant has to be ready. And the question begs asking - are we wise enough (like the ant who prepares for food in the summer, because if he doesn't have it, he dies) to plan for eternity? Are we that smart? Are we listening and walking in that way of life? Paul would write to the Hebrews, "It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). So that's coming, isn't it, for all of us, and it doesn't really tell us when. We should be planning for that day. The psalmist wrote, in Psalm 90:12, "So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." He said it to the Ephesians as well. Chapter 5:15, Paul said, "Walk circumspectly," which literally means "look in every direction." "Don't be a fool. Be wise. Redeem the time, because the days are evil." And Agur would say to you: take the ant as an example of someone, though he is weak, he is extremely wise. He plans for the summer to gather his food because if he doesn't do it then, he's

not going to do it at all. He's not going to make it through the winter. And if you don't get ready in this life - for the coming life - you're not going to make it either. And that's his point. That's his point. Soon enough we run out of days. And what more important things could we be concerned with than one day standing before the Lord to answer for how we spent our days or how we spent our life while in the light, right? Jesus said, in John 12:35, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going." Plan ahead. Make the plans. How foolish to live life consumed only by this life while ignoring the much longer life to come.

So, there are four things wise on the earth, but they are extremely small. The ants - not strong, but they're extremely wise. They have forethought. They plan ahead. You should plan ahead. You never know when the Lord says your day is up. It doesn't matter how old you are, how long you think you've got, how healthy you feel. When your time is up, your time is up. Be the ant. Be like the ant. Small brain, wise planning.

All right. Look at Luke for a minute with me. Hopefully you've found Luke 16 by now. And just kind of keep your finger there in Proverbs. Here's one example of Jesus' parable. It is called "The Parable of the Unjust Steward," but it has everything to do with planning ahead for the future. Verse 1, "He said to His disciples: 'There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods.' " So here's a fellow in charge of a rich man's money. He's his business manager. He's his accountant. And he's accused of mismanaging funds or embezzling money, if you will; and, from what follows, he was not unfairly accused. He was guilty as charged, but that wasn't so apparent early on. Verse 2 says, " 'So he called him and said to him, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward." ' " So, he calls him to task. He asks him for accountability. It would appear that, because of the way that it is written, he was going to get a fair trial with his boss. He was going to audit the books. All the process was going to be carried forth. His job would be held in the balance. He knows what is coming if he is found out to be guilty. It appears he did not admit his guilt, hoping maybe the investigation could buy him some time. But what he did do, knowing he was going to be fired as soon as the results came out, was he used what little time he had left on the job to plan ahead. And while his boss thought the best of him and allowed him to continue, he would use that opportunity and that information and that position to position himself so that when he was fired, he'd still have some income.

That's really the bottom line to this parable. We read in verse 3, " 'Then the steward said within himself,' " (not to the boss) " ' "What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg." ' " Or, in other words, "This is all I know," stealing, apparently. " ' "I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses." So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, "How much do you owe my master?" And he said, "A hundred measures of oil." So he said to him, "Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty." Then he said to another, "And how much do you owe?" So he said, "A hundred measures of wheat." And he said to him, "Take your bill, and write eighty." ' " So, in the interim, this suspected crook went out to make friends that he believed could help him later. He begins to feather his own nest with favors he'd need when the results of the audit would implicate him. He used his position to forgive large portions of debt (that weren't owed to him but to the man that he worked for) from his boss' debtors, thereby making him friends who now, he felt, owed him some kind of favor. Verse 8 says this, and here's the lesson, " 'So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.' " In other words, when the owner received the results of the investigation, he quickly saw what his manager had done, and he commended him. Not for cheating, not for stealing. He wasn't going to keep him on. But for the shrewdness he used in using his present opportunity with a view towards future personal benefit. That's the idea. Right? He planned ahead. And Jesus, at the end of verse 8 and down through the rest of the parable, makes the spiritual application. He said, "The sons in this world are far more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light." Or, if you will, look how well the children of the world understand how the world works, and they use what they understand for their personal gain. They are smart in operating in the world to move themselves forward. Have you ever thought about the wisdom of acid-washed jeans to anyone but the seller? It makes no sense. "Let me ruin your pants, put a hole in a few of them. Here. Charge you double!" It makes sense only to the seller. If he can convince the audience that that's the way to go, boy, he's got something.

Why do not godly men and women do the same sort of thing for spiritual gain? Verse 9, " 'And I say to you,' " Jesus said, " 'make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon,' " (literally, through money) " 'that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore

if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon,' " (that's the money that perishes here) " 'who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon' " (money). His point is - why not use the money that is passing away to invest in spiritual fruit that will remain because you're going to fail? Or, if you'd like, you're going to die, and one second after you die, you'll never write another check. And in heaven, your currency won't be current. And the streets are made of gold, not asphalt. So what are you going to bring along?

Only here can we turn temporal into eternal. And notice that Jesus drives home that truth that faithfulness, in one sense, is planning ahead. Use what you have for now to make sure that it will last for all of eternity. "Where your treasure is," what does that say, "that's where your heart will be" (Matthew 6:21). Right? So that's the example by the parable. If you know that your time is short, if you know that reckoning time is coming soon, if you know that the opportunity to lay up treasures in heaven will soon be gone, then take the lead from the ant. Small, weak, and yet wise because the ant thinks ahead. He thinks ahead. He makes the most of each time, each day, because there's only so many days for him to gather fruit before the summer is past. There's only so much time for you to gather spiritual fruit that will last - not just temporal things that won't, that will die with you. That's the point.

Since we're coming to a new year, 2017 could be the year of the ant. I know that's not on the Chinese calendar, but it should be on ours. The year of the ant.

All right. Let's go back to Proverbs. Verse 26. Secondly, "The rock badgers are a feeble folk, yet they make their homes in the crags." The rock badger, or it is sometimes called a "coney" (the Hebrew word is "*shafan*") is one of those lists of unclean animals that don't divide their hoof (in the Old Testament). They are only found in the Mideast. You won't find them anywhere else but in the Mideast. They have no tail, they have bristly hair, they look like an overgrown kind of guinea pig. I have a good picture of one of them at En Gedi where we're sitting in a circle under some trees, studying about David, when one of these little animals sticks his teeth out - really menacing - at me. And they've got these long, like, chomper teeth. Rock badgers live in families. They are very timid. They are quick to retreat. "They are feeble folk." That's what we read here. They have no real way

to protect themselves from predators. They are essentially defenseless creatures when it comes to danger. Instinctively they, these rock badgers - these coneys, compensate for their feebleness in the strength of the place that they choose to dwell. That's really their smart move. That's their wisdom. They can't stand in the field and fight you off. But they select for themselves sheer cliffs that they can live in that very few people can get to. And they are comfortable there, and they are built to climb. Their safety is their chosen place of residence, and they are as safe as the rocks are strong (in which they live). And you will find them up these sheer walls, crawling around as if they owned the place; and they do. They're little, verse 24, but they're wise. They are feeble, but they are made strong by the place that they choose to build their house. Really beautiful picture. Their wisdom is simple, and it's very straightforward. They're aware of their weakness and inability to defend themselves, so they build their house - ready? - upon the rock. Brilliant. It is a sign of a wise man to know his weakness.

Look, you're a believer in Christ. The devil is far stronger than you. You will lose in a battle with him every time. I don't care how determined you are, you're going down. It's good to know that so that you won't try it on your own. Spiritually, we have to realize we have an enemy that is much stronger than we are. Peter said, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). That's the enemy that we face. But, we have a God who's far stronger than he. And the place that we choose to live and build our lives, the better off we are. In the Sermon on the Mount, there in Matthew 7, Jesus, towards the end of the chapter, says, "There are folks who build their house upon the sand." And He described them. He said, "They're just folks who hear the word of God, but they don't keep it. They listen to it, they agree to it, they nod in agreement. They don't follow it, and they walk off." And then He said, "When the storms come, their house goes down." But then He said this, "He who builds his house upon the rock is he who doesn't just hear the word of God. He does it. He follows it. He keeps it." Small, but wise. Feeble, but strong. That's you and me. And we're strong in the, and to the, degree that we build our house and our relationship with God. Right? That we are hearers and we are doers of the Word. The Lord defines those who hear His Word and do His will as building their house upon a rock. That'll enable you and I that are weak, and that we're defenseless in front of an enemy far greater than we, and the enemy can be powerful, but we can't be overcome because we stand upon the Rock. Now that won't work if all you're doing is agreeing with God's truth, and you're not doing it. It's the doing that keeps you safe.

The coney could stand in the field and just say, "I could live way up there," and be slaughtered by just about every animal passing through the area. But if he climbs up the hill and hides himself there, now he's got something. Now he has something. "My grace is sufficient for you, My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). But, it is as we find the power of Christ resting upon us that we find that strength.

David prayed for the same thing. Psalm 61:2 he said, "From the end of the earth I will cry to You, when my heart is overwhelmed;" my prayer is, "lead me to the rock that is higher than I." So, here's another animal you can learn from. God gives us a little lesson - biology lesson, if you will. The coney is aware of his lack of strength, and he knows that, to dwell in safety, he's going to have to climb high upon the rock. You want to be wise as a Christian this coming year, build your life upon Jesus. Be doers of the Word. Be strong and be safe. I'm no match for the devil; he's no match for my God. So learn. He's feeble, but he makes his home in the crags. He knows exactly where to go, and so should you and I. And the enemy will not be able to take out a believer who's building his house upon the Rock.

Thirdly, locusts. Verse 27, "The locusts have no king, yet they all advance in ranks." Agur's third example is, again, little upon the earth but extremely wise. Locusts are the epitome of wisdom. They find their success through teamwork. Right? When they invade, they swarm in hordes. They bring so many friends along that their presence blackens the sky. I don't know if you've ever seen a locust infestation. There were some pretty bad ones in Africa over the last twenty years. There're some amazing YouTube videos, where the entire sky just goes black and where trucks slide off the road over the bodies of these locusts that have been run over by the tens of thousands; and yet they can't stop them. They absolutely just keep coming. Planes won't fly, trains won't travel. Huge colonies moving in ranks, and they eat every bit of vegetation, and they conquer as a united kind of combined effort. And they're this big (4-6"). But there're a zillion of them this big, and they have victory - not because they're small but because they work together. They have no king, and yet they move in rank. Isn't that interesting? Their wisdom is to prevail by numbers. A single locust wouldn't be a problem. Several hundred would pose little threat. Two hundred million - problematic. And they just come as a group, and they find themselves victorious. They have no king. Instinctively, they gather themselves together. They move together as one. Though they have no rallying cry, there's no official leader to organize them,

there's no one to lead them. But God instinctively makes them so that they work together.

Now that doesn't happen with us instinctively. That has to happen to us by choice. And it has to happen by His Spirit. We, as the body of Christ and as a local church, can learn much from the locust about seeking to accomplish God's will in reaching the world; but, rather than battling with others, cooperate with them. So many churches are so competitive. We've invited folks to come and share with men's groups, for example, and they're worried about coming because, "What if you take our men?" I don't want your men, I've seen your men! No, I didn't say .... (Laughing) There's always this competitive kind of jealous, factional, who's-in-charge here. But if we're going to overcome, if we're going to bear much fruit and reach a world that seems much more organized against us than we are organized to reach them, then we'll take a lesson from the pages of the locust and see the need we have for other ministries, for the benefit that comes from a united front, that the Bible doesn't paint any picture of a lone ranger in the work of God. You won't find any lone rangers. We need the body. We need the work of the Holy Spirit. We need each member. Unity and faith in God brought victory. Right? Israel faces the Amalekites, it's Moses holding up his hands, and then he gets tired, and Aaron and Hur come and hold up his arms as he holds out the staff that God gave him. And Joshua's down in the valley fighting away, but it took everybody. It didn't just take a part; it took them all. Israel set out to correct an atrocity, there in Judges 20, and you can read about it. But the description is, "All of the men of Israel gathered together and united together as one man, took the city" (verse 11). Because that's the way God works best. That's why we call it a body. We're a body of Christ. It was teamwork. I think if you read Nehemiah, especially the story of the rebuilding (early on in the book of Nehemiah) of the city, you'll read about everyone working in his place and doing his thing and others watching over them and supporting them. It was a real united effort. And we need united effort. We need each other in the body. Every part has a function, and we are far stronger and more effective than we could ever be alone. Aren't you glad there are people watching the little babies in the Sunday school right now? I am. It's hard enough getting you to pay attention. Just imagine them little 3-month-olds who are cute as a bug and on mom's lap, and then they're right in your face. I've lost you, haven't I, because you've spent an hour watching a baby. It's a good thing we have worship leaders because some of you can't sing very good. (Laughing) I've heard you. I've heard you. Now, to the Lord, you are a joy to listen to. To the Lord, you're a joy to listen to. And other people have gifts. It's a good thing we

don't all have that. We have folks that go to the convalescent ministry every week or to the prison. We have folks that teach home Bible studies and go out to mission fields. And we need them all. If we're going to accomplish our work, we need them all. And Satan's greatest plot, always, is to divide and conquer. It's always the way he works. Rivalry that leaves us ineffective. And to be honest with you, the locust has no king. And we have a King. So they do something instinctively that we, spiritually, should all rally around a leader. They don't have one. We do! We have great benefit over the locust. Right? We're all running into Jesus' arms and into His presence, looking for His direction and His will. But we're going to have to do it together. We're going to need all of us. And if you really want to have victory, the church by and large, by itself, is very small and can be very weak, but together, collectively, look out, man! Stuff's going to happen. God's going to use us. He always has, always will. And the locusts teach us that as a lesson. We have a King who calls each of us to live for Him and directs us in the areas He'd have us to serve. It's a good thing we all have a place to serve. You've just got to know what your place is. I don't know what it is. But I know you have one. And hopefully this coming year will find you finding what that is and joining the crowd and joining in the work. I know what God hasn't called you to do. Ready? Sit right there. None of you are called to sit right there. If you feel otherwise, please bring your verses to me after church, and then I will show you my verses on why I believe you're not called to sit right there. Oh, you're called to sit right there for now, but there's more to be done than that.

Well finally, verse 28, "The spider skillfully grasps with its hands, and it is in kings' palaces." Now remember verse 24. It's the controlling verse. Four things that are little but wise. The last one, the spider, skillfully grasps with its hands and can live in the kings' palaces. The word "spider" is "**semamith**" in Hebrew, which is usually translated "gecko." And so it is probably a lizard of some kind, though it has been translated, in this translation, "spider." If you've ever been to the tropics - go to Mexico, go to Hawaii, go to Costa Rica, go to the Yucatan, go to the Philippines - you will find geckos. In the house that we stayed at in Puerto Vallarta, years ago, we had an outside place where we could eat. There were at least fifty geckos hanging upside down over our dining room table. Now the good thing is they eat cockroaches. The bad news is they hang upside down over your table. (Laughing) And you're just wondering - you're not going to just have a problem from up there into my food here, are you, because I don't really like where you're hanging out. They are able to do what they do by this ingenious little foot that God gave them. Again, it is a creation of God. On every toe, there are these little pods, and within

them, they secrete these little sticky substances. They can walk straight up on marble or glass - no slipping, no problem. "Yeah, that's where I go. This is what I do." Like Spiderman. They climb. And their bodies can be made so long and sleek that they can pass through the smallest crevices, so small that you'd swear they couldn't have gotten in here, but they can. It's impossible to keep them out. So they find themselves living in luxury. Why? Because of their instinctive ability to move around, to make themselves small, to go and come wherever they feel that they need to be. The wisdom that compensates for their size is their ability to securely hang on. And if they can hang on, they can go anywhere. They can go where you can't go. Their strength is the ability to hang on. Right?

Well, God has given to you and me tremendous promises to hold on to. If you want to live a blessed life, hang on to them. Remind yourself of them. David wrote, "I'm going to dwell in the house of the LORD forever" (Psalm 27:4). He hung on to that promise. It made a huge difference in his life. You have that promise, too. Hang on to it. You might be weak, you might be small, but, man, you can find yourself to find great strength and be exceedingly wise. You can hang on to the promises of God. God has given us His Word to hang on to tightly. Promises that, if we don't let go of them, we'll be wise. Like the gecko who so tenaciously hangs on. Satan comes to discredit God's Word to you, and you just hang on to the truth. He comes to tell you what a worthless individual you are, you just hang on to the truth. He comes to discourage you that God can't use you, and you just hang on to the truth. You might be weak, but you're wise - you're hangin' on. And these geckos, they hang on. The enemy wants to knock your feet out from under you, and you're just hangin' on, not lettin' go. Paul wrote to the Galatians and said, "Don't be weary in doing well, for in due season you'll reap if you don't faint" (Galatians 6:9). Moses said to the people going into the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 1), "Go in and possess your possessions," following the examples of God, believing in His Word, obeying His Word, following His statutes, "you can go in and possess your possessions." Hang on. Hang on.

There's a lot we can learn from God's creation. This fellow just decided to pick four little examples to us - presented as little creatures who, in their creation by God, have been given tremendous wisdom, just through instinct, that makes them overcomers. But then he sets the parallel next to it for us. And here's the parallel. The parallel is that you and I can seek to develop, in the Lord, those very same attributes, and we can come out wise. And we can find ourselves in a place where we can bear much fruit. Plan for the future. Easy. Reach out to live upon

the Rock that is higher than you. Take part in the united effort of the body. Find out the place that you're supposed to be. And hang on to His promises. How's that? That's pretty easy to remember, isn't it? Want to repeat them? All right. You repeat them. Oh, never mind. Each of us has a scheduled appointment with the Lord. We just don't know when it is. But you're on the calendar. You've got to be ready. It's preparation time, isn't it? "Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near, Isaiah (55:6) would write. Psalm 14:2 says, "The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God." That's what He's looking for - from you and from me.

So, if you're not prepared, then you want to take the lesson right now from the ant, and get ready. Plan well. Where are you making your home? Where is your life really situated? Where are you planted? Because if it isn't upon the Rock, it's going to be something that's going to let go and let the enemy get in. If you're in fellowship, my question would be - what are you doing here? Where are you serving? What has God called you to do? Because there's great wisdom and security in the body. And, finally, how tenaciously are you hanging on to the promises of God? They're all true, you know. They were true before you were born. They'll be true when you leave, if the Lord tarries. But they're still true. How good are you at hanging on? How's them little suckers on the paws of your fingers?

Submitted by Maureen Dickson  
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