

Dr. August Konkel, Proverbs, Session 6, Wisdom as a Tree of Life, Proverbs 3:13-20

Podcast Audio Overview

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Hey everyone, welcome back today. We're taking a deep dive into the book of Proverbs. Yeah, specifically, this idea of wisdom as a tree of life.

It's super fascinating. We're going to be looking at a lecture by Dr. August Konkel, who just really digs into this incredible metaphor. Yeah, and you know why a tree makes this such a powerful symbol when we're talking about wisdom? Stick with us because we're going to explore how this tree of life imagery connects the past and the present.

Okay, and even gives us a glimpse into the future, and it all ties back to, you know, living a fulfilling life. I like that. So the tree metaphor really provides kind of a tangible representation of wisdom. Yeah, you know, something that we can grasp as humans with our experience of, you know, things growing, right, things that sustain us. Absolutely, it's not just this, like, abstract idea. It's something that we can like picture and connect with exactly and Dr. Konkel points out that in Proverbs those who possess wisdom are considered blessed. He uses this Hebrew word *asher a* to describe this state of blessedness, I don't know about you that word might sound a little unfamiliar to me at first. Yeah, but it's got deep roots like it connects back to Psalm 1 which describes the blessed life of a person who delights in God's law. Oh, wow, and that concept even echoes in Jesus's teachings, too. Well, that's so interesting because it shows how this concept of blessedness.

Yeah, it's been woven, you know, all throughout Scripture, and it makes you think: what does it mean to be blessed, right? It's a good question. It's not just about luck. Yeah, or, you know, material wealth. It's about developing a character that is rooted in righteousness, right? You know, understanding and aligning with God's ways; it's about living a life that reflects divine wisdom.

Like, how would you describe a blessed person? You know, what kind of choices would they make? Hmm? It's a really good question. Yeah, I think we need to dig into that. Yeah, let's unpack that a little bit. So let's start with this tree of life idea and look at it across time, starting with the past.

Okay, Dr. Konkel takes us all the way back to the Garden of Eden, where we find not one but two significant trees. Oh, interesting: the tree of life and the tree of knowledge, right? And it's important to remember that Psalm 1, which we just talked about with the blessed person, yeah, it starts with a tree.

Oh, wow, a tree planted by streams of water, so we already see this connection right from the beginning. Yeah, between blessedness and this image of a flourishing tree. Wow, and then in the Garden of Eden, the tree of life represents the ultimate source of life: God himself. It reminds us that life isn't just some random thing that happened, right? It's a

deliberate gift from our Creator. That's a good point. And then, of course, there's that other tree. Yeah, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which kind of got humanity into a bit of trouble, a little bit.

Is it Tad? Yeah, it represents humanity's attempt to define good and evil on their own terms, separate from God, right, separate from God's guidance, which, as we all know, didn't really work out. Not so much. That's kind of an understatement, right? But here's where things get really interesting. Okay, Dr. Konkel says that in the present day, wisdom itself is the tree of life. Wow, it's accessible to us right here, right now. It's that Asher, a character that we were talking about earlier, that blessed way of living that we can cultivate today, so it's not just back then; it's now too, right? It's not just in the past.

It's something we can experience now. He even points to a symbol from Jewish tradition: the menorah. Oh, interesting, and it's not just a candelabrum, right? It's actually a Representation of the tree of life. Wow, it symbolizes this wisdom of living a life that's in harmony with God's creation and pleasing to him, so knowing how to live well, making wise choices. It's like tapping into that tree of life exactly here and now. Yeah, I love that imagery. Yeah, but what about the future? What happens to this tree of life idea then? Well, if we fast-forward all the way to the book of Revelation, right, we see the tree of life again; this time it's in the New Jerusalem. Okay, and it's this picture of paradise restored- right, a return to that perfect communion with God that was lost back in Eden- but it's not like a guarantee, is it? It sounds like getting to this future tree of life depends on accepting God's truth. Exactly.

There's a choice involved. Just like in Eden.

Yeah, we're faced with a decision: Do we embrace God's wisdom and live according to his truth, or do we choose our own path? There are definitely some parallels there. Yeah, for sure. Another thing that I found super fascinating that Dr. Konkel brought up is this connection between, okay? Wisdom and understanding the world around us in Proverbs 3.1 9:20 It basically says that tapping into wisdom helps us understand the natural order that God created. Oh, wow, like we can actually get a grasp on God's design. It's like God used wisdom to create the world, right, and then when we seek wisdom, we can actually understand His creation better.

Hmm. That's a great point. Yeah, it highlights how wisdom isn't just about morality or personal choices. Yeah, it's about comprehending the universe, the laws of nature, and how everything is interconnected.

It's like getting a key, exactly, to unlock this deeper level of understanding of everything around us. Yeah, this is definitely sparking my curiosity, too. It makes you think about how understanding wisdom could deepen our appreciation for nature, for science, even for the everyday things. Even the mundane things can become fascinating. Yeah, totally. So we've got this rich image of the tree of life spanning across time.

Mm-hmm, you know, we lost access to it in the garden, right? But God gives us a way back through redemption, through accepting his truth, which eventually leads us to that tree of life in Revelation, and what's amazing is that in the meantime? Yeah, we have access to wisdom, right, which acts as a kind of present-day tree of life, guiding us, you know, toward

a fulfilling life. It's like a bridge connecting us from paradise lost to paradise regained. That's beautiful. I love that; me too.

And just like a bridge needs a solid foundation to stand strong. Hmm, our pursuit of wisdom needs to be rooted in God's truth. Absolutely, that's a good place to stop for now, I think, but we'll pick up this conversation next time. It sounds good, and I'll explore this idea of pursuing wisdom even further. I'm looking forward to it. It's definitely a journey, not a destination, right? There's always more to learn and discover. Yeah, for sure.

And you know speaking of growth and discovery, okay, Dr. Conkle mentioned something that really made me think oh, yeah, he talked about the Arch of Titus in Rome. Okay, which was built to celebrate the Roman victory over Jerusalem, right? Right, but here's the interesting thing: this arch features a menorah. That's interesting. Why would they do that? I know right you'd think they would want to erase all Jewish symbolism after conquering them. Exactly, so why highlight the menorah the symbol that's so important to Jewish tradition. Yeah, it's kind of a strange detail it is. It's like a contradiction; it's like they unintentionally ended up showcasing one of the most powerful symbols of Jewish culture. Right, the tree of life, exactly, representing wisdom and resilience.

It's like even in defeat, that power of wisdom couldn't be erased. I love that. It's like this enduring thing it is it transcends everything so we've covered a lot of ground here. Yeah, we have what's really stood out to you so far. You know, it really gets me is that wisdom is available to us and now, right in the present. Yeah, it's not just for like scholars or theologians, it's for everyone exactly. It's a way of life, a path we can all choose that leads to that. Asher.

Eh, yeah. Makes you think about our choices, doesn't it? It does. Like, are we choosing the path of wisdom, or are we getting lost in all the noise of life? So easy to get distracted; it is. Dr. Konkel brought up this metaphor of nourishment. Okay, you know how a tree needs the right stuff to thrive. Yeah, like sunlight, water, good soil. Exactly.

Mm-hmm. It made me think about what we're feeding our minds and hearts. Are we seeking out wisdom, or are we filling ourselves with things that don't really help us grow? So it's like we have this tree of life, right? Overflowing with good stuff, with nourishing fruit, but we have to actually choose to eat from it. We do have to make that choice. So if wisdom is this path to a blessed life, how do we actually start? That's the big question, isn't it? What can we actually do?

Well, Dr. Konkel talked about engaging with God's Word. Okay, reflecting on his teachings and learning from people who embody wisdom reminds me of that verse from Psalm 1 we talked about earlier. Oh, yeah, the blessed person meditating on God's law day and night, exactly. It's about immersing ourselves in wisdom, right, letting it shape everything we do, our thoughts, actions, relationships, all of it. But it's not just about reading or studying, right? No, it's about applying it, living it out, making choices that line up with what we're learning, putting wisdom into action. Exactly, wisdom isn't just knowing stuff, right? It's about doing stuff. It's about making those wise choices every day, yeah, both big and small, so it takes effort.

It does. It's a conscious choice. We have to seek it out, absorb it, and then actually live it out, and remember it's a journey.

Yeah, we're going to mess up sometimes. Of course, our choices won't always be perfect, right? But the good news is we can always get back on track. That's encouraging. It's not about being perfect, right? It's about trying our best to align our lives with God's wisdom and knowing that we have his grace to help us. Yeah, I love that. Dr. Konkel tied the past, present, and future together so well. Me too, you know; we lost access to the tree of life in Eden, right? But we can find it again through wisdom in the present.

Yeah, which leads us back to that ultimate tree of life in Revelation. It's this beautiful story of redemption. It is God giving us a way back. He does. It makes you think about all the choices we make every day. Do they lead us closer to that tree of life or further away? That's a good question to think about. It is; that's a good place to pause. We'll wrap up this deep dive in our next episode. Sounds good.

So it makes you think about those choices, right? Like, if wisdom is that tree of life in the present, what kind of fruit does it actually produce in our lives? Yeah, that's a good question. What fruit are we seeing, and what can we do, like today, to make sure that we're, you know, cultivating that wisdom? Yeah, and actually experiencing those blessings, right? It's not just about knowing; it's about living it, exactly. So it's not enough to just, you know, have the knowledge. Yeah, we've got to see how that wisdom is actually playing out. Yeah, those fruits might look different for everyone. Hey, that makes sense for some people.

Maybe it's being more patient, okay, more understanding in their relationships with others. It might be the courage to do the right thing. Yeah, even when it's hard. Yeah, or maybe it's like a new appreciation for nature.

Oh, I like that. Yeah seeing the beauty and complexity Yeah, like we're all planting these different wisdom seeds, right and they grow into these unique fruits exactly But they all nourish us and just like a tree needs care and attention right to really thrive Yeah, so does our pursuit of wisdom. It's not a one-and-done thing.

No, it's a lifelong journey We're always learning growing Changing exactly adapting and the more we grow in wisdom Yeah The more rooted we become in that asher a that blessedness exactly the more we understand God and align our lives with his truth The more we experience Peace purpose joy it all flows from that wisdom. It does. I'm really inspired by this; me too. It makes me want to get out there and start planting some wisdom seeds.

Well, there's no time like the present. That's true. Every moment is a chance to choose wisdom, to seek truth, to make decisions that lead us closer to that tree of life. This has been such a good deep dive; I feel like we've only just scratched the surface of this whole Wisdom is a tree of life idea, right? There's so much more to explore, and it's definitely given me a lot to think about. It's a concept we can keep coming back to, yeah, throughout our lives, always finding new meaning and new ways to apply it, exactly. I love that Well to everyone listening keep seeking that wisdom It's a journey worth taking it is and who knows you might just find some delicious fruit along the way Absolutely until next time keep diving deep