

First Baptist Church Smiths Falls

May 27, 2018

Scripture: Proverbs 3:13-20 New International Version (NIV)
13 Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, 14 for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. 15 She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. 16 Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honour. 17 Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace. 18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her; those who hold her fast will be blessed. 19 By wisdom the Lord laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; 20 by his knowledge the watery depths were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew.

Congregational Prayer: "Our Father"

Our Father, Which Art In Heaven, Hallowed Be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom Come. Thy Will Be Done, On Earth As It Is In Heaven. Give Us This Day, Our Daily Bread, And Forgive Us Our Trespases, As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us. And Lead Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From Evil. For Thine Is The Kingdom, The Power And The Glory. Forever And Ever. Amen

Message: "The 3:16 Trail: Wisdom of God"

Introduction:

- The 3:16 Trail through the Bible is often full of stories, as God regularly uses the narrative to help us to understand the world in which He wants us to live, move, and have our being.

Today, as we stop at Proverbs 3:16 we come upon a portion of scripture that is bipolar – that is it contains, very clearly, two options, as does God's Holy Word. Today, let's put the Book

of Proverbs into the form of a story, therefore, going in two differing directions. Let me tell you about two sisters. They are fictitious sisters, but they are throughout the Book of Proverbs, as they are seen throughout the Bible and, I believe, they are also seen throughout our lives.

Part 1: The story of two sisters:

- One day two beautiful twin sisters were born. Full of God's hope, full of God's promise, full of the potential of being in God's world, the two sisters came to life with the same hopes, dreams, and wonderment that you and I and all of us possess.
- The first sister, Dara, came into this world full of uncertainties and yet with a drive to understand and to grow in this world. Her twin, Polly, came into this world with a heart full of fun, enjoyment, and excessive glee. And while they were sisters, it became clear that each had her own path to walk, each had a separate trail on which to meander in life.
- These two differing trails became evident early in their lives.

Dara wanted to explore the world to understand how she fit.

Polly wanted to explore the world to see what she could get out of it. Dara went into reading and studying and at times even obsessing about who she was in this world and how she could be, while Polly wanted to live as much of life as she possibly could, rarely thinking of others, but trying to pull as much merriment out of every little thing that she could.

- Their parents told them all about God, about the love of Jesus Christ, who died to save them, who died to pay for their sins, and who wanted them to walk the path of life to Him, and Dara took note of all that was said. Dara did an awful lot a wrestling in her soul about God, while Polly heard all that “God-stuff,” but politely decided that it was all just part of a bigger story, the story of which there were other possible stories, and yet what was the good of taking much account of anything right now when there was so much to get from life
- While in High School, Dara had some significant health

problems. She felt frustrated, slowed down, and became angry at God. Where was the God of creation if she was going from hospital visit to hospital visit? How could there be a God of the Universe if there are questions that God did not seem to be able to answer, like the reason for her sickness?

- One evening Dara came upon her mother and father earnestly lifting her up in prayer before God. Their words were easy, as if they’re talking to their friend, and they passionately laid out a plea for Dara’s health, and for Dara to resign her heart to Jesus Christ. That prayer changed Dara’s life in more ways than one. Shortly after she heard this prayer from her parents, Dara prayed to have Jesus come into her heart and the take over as her Lord and Saviour. And then the hospital visits came to an end, and Dara’s health returned.
- It was during the same time that Polly took the other path. She found some people at the High School that were into “experimenting,” and she quickly went from trying out new

things with her life and her body to leading others when it came to using substances and sexuality. Polly found out that if she talked to the boys in a certain way she felt a sense of power, and when she used her body in a certain way she suddenly felt that she could get anything she wanted. She learned from some of her girlfriends what she saw in the movies and television and in some of the songs that she liked: that with the right words given in the right way she can control the people around her. Polly liked that power.

- As time went by, one of two sisters became successful and powerful. Polly was the one who went on to make the money, got the degrees in University, and the jobs to go with them. Polly was the one who found a terrific man, but he ended up being one of many that she would date and dump or marry and divorce. Polly travelled the world, was occasionally highlighted in different business magazines, and was in various newspapers around the world. People recognized her wherever

she went. And Polly kept up a good show of her life. But Polly was never happy. Contentment eluded Polly. And over time the money and the substances and the superficial relationships wore her down significantly. One day, Polly decided that she was going to go to Church again. She still was not prepared to do all that “God-stuff,” but she felt that if she supported the Church, gave her money, and helped out at a few different church-type functions, she would be able to say that she did that “Church” thing. Polly still felt that no one cared about all that “God-stuff,” and no one at Church ever asked if she was even interested in God, let alone willing to serve Him. In fact, when people started talking about Jesus as a Saviour and about having God in your life in a personal relationship, Polly and her Church friends knew how to change the subject or change the situation so that the pesky believers were out of the way. And while Polly felt that she had checked off another significant box in her life (the church-box), she still felt that

something was still missing.

- Dara's life was much different. She had a life of education and marriage and children and teaching Sunday School. She often struggled to get into her bed night after night, folding her hands in prayer and working to keep her mind on the joy of talking to God before she fell asleep. There were diapers to be changed in the middle the night, job opportunities to be fulfilled during the day, and she worked hard to be a good wife and mother. Hours in Dara's life were spent on being the household taxi driver, and a meal provider, and few people would have offered to come to write a book about her life.
- But Dara had something going for her that allowed her to come to the end of each day with the joy and contentment that was deep and true. She had made a commitment to walk with the Lord Jesus Christ every day of her life, and further to that, every moment. And so, while life was difficult, it was always rewarding. Dara knew a contentment that came from her

walking close to the God of the Universe. Dara's family did not have a lot of extra, but Dara always felt as if she had riches and honour. Dara always felt that she had more than enough, and was so blessed whenever she could help others. And whatever Dara did at home, at work, at Church, or in the community was highly regarded. To others around Dara, she became as a tree of life. She brought happiness and peace to those around her, even in their pain. And when Dara spoke, some people chose to ignore her, but those who listened to her heard the sweet sound of blessing and richness.

- One day, both Dara and Polly came to the final number of their length of days. Time and their bodies had finally had enough, and the great recall of The Maker began. Polly's lifetime adventures had not prepared her for this last step. Polly's life had always revolved around her finding a way for her to get out of trouble on her own and to rely on manipulating others around her. So when it came to her standing before the God of

the Universe, all Polly saw was darkness.

- For Dara her last breath was part of the journey that she had been walking throughout her life as a believer in Jesus Christ. The trail of her life that began with her accepting the Lord as her personal Saviour led directly to her standing before her Lord and her Saviour on the beautiful day of her death. The voice that she knew in her many conversations, her many prayers, as she had rested with her Lord and Saviour, called her to be home for eternity.

Part 2: Dara and Polly

- So, that's my story of Dara and Polly. I really thought that it would be an easy story to write, until I recognized that there are so many people like Polly that are out there that are hurting and lost that I have met in my life. Tears formed easily.
- I'm so grateful that my story is more of Dara's. You might be wondering about the name Dara – I found that Dara is a Hebrew word for “wisdom.” And the name Polly just rhymed

with the word folly, a word that is often in the Book of Proverbs for those who walk away from God, choosing the path of death.

- As you can see in our 3:16 verse from today, there is goodness and joy and peace and longevity promised to those that are close to God. For those that choose not to, the folly of those that choose not to walk with God, leads them into deeper and deeper struggles, and ultimately eternal separation from God.
- I'm so glad that my story is not that of folly. I'm so glad that someone came along and introduced me to Jesus Christ early in my life. I'm so grateful for godly parents that directed me to Christ. I'm so glad for teachers who made it clear that there was Christ or nothing. I'm so glad for pastors who preached sermon after sermon at my old thick head who directed me to the love of Christ, and have kept me on the pathway to life. I'm so grateful for Christians along the road who have been guideposts to direct my steps. And I must say, with great

confidence, that when I come to the end of my days here on earth, maybe in this next second, or in many more decades, that what will happen next is a story of Dara – of the sweet reunion with my Lord and my Saviour, the lover of my soul.

Conclusion:

- Please know this: as you sit here today you are either a Dara - walking with the wisdom of God, or you are a Polly, and living in folly. The Lord says that there is no middle ground. The Bible says that our God is waiting for you to say yes, and step into new life. The trail of wisdom is open to you. The pathway to life is before you today. It's time to take a walk to the Saviour.