

## ***GOD'S WISDOM FOR LIFE, PART 4: "THE BENEFITS OF WISDOM"***

### **Proverbs 2:1-22**

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#### **Personal Introduction**

Hi everyone. If you don't know me, I'm Jeff - one of the pastors at HMCC of Jakarta. And it's my privilege to be preaching the Word of God for us today.

#### **Sermon Series Introduction**

Today, we'll be continuing our sermon series called "God's Wisdom for Life" - where we're going through the book of Proverbs together.

We'll be continuing with part 4, titled "The Benefits of Wisdom."

Before we begin, let me pray for us.

#### **Sermon Introduction**

What's the one advice that you've received - that's been so valuable & beneficial for you - that you still remember it even today? (It could be from one of your parents, or a friend, or a mentor)

Maybe after the service, you can share with each other over lunch/dinner. Let me share mine...

For me, it was advice from my dad. When I was about 6 years old, he set me aside and told me, "Jeff, you're the oldest child. And as the oldest sibling, you're to live your life as a role model for your younger siblings. What you do will set an example for your younger brother and sister."

But ironically... he told me this after I had just hit my brother on the face - not with my hand, but with a battery (not a AA battery but one of those bigger, rectangular batteries), and it caused him to bleed on top of his eye. That was a scary moment. As a kid, I honestly thought that I'd killed my brother. And I felt really guilty.

But instead of just punishing me, that's when my dad took me aside and gave me that advice - "Jeff, you're the oldest sibling... you're not supposed to hurt your younger brother, you're supposed to take care of him and be like a role model for him." And that hit me deep (because I still remember that now even after almost 30 years).

And his advice has been so *beneficial* for me even till today, and it's helped me relate with others with love & care (not with anger). So I'm thankful for my dad - and I'm glad I held on to his words & treasured it instead of just throwing it away...

Perhaps your dad (or maybe someone else important to you) has also given you advice that's been very beneficial for you, that you've treasured it and still remember it to this day.

And in our passage today, we'll see something similar: we'll see King Solomon - as a father - giving advice to his son. And he lovingly pleads with his son to seek God's wisdom, and more importantly... to treasure God's words & commandments (to not just throw it away).

And we'll see that if his son does that, then he'll experience many benefits that come from knowing God...

## **Scripture Introduction**

So if you have your Bibles with you, please turn to Proverbs 2:1-22...

We'll get a glimpse of the many benefits that come from knowing God and His wisdom. So please follow along, as I read Proverbs 2:1-22 for us...

## **Scripture Reading**

Proverbs 2:1-22 (ESV)

- <sup>1</sup> My son, if you receive my words  
and treasure up my commandments with you,
- <sup>2</sup> making your ear attentive to wisdom  
and inclining your heart to understanding;
- <sup>3</sup> yes, if you call out for insight  
and raise your voice for understanding,
- <sup>4</sup> if you seek it like silver  
and search for it as for hidden treasures,
- <sup>5</sup> then you will understand the fear of the Lord  
and find the knowledge of God.
  
- <sup>6</sup> For the Lord gives wisdom;  
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
- <sup>7</sup> he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;  
he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,
- <sup>8</sup> guarding the paths of justice  
and watching over the way of his saints.
  
- <sup>9</sup> Then you will understand righteousness and justice  
and equity, every good path;
- <sup>10</sup> for wisdom will come into your heart,  
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;

<sup>11</sup> discretion will watch over you,  
understanding will guard you,  
<sup>12</sup> delivering you from the way of evil,  
from men of perverted speech,  
<sup>13</sup> who forsake the paths of uprightness  
to walk in the ways of darkness,  
<sup>14</sup> who rejoice in doing evil  
and delight in the perverseness of evil,  
<sup>15</sup> men whose paths are crooked,  
and who are devious in their ways.

<sup>16</sup> So you will be delivered from the forbidden woman,  
from the adulteress with her smooth words,  
<sup>17</sup> who forsakes the companion of her youth  
and forgets the covenant of her God;  
<sup>18</sup> for her house sinks down to death,  
and her paths to the departed;  
<sup>19</sup> none who go to her come back,  
nor do they regain the paths of life.

<sup>20</sup> So you will walk in the way of the good  
and keep to the paths of the righteous.  
<sup>21</sup> For the upright will inhabit the land,  
and those with integrity will remain in it,  
<sup>22</sup> but the wicked will be cut off from the land,  
and the treacherous will be rooted out of it.

This is God's Word.

## **The One Thing**

***God gives His wisdom to those who seek Him & treasure His commandments.***

## **Overview**

The benefits of receiving God's wisdom: We'll receive...

- I. Knowledge of God (vv. 1-6)
- II. Protection from evil (vv. 7-19)
- III. Promise of inheritance (vv. 20-22)

And I think we all can agree, those are 3 awesome benefits!

## **I. Knowledge of God (vv. 1-6)**

Let's start by looking at verses 1-5 - And to make it simpler for us, let's first take a look at only verse 1 & verse 5. Because if we take a look at only those verses, then we can see a brief summary of the advice that Solomon is giving to his son here...

It's an "If... Then..." statement.

He's basically saying: My son, IF you receive my words & treasure up my commandments (which are really based on God's words & commandments), THEN you will understand the fear of the Lord & find the knowledge of God.

So there's an important cause and effect that we see here:

- IF his son does these specific things, THEN what'll happen is that he'll be able to experience these specific benefits.
- IF his son receives & treasures God's commandments, THEN where these commandments will lead him to... is to the knowledge of God... So son, if you treasure God's commandments, then you will know God!
  - You will know who God truly is, and what He's truly like! You will know His character! You will know His greatness and you'll know His great works...

And not only that - verse 5 - but you'll also understand the fear of the Lord.

- You will understand the reasoning or motivation behind why we should fear the Lord
- So not merely knowing what "the fear of the Lord" is - not merely knowing that to fear the Lord is to respect and honor the Lord.
- But you will understand the fear the Lord:
  - Understand why it's appropriate to fear our mighty Lord
  - Understand what it looks like to fear the Lord
  - Understand where the fear of the Lord will lead you to
  - Understand the consequences of not fearing the Lord

If you seek God & treasure His commandments, then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and you will know God...

<pause>

Brothers and sisters, let's take this in for a second... What a privilege it is that through His words and His commandments, that we may know the God of the universe.

Imagine how awesome it would be to get a chance to get to know your favorite celebrity (think of that person for a second - maybe it's Taylor Swift or Ryan Reynolds or someone else).

- And not just knowing about them; knowing facts about them, but really getting to know them (who they are at their core); to spend time together with them and get to know why they do what they do, their deepest desires, their motivations, their likes and dislikes...
- And imagine that you two become good friends.
  - And now, not only do you truly know them, but they also know you. They call you by your name. How much would you treasure that relationship?
  - How much would you value that knowledge of your new friend?

How much more valuable, then, would it be to know the God of the universe - the one who not only created everyone you know and gave them their talents, but also created you and who knows you.

And not only that, but this God desires for you to know Him...

**Proverbs 2:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup>For the Lord gives wisdom;  
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;

Friends, this verse is a game changer - Because what this verse is saying is that God is not hiding His wisdom from you; He's ready to give His wisdom to you. And He's not trying to keep His identity a secret. He desires to be known by you. And for you to know Him more and more...

And here we see that it's from God's own mouth (from His own words) comes knowledge and understanding - So this means that we may come to know who He is from His own words!

- The Bible that we have today is the written word of God from the very mouth of God.
- And it's as good as His spoken Word.

This is the primary way that He's revealed Himself to us. So let's keep that in mind as we're reading the Bible...

So with that in mind... allow me to rephrase some of the words in verses 1-5 - Let's re-read verses 1-5. But imagine now, that this is God speaking directly to you...

- "[My child], if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out [to me] for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will [find me & you will know me]."

Our God invites us to know Him (for some of us, it's to know Him for the first time. For some of us, to know Him more and more), and He even tells us what to do in order to know Him.

<pause>

Look at verse 4 - What we need to do is to treasure His commandments, and to actively seek to understand Him (which we see here will require some work!). We're to search for it as if we're searching for hidden treasures.

When we think of movies of people trying to find hidden treasure (like Indiana Jones or Tomb Raider - you see that they're doing it with eagerness and enthusiasm because they know that there's a great reward that's awaiting them. And it takes a lot of time and work (you have to be diligent, consistent, and patient for years and years). But they keep doing it because they really value that treasure, and they know that in the end... it's gonna be worth it; it's gonna be worth all of their hard work and sacrifice!

And it's similar in terms of how we're to treasure God's commandments and how we're to treasure knowing God.

J. I. Packer, the author of the book "Knowing God," has this to say:

"What makes life worthwhile is having a big enough objective, something which catches our imagination and lays hold of our allegiance, and this the Christian has in a way that no other person has. For what higher, more exalted, and more compelling goal can there be than to know God?"

Friends, do you treasure knowing God above all? Is that why you're here in this church service today? Did you come with an anticipation to know God more deeply? Or are you here knowing that it's something good to do but find the thought of God boring?

Because our tendency is not to passionately seek after God's wisdom, and to treasure our knowledge of God.

- Our tendency is to live our lives as if God doesn't exist; focusing our lives on ourselves or on other things instead.
- Even for Christians, we often forget about God.
  - Maybe even when we study the Bible, we can sometimes forget that it's all about God! And it's not about us!

<pause>

Let me suggest something that can help us to treasure God's commandment. Let me suggest that when we read God's words and His commandments, that we take some time to dig deeper and to search for the hidden treasures that can be found within it.

For example, when we read the commandment "You shall not steal." We can read that commandment and even memorize it and come to the conclusion, "Don't do that! Don't steal!" That's simply what it means, and then that's it.

- It's more like a fact. Or a rule we're to follow.

But don't stop there... let's take time to dig deeper and search for that hidden treasure... "What does this commandment reveal about God?"

- We can ask questions like, "What is the purpose of that commandment? Why was it given? What do I understand about God from this? What does He value? What is He like? What is His character? Who would give such a commandment?"
  - Keep searching for that hidden treasure...

- And then we'd find that the God who'd give such a commandment values righteousness, and justice; honesty and integrity, and is concerned (and cares) about others.
  - That's why He doesn't want us to steal.
- And it not only reveals what He values but that He Himself is holy, righteous, and perfectly loving. That's His character. That's who He is.
- And His people are also to be holy - and that's why we shouldn't steal.

You see how that can completely change how we view that one commandment, "you shall not steal." Maybe it used to be just a mere fact or command, but now that commandment is a treasure... It reveals to us something wonderful about God...

And so we get to learn more and more about our God by diving deeper into His Word each day. And we can keep exploring all of Scripture - imagine the hidden treasures that are ready to be found in his other words and commandments.

Look at verse 3 - As we do that, we can call out and raise our voice to God in prayer. We can pray, "God, please help me to understand you more, I want to know you..."

Let's do that as we study the Bible together; that as we go into the Bible Study, we're prayerful & our heart posture and mindset is, "I want to know God more..." (and He's ready to give us that knowledge of Himself).

So the first benefit of treasuring God's commandments & receiving His wisdom: it's that we may know God. Second, we also receive...

## **II. Protection from evil (vv. 7-19)**

### **Proverbs 2:7-8 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup>he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;  
 he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,  
<sup>8</sup>guarding the paths of justice  
 and watching over the way of his saints.

So what we'll also learn about God the more we spend time with Him is that God is for us.

- He is our shield - guarding us & watching over His people.
- That's the kind of God He is.

Again, let's just take that in for a second: the sovereign, all-mighty God is for us. And He watches over His people...

But how will He guard and watch over His people?

- The answer to this question is connected to our knowledge of God...

**Proverbs 2:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup>Then you will understand righteousness and justice  
and equity, every good path;

Verse 9 is a continuation from the “If... Then...” statement that we saw earlier.

So if we put it all together, Solomon is basically saying: “My son... IF you treasure God’s commandments and you seek Him as for hidden treasure, THEN God will reveal Himself and you’ll know God. And IF you truly know God, THEN you’ll also understand righteousness and justice and equity, and every good path.”

Why? Because God is righteousness, God is justice; He is goodness. And if you truly know Him, and His ways, then you will understand the good path - because then you’ll understand how you’re to live your life in accordance with His Word; in accordance with His good commandments and God’s good character.

In other words, you’ll be able to discern (or rightly determine) what’s good and what’s evil because you’ll know God’s voice. You’ll know that whatever it is that’s in accordance with His voice, His character, and His commandments... is going to be good. And you’ll know that what’s not in accordance with His voice, His character, and His commandments... is not going to be good, it’s evil.

So this is one of the ways that God will be protecting and guarding you - it’s through the wisdom that He gives to His people. That’s why verse 11 says that “discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you.”

Because by knowing Him, and knowing His voice; By listening to Him and obeying Him, then we can remain in the path of the good, and away from the path of evil.

<pause>

**Proverbs 2:9 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup>for wisdom will come into your heart,  
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul

God’s wisdom (that you’ve received from Him) will not only come into your mind (helping you to judge what’s good and evil), but it’ll come into your heart; into your soul (into the deepest parts of your very being!). You will become wise in character. And God’s wisdom will be pleasant (will be pleasing) for you - because you’ll see that it’s good for you, and so you become motivated (from the inside out) to live godly lives.

It’s like after I realized my dad wants what’s good for me, then I’m motivated to continue to obey him and follow his advice. And it’s the same with our Heavenly Father, we can trust that He has our good in mind and is protecting us.

<pause>

Because here's the thing, there's a reason why God's people are in need of His protection. There's a reason why we need to be able to know His voice and be able to discern what's right and wrong.

Because in this life, we're gonna be under attack.

- Satan is actively working against us, trying to lead us away from God; away from the path of the good, and trying to deceive us to go toward the path of the evil.

Look at verses 12-19 - why it can be difficult for us to hear God's voice at times (and to obey Him) is because there's gonna be other voices trying to tempt us:

- We see 2 other voices highlighted here:
  - The perverse speech of evil men & the smooth or seductive words of immoral women.

Both of these voices are ungodly.

- Look at verses 12-15 - One voice is going to be perverse or twisted. And it will try to persuade you to walk along the wrong path (Leading you to live your lives in such a way that dishonors God & displeases Him). It'll get you to walk in the way of darkness & for you to rejoice in doing evil. Rejoice in doing evil - so if you listen to this other voice it would get you to be rejoicing as you're disobeying God. You will feel happy, as you're walking along this path, going further away from God.
- Look at verses 16-19 - If that's not enough, another voice is going to be smooth and seductive, and will try to persuade you to forget the covenant that you have with God - just as they've forgotten theirs with God. And this path leads to spiritual death, it'll lead you farther and farther away from God (but it will deceive you into thinking that this is the way of pleasure & satisfaction).

The scary thing is that some of us may already be enticed to go down this path, and we don't even realize it. Actually, even in the past week, we probably heard these two other voices in our minds, tempting us to sin against God.

But maybe we didn't catch it because the voices may not sound obviously evil at all.

Brothers and sisters, the enemy is deceitful. The voice of evil is not always going to sound harsh and loud and easy for us to notice. It's going to sound smooth, very easy for our ears to listen to.

Satan is deceitful. He's going to use words that's going to go down real easy. Basically, words that you want to hear. Like:

- "Just do what makes you feel happy! Do what makes you feel good!"
- "Always follow your heart! Because the only one who knows what's best for you is yourself! Just do you!"

The enemy will push you away from God and toward self-reliance or reliance on something else (anything or anyone other than God)...

Because what we probably want is probably not God's glory but our own glory - Not to treasure God, but to have our own treasures apart from God (our own money, career, success, power, influence, pleasure, and on and on).

And guess what? The path that the devil will lead you to may lead you to getting those things you desire. It's not gonna be obviously labeled "the way of evil" (there's going to be no clear disclaimer that says: "watch out! This path leads to death!") No, It's going to be labeled very nicely, something more like:

- "Self-fulfillment."
- "The pursuit of happiness."
- "Enjoying life."
- Or something else that's going to sound good, but will get you to forget about God (and away from the path of godliness).

<pause>

How can we listen to God's voice amidst all this other noise?

It's by knowing His voice and following His voice.

This reminds me of the first time I came to HMCC, and I asked one of the pastors, "How do I hear God's voice?" I'm not sure he actually knew what I meant. Because... literally, I thought I was supposed to hear God's voice audibly (like I'm going to somehow hear somebody's voice). Because people sometimes say, "God spoke to me" (So I literally thought people could hear Him).

The answer I received was not what I expected, I was expecting clear step-by-step instructions, but he said, "the more time you spend in God's Word, the more you'll know that it's Him speaking." I wasn't completely sure what he meant (I probably should've asked follow-up questions, but I was still new and shy). But I just kept doing what he wisely suggested. I kept reading God's Word and commandments, trying to familiarize myself with His voice.

And I realized that as I'm reading the Bible, that's as good as God speaking to me. As I remember His Word (perhaps specific verses that come to my mind), that's Him speaking to me... By the grace of God, that brother was right - "the more time you spend in God's Word, the more you'll know that it's Him speaking."

It's like spending more and more time with a family member or a friend. After so much time together, you know what their voice sounds like - how they speak, the words they usually use, the way they think and what's in their hearts and how they communicate to you...

So that if someone hacks their WhatsApp and sends you a message pretending to be them, you're probably thinking, "wait a second... this doesn't sound like Jeff" ("Why is he messaging me in Bahasa asking for money?"). And you're not going to fall for it.

Of course, this can only happen if you've spent enough time with that other person and know them well enough. Just like if you've spent enough time with God and know His voice.

So it's the same if you hear a voice that says something like "you shall steal" or maybe it'll sound nicer "you shall do whatever it takes to make yourself happy. Maybe it's not stealing if it's for a good cause." Maybe it'll sound smoother, so it's easier to swallow. But basically, that's when you're to think, "wait a second... this doesn't sound like God..."

And you'll be able to tell what's right and wrong depending on if it's in accordance with His Word or not. Because God does not contradict Himself.

And so you'll be protected from the path of evil, and guided towards the good path...

That's the second benefit that comes from treasuring God's commandments and knowing Him: discernment & protection from evil.

### **III. Promise of Inheritance (vv. 20-22)**

#### **Proverbs 2:20-22 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> So you will walk in the way of the good  
and keep to the paths of the righteous.

<sup>21</sup> For the upright will inhabit the land,  
and those with integrity will remain in it,

<sup>22</sup> but the wicked will be cut off from the land,  
and the treacherous will be rooted out of it.

Ok, let's summarize Solomon's train of thought so far... He's basically saying, "My son, IF you seek God, THEN you'll know God. IF you know God, THEN you'll know how to live godly lives and you'll desire to live godly lives (it'll be pleasing to you)... And now, for those who live in godliness, then they'll inherit this promised land & will remain in it."

So the final benefit that we'll take a look at today has to do with this land that God has prepared for the righteous.

These verses should sound very familiar to Solomon's son...

Because in the Old Testament - God covenanted with His people (the Israelites). God told them that IF they're to follow and obey His commandments, THEN they'll be able to remain in the promised land that's been prepared for them. But IF they do not, THEN they won't live there for very long, and they'll be taken out of it (which would eventually happen when they're exiled by the Babylonians).

For us today, this “land” (mentioned in verse 22) points us to another promised land that’s still to come in our future... Heaven - the eternal place that God has prepared for the righteous. But... this also points us to how those who are wicked will be cut off from Heaven and cast into Hell.

<pause>

So here’s the thing... The more we dive into God’s commandments... the more we’ll learn that as much as the commandments reveal to us something about God’s character, it also reveals to us something about our own character...

God’s commandments point us to our sinfulness - to how far away we actually are from perfectly obeying God’s commands. Because many times we’ve loved & idolized something else other than God (worshiping our reputation, our career, or our glory above God). And many times, we’ve coveted what others have (Not content with what God has given to us). And many times, we’re not able to listen to His voice and succumb to temptation.

So then based on these verses, we’d actually be much closer to the wicked than to the righteous; much closer to Hell than Heaven. Because none of us have treasured His commandments perfectly; none of us have perfectly treasured God above all else.

So because of our sins, what we deserve is to be cut off from Heaven; to be rooted out of it, and to be cast into Hell. That’s what we deserve.

- Even if we’re to somehow live perfectly starting now, always making the right decisions (always listening to God), then we still would not be able to cover the debt for our past sins... None of us are perfectly righteous like God.
- So this is not good for us...

But thankfully, that’s not the end of the story for us because there’s still Good News; there’s still Jesus.

Just as God first revealed Himself to the world through His Word - He ultimately revealed Himself to us through Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh; God’s wisdom personified...

And so God came into the world that He created...

When Jesus lived on Earth, he obeyed the commandments perfectly - he lived the perfect, sinless life that we could not. Jesus died as our substitute on the cross - he didn’t die for his sins - for he had none, but he died for our sins..

And now, those of us who believe in him and put our faith in him as our Lord and Savior, we will not be cut off from the land. Our sins are forgiven, and Jesus’ righteousness is counted as our own.

- So then now... even though we’ve sinned, and we’ve oftentimes ignored His voice and fallen into temptation - listening to the devil’s perverse & seductive voices - even then... because of Jesus... we’re not labeled as “wicked” but as “righteous.”

And because our God loves us, and desires to be known and to be in relationship with us, our relationship with God may be restored through Jesus (God made the path for us), and we're now given a promise of inheritance - where one day, we'll be with God in Heaven forever.

So one great benefit of knowing God and putting our faith in Him is that we can breathe a huge sigh of relief - because the God who is for us... is not only for us during our lives now on Earth, but here's for us yesterday, today, and forever...

He's not only watching over our path now, but he's also secured our path towards eternal life in Heaven.

- And He's protecting our path so that He may give us Himself and give us a relationship with Him.
- Isn't that amazing? It's hard for our minds to really comprehend the magnitude of that...

## **Conclusion**

As we conclude, I just want us to think of where we are in our walk with Christ...

For those who have not yet started that walk with Jesus, and are still exploring or searching more about Christianity, just want to encourage you to keep it up! Keep seeking & searching for Him as for hidden treasure! Keep looking with excitement and anticipation! Keep going to God's Word, keep praying for Him to reveal Himself to you and to provide you with understanding.

And if you have questions, please reach out to me or any one of our members. We'd love to talk to you more about Jesus. And hope that you may also come to know him - because to know Jesus... is to know God...

<pause>

Now, for those of us who have followed Christ for some time now... let's reflect on our personal relationship with God: This past week, have we been treasuring God? If someone were to observe your life this past week, would they say that it's obvious that what you've been treasuring the most is your relationship with Jesus?

If not... If some of us feel like we're losing our fire for him... well, if that's you, and you feel like your relationship with God needs to be rekindled... let's remember how you first came to know him in the first place...

Perhaps - like me - you first came to church not with the sole focus on wanting to know God more, but you just wanted to learn how to figure out your life... or maybe you thought it's just something you have to do as part of your weekly checklist so that others can think of you as a "good" person.

- But then the more time you spent in God's Word, the more you realized that there's something more here...
- You're trying to find ways to fix your issues and struggles, but instead you found a God who loves you despite all your issues.
- You found a God who loves you so much that He sent His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to die for you so that you may live.

- And instead of finding out knowledge on how you can fix your life, you found out that your life is already made whole because of the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- And it led you to wanting to learn more about this God - who is this God... who came after you when you were lost? And who continues to come after you again and again?

I encourage you to remember that spark, and pray that God may rekindle that fire in your heart to continue searching for Him, and to know Him more and more...

<pause>

Now how about us as a church? If a visitor were to observe our church (not only our Sunday service, but how we live together as a church Monday-Sunday), would it be obvious to them that what's important for our church is knowing God? Would they observe members who are on fire for God, discipling one another to know God deeper and praying together and having a rich relationship with Jesus, and evangelizing so that others may know God?

I hope that as a church, we can be a church that's on fire for God - that we desire to know Him more and more; that we're still trying to uncover more depth in our relationship with Him; studying His Word with passion, and praying and calling out to Him as His people, and helping others to know Him more. And that it's His words and His voice that we really treasure in our lives.

## **The One Thing**

***God gives His wisdom to those who seek Him & treasure His commandments.***

Let's pray.