Sermon title: Wisdom from small creatures – 1
Sermon text: Prov 30:24 – 28

Introduction

1. We are conditioned to think "I wished I had more strength, more influence, more resources, more opportunities, then I could be successful."

2. These Proverbs indicate that decisive factor in life is often not the absence of limitations but the presence of wisdom.

3. These verses reflect one single idea/strategy in four separate applications. The applications appear routine and mundane but the effect is cumulative.

4. These verses can be applied on an individual, group & national level.

30.24 “Four things on earth are small, yet they are extremely wise:
Therefore, the only idea connecting all 4 animals is this –
a. they are small – i.e. with natural disadvantages
b. they use wisdom to adapt and thrive despite their natural disadvantages

Therefore, Christians can learn to use wisdom to compensate for our natural disadvantages.

30.25 - Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer;

Observation

1. Ants have a natural disadvantage – they are small.
Yet, ants survive because they prepare for the future (seasons change and opportunities disappear).

2. Ants plan for the future because there is only a narrow window of opportunity called “summer”. Once “summer” is over, the window of opportunity also closes.

3. “Summer” – Summer is the season of opportunity before need arrives.

Wisdom: The wise prepare and plan before a crisis appears.

This proverb rewards small doses of consistency and has a cumulative effect.

Application

1a. Students – there is only a “summer” in which you can study – don’t waste this “summer”.

b. After a window of opportunity “summer”, you have lost the opportunity to study.

2a. Working adults – plan for retirement now, don’t fritter your money now on things that are short-term – don’t wait until you’re 55 to start.

b. Pirates’ problem was he depended on inheritance for security and didn’t plan for his retirement. His one mistake – he should have started planning (by saving) for retirement at 35 instead of 55.

3a. Seniors – as we age, we lose muscle strength, our blood pressure and cholesterol levels are high. The muscle loss starts around 40+ years.

b. Just as physical strength must be built before old age, spiritual strength must be cultivated before adversity arrives.

4. Christians – focus on building up your spiritual character now while it is still “summer”. If there is prolonged neglect in your spiritual life, eventually spiritual decay sets in and it’s very difficult to reverse the spiritual decline.

The ant teaches us how to prepare before crisis comes. But not every crisis can be prevented. The rock badger teaches us what to do when crisis finally arrives.

30.26 Hyraxes (rock badgers) are creatures of little power, yet they make their home in the crags.

1. Rock badgers have a natural disadvantage. They are small and predators attack and feed on them.

2. Yet, rock badgers survive because they know where to hide when there is crisis/danger.

3. “make their home” – they permanently live near their refuge.

Wisdom: The wise cultivate their refuge before the crisis arrives.

Students

1a. Students may face academic failure, peer pressure, intellectual doubts, mental breakdown, or loneliness.

b. During normal times, the wise student develops spiritual habits. Regular Bible reading, prayer, service in ministry, seeking godly Christians for counsel/advice/friendship.

c. Crisis – **WHEN** (not if) exams go badly, friendships break down, or faith is challenged, the student already knows he can seek refuge in God, in godly church leaders, in godly church friends.

Working Employees

2a. In Singapore, careers often seem secure until suddenly they are not. A corporate restructuring, retrenchments in an economic downturn, an unreasonable boss, being bypassed for promotion, a company/department closure or factory re-location.

2b. During normal times, he cultivates friendships within the church, maintains spiritual disciplines, and remembers that his ultimate security rests with God.

2c. Then when job crisis/adversity arrives, he takes refuge in God and also seeks help/encouragement from church leaders & members.

Seniors

3a. Over time, loved ones and friends pass on, gradually loneliness sets in, reduced mobility and increased dependence for daily living.

3b. During normal times, the wise senior spends decades learning to trust God.
When physical strength declines, spiritual habits are already deeply rooted.
The refuge was not built yesterday. It was cultivated over a lifetime.

3c. The wise senior prepares for the trials of old age by learning to rest in God throughout the years of strength.

Summary

Ant

1. Young parents – Train your children now – while it is “summer” – while there is a “window of opportunity”. Don’t think to yourself “she is only 9, we’ve got another 10 years to go”. Once “summer” passes, that window of opportunity to train your children closes – habits set in.

2. National – we have natural limitations in water and energy supply. But we can wisely prepare to diversify our water supply and energy supply (NEWater and electricity from M’sia and LNG from regional countries).

3. Christians – build up your spiritual character now while it is still “summer”. If there is prolonged neglect in your spiritual life, eventually spiritual decay sets in.

Summary

Rock badger

1. Students facing difficulties in studies (unfamiliar subject), exam crisis.

2. Employees facing economic downturn, corporate/department closures, factory re-location.

3. Seniors facing loss of loved ones and friends and onset of loneliness

Wisdom is knowing where your refuge is before you need it. In times of crisis, we can turn to God and to godly church leaders and members.