Wisdom from Solomon’s Mine: Preaching Proverbs

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I. The Value of Preaching Proverbs
   A. Proverbs is part of God’s inspired Word!
   B. Proverbs is a great resource for practical discipleship.
   C. Proverbs provides a great opportunity to tackle tough subjects.

II. Interpretive Principles for Preaching Proverbs
   A. We must understand the characteristics of proverbs.
      “A proverb is a concise, memorable saying, usually in poetic form, expressing a generally accepted observation about life as filtered through biblical revelation. From this definition, we can observe that a proverb is characterized as being concise and memorable, simple yet profound, specific yet general, usually expressed in poetic form, and observations about life as filtered through biblical revelation” (Dr. Robert McCabe).
   B. We must handle the proverbs in light of the book’s purpose, theme and emphases.
      1. The book’s purpose is to impart and develop wisdom, 1:2-6.
      2. The book’s theme is that reverential trust is the key to a life of wisdom, 1:7.
      3. The book’s emphases are:
         a. A practical orientation, 3:4
         b. A God-centered frame of reference
            1) God’s sovereign control over all things, 16:1, 4, 9
            2) God’s wisdom as the source of the good life, cf. chap 2
c. A creation theology, 3:19-20; 8:22 ff
   1) Order and Wisdom
   2) Blessing and Judgment

C. We must set the truth of proverbs properly within the context of biblical teaching.
   1. We should recognize the difference between descriptive and prescriptive proverbs.
      a. Descriptive is life as it is, cf. 17:8; 14:20; 31:6-7
      b. Prescriptive is life as it should be
         2) Moral absolutes, cf. 11:1; 14:31
         3) Moral absolutes plus generalization, cf. 3:1-2

   2. We must remember the proverbs are set within a Mosaic covenantal context, cf. 2:20-22; 10:22.

III. Homiletical Issues in Preaching Proverbs
   A. Build your sermon around the single, central idea of the text.
   B. Structure your sermon for effective communication, not as an outline of the text.
   C. Devote extra time to contemporary life application.

IV. Practical Suggestions for Preaching Proverbs
   A. Traditional Exposition in Proverbs 1-9
   B. Thematic Exposition in Proverbs 10-31
      1. Character Studies (e.g., wise man, simple one, fool, scorners, sluggard)
      2. Virtues and Vices
      3. Wisdom for the Family
      4. Proverbs for a Productive Life