

Bethel

Prayer Meeting Addresses

Number 41 A New Year Message

Reading: Proverbs 16. 1-20

1 The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord.
2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits.
3 Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.
4 The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.
5 Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.
6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.
7 When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.
8 Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.
9 A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.
10 A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.
11 A just weight and balance are the Lord's:

all the weights of the bag are his work.
12 It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness.
13 Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right.
14 The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it.
15 In the light of the king's countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.
16 How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!
17 The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.
18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.
19 Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.
20 He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.

“He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he” (verse 20).

Address

As we come to the end of another year, we have many things in our lives that need handling wisely, and especially when we think of the unknown way,

the things that lie before us, there are many matters that need handling wisely. And the Lord says that he that handleth these matters wisely shall find good.

I trust this is a little end of the year message for us, a new year message for us. Just two or three things. First of all, the great matter of our never-dying souls and our sins and eternity. That is *the* matter, the matter above everything else that needs handling wisely. And how many thousands handle it foolishly! O may the Lord bless us with wisdom to handle this great matter wisely, make us “wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

And if He does, how will we handle this matter wisely? Well, just in two lines of one our hymns:

“Then feeling well our ruined state,
We humbly fall at Jesus’ feet.”

You cannot handle a matter more wisely than that, to fall at Jesus’ feet and through grace to look to Him alone and rely on Him alone and pray to Him alone, and commit your eternal concerns to Him alone.

“None but Jesus!
None but Jesus!
From His blood our hopes arise.”

O that is the great matter! He that handleth it wisely shall find good.

And then secondly, our troubles. They come in different ways to different people: trials, troubles, sorrows, afflictions. It needs a lot of grace to handle them wisely, but there are many warnings in the Word of God against not handling these things wisely. One wrong way is this: to seek just to bear up under these things and shrug them off and go on as if nothing is taking place. That is despising the chastening of the Lord. Another way is to faint under them, to give up. That is fainting when we are rebuked of Him. (See Hebrews 12. 5). Another way is rebellion against His will. May we be kept from it. O for grace to handle this matter wisely, in faith, in prayer, looking to the Lord for all needful strength, all needful help. “Commit thy way” – whatever it is – *thy way*. “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.” Now O for grace to handle that matter wisely and find good.

And then a third thing: matters in providence, and you all have them. You young ones have them at school, older ones at college or as you go out to work:

problems that come, difficult things, seeking to know and do God's will, things that trouble you and bewilder you and seem to stumble you; these things that come to us all, disappointments, your relationships with other people, things in your home, your family, your business, your life, your circumstances, things in the church of God. Now these matters need to be handled wisely, and sometimes it is vital that they are handled wisely, and sometimes we see what a terrible thing if we do not handle them wisely, and sometimes we come to this: this matter is so important, it *must* be handled wisely.

How can I handle it wisely if I have not any wisdom? Have you ever come there? You have come to the end of all your wisdom and yet the Lord says, "He that handleth a matter wisely." Sometimes we just have to confess we have no wisdom whatsoever and put the matter completely into the hands of the Lord and beg Him to handle it for us, to "hold the helm and guide the ship," and steer us between the rocks and the quicksands. And your matters will never be handled more wisely than when you have to "leave Him to order all your ways, and trust in Him whate'er betide." O for this grace!

"He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good." And the conclusion: "And whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he." These two halves of the verse are not contradictory or separate. We do need that faith to "trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us." I suppose as the new year comes, everyone is wishing everyone else happiness, and we do it sincerely, even to acquaintances we meet. We do wish them happiness. But I think some of you know what Toplady meant when he said, "Only to be found in Thee!"

"He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he." "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." So may the Lord give us grace to handle our matters wisely and may He give us grace to trust in Him.

"Trust Him, He will not deceive us,
Though we hardly of Him deem;
He will never, never leave us;
Nor will let us quite leave Him."

This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom, on Monday, 29th December, 2008

