



SERMON RECAP

JULY 19, 2026

The Wisdom of Humility and Purpose The Wonderful Things You Will Be

Proverbs 1:1-9 and Ecclesiastes 12:8-14

Today's Scripture passages are the opening of Proverbs and the end of Ecclesiastes. It is the bookends of these two books about Wisdom. For the last several weeks we have been talking about these two books as if they are in dialog. The Bible Project, a wonderful online resource of Bible studies and animation videos, compares Proverbs and Ecclesiastes to an exuberant new teacher and a wizened critic. Proverbs expounds on the wonder, benefits, and merits of Wisdom. Ecclesiastes explores the messiness of life.

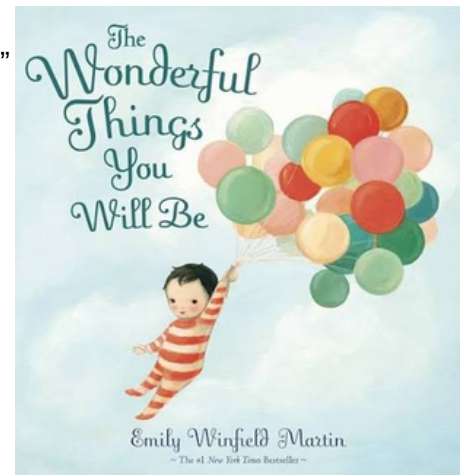
Proverbs says, "Pursue the tenets of Wisdom and you will reap the reward of a meaningful life." Ecclesiastes says, "Not so fast, my friend." Proverbs feels too simple, almost naïve. Ecclesiastes feels too cynical, calling all of life "pointless," or "meaningless." Held together, however, they paint a more beautiful picture of life's journey.

The Wonderful Things You Will Be is a lovely book written from the perspective of a parent, or wise adult, looking at a child in wonder of all that they could become. It is Ecclesiastes with a little Proverbs hope. It is Proverbs with a little Ecclesiastes experience. It reminds us that wisdom is not only about what we know—it is about who we are becoming.

Proverbs begins with a call to purpose. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge," it says, and then it invites us to choose the path of wisdom over the path of folly. Wisdom, in Proverbs, is not a mystical gift reserved for the elite. It is a learned practice, a way of life shaped by humility, curiosity, and teachability. It is the posture of a child who asks questions, who wonders, who delights in discovery. Proverbs imagines a future shaped by good choices, steady habits, and a heart tuned toward God.

Ecclesiastes, on the other hand, ends with a sober reminder: even the wisest life does not guarantee the outcomes we hope for. The Teacher has seen righteous people suffer and foolish people prosper. He has watched plans fall apart and dreams dissolve. He has learned that life is vapor—beautiful, shimmering, but impossible to hold.

What the Teacher calls "vapor" or "pointless" is the breath we exhale, it cannot be held forever. Breath is only useful if it is spent. Life is only useful if it is lived. The story is worth telling. The pages are worth filling.



Together, these two books teach us something essential about purpose and the future. Proverbs tells us that our choices matter. Ecclesiastes tells us that outcomes are not guaranteed. Proverbs encourages us to build a life of wisdom. Ecclesiastes reminds us to hold that life loosely. Proverbs says, "Grow." Ecclesiastes says, "Trust." Proverbs says, "Become." Ecclesiastes says, "Surrender." And when we hold these truths together, we discover a wisdom that is both hopeful and honest.

The Wonderful Things You Will Be reveals this truth. When we look at children, we see possibility. We see gifts waiting to unfold. We see futures not yet written. But the book gently reminds us that the "wonderful things" a child will be are not only about achievements or successes. They are about character, compassion, courage, kindness, imagination, and love. They are about becoming the kind of person who reflects God's goodness in the world.

And that is true for us as adults as well. Ecclesiastes might say that our lives are vapor, but vapor is still beautiful. We, too, have pages left to write. We, too, have wonderful things we can still become. Wisdom is not only for the young. Purpose is not only for those just starting out. The future is not only for those with decades ahead of them. Every one of us—no matter our age, our story, our regrets, or our hopes—can still grow in wisdom, still deepen our purpose, still discover new ways to live faithfully.

So today, as we close this series, we hold Proverbs and Ecclesiastes together. We honor the childlike openness that Proverbs invites. We honor the seasoned honesty that Ecclesiastes demands. And we trust that God is still shaping us, still guiding us, still calling us toward the wonderful things we will be.

NEXT WEEK:

The Wisdom of Seasons, "Snowy Day"