

May 21, 2006  
Proverbs 6:6-9; 8:22-31  
First Parish Church  
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## *Words of Wisdom*

*Note: This message was given on the Sunday of the Children's Musical, "Wise Guys," based on the book of Proverbs.*

My grandfather, Jack Begley, was only able to go to school through the eighth grade. I know some of us complain about going to school at all. But it really is a privilege to be able to go to school. My grandfather's parents came to this country on a boat from Ireland. When he had finished eighth grade, his family needed him to go to work to help support the family.

However, this didn't stop my grandfather from learning. He kept reading books for the rest of his life. I remember he particularly liked reading about history. He was also a keen observer of what was going on around him. He believed you could learn a lot just by looking and listening to what was going on around you.

Each summer, we used to spend a couple of weeks at a cottage in Friendship with my grandparents. You might easily find my grandfather sitting on the deck or out on the lawn, intently watching something at his feet.

"Grandpa, what you doin'?"  
"Watching the ants."  
"How come?"

"They are amazing creatures. They go back and forth, back and forth. They are so organized, so strong, and they work so hard."

It is this kind of wisdom that we find in the book of Proverbs. In fact, there is a passage in Proverbs 6:(6-9) that speaks directly about ants. It is a warning to us not to be lazy.

*Go to the ants, you sluggard;  
consider its ways and be wise,  
Without having any chief or officer  
They prepare their food in summer, and  
gather their sustenance in harvest.  
How long will you lie there, O sluggard?  
When will you rise from your sleep?*

In a little while we'll meet some ants and a sluggard.

Proverbs is full of advice and warnings and sayings. They are similar to sayings that we have today. For instance

if I say,	you say,
<i>Still waters</i>	<i>run deep.</i>

*A apple a day keeps the doctor away.*

*Birds of a feather flock together.*

This is the type of wisdom we find in Proverbs. Unlike many of the other writings in Hebrew Scriptures, Proverbs does not tell a story, it doesn't tell of the history of the people of Israel and of their relationship with God. Proverbs says there is wisdom to be found by

