

A reading from the Book the Sirach

Blessed the husband of a good wife,
twice-lengthened are his days;
A worthy wife brings joy to her husband,
peaceful and full is his life.
A good wife is a generous gift
bestowed upon him who fears the Lord;
Be he rich or poor, his heart is content,
and a smile is ever on his face.
A gracious wife delights her husband,
her thoughtfulness puts flesh on his bones;
A gift from the Lord is her governed speech,
and her firm virtue is of surpassing worth.
Choicest of blessings is a modest wife,
priceless her chaste soul.
A holy and decent woman adds grace upon grace;
indeed, no price is worthy of her temperate soul.
Like the sun rising in the Lord’s heavens,
the beauty of a virtuous wife is the radiance of her home.

The Word of the Lord. *R. Thanks be to God*

Commentary

The book of Sirach, is frequently referred to as “Ecclesiasticus,” or “The Book of Wisdom.” It is the wisdom writings of Ben Sira.

Like the passage from Proverbs (OT option #6), this one emphasizes the role of the wife. She can reveal God’s blessing to her husband. He can expect to live twice as long with a good wife, for she brings joy and peace to him. These were traditional blessings, and they are more important than wealth. While it is a compliment to the wife to be compared to the rising of the sun – that which gives life, hope, and promise – the passage has a noticeable tinge of inequality to it. It appears that the woman is to spend her life pleasing her husband and feeding him. At its best, it shows how people can be a blessing from God.