

Woodland Baptist Church
 Wednesday October 23, 2013
 Seeking Wisdom Together - Proverbs 1:20-33
 The Call of Wisdom; The Tragedy of Rejecting it

1) READ Proverbs 1:20-33

- a) Here we have our first personified voice of wisdom and there is no other instance of Wisdom speaking in public settings apart from the apocryphal book of Sirach.¹
- i) *Personification* - Personification is “a rhetorical figure of speech in which inanimate objects or abstractions are endowed with human qualities or are represented as possessing human form.”³ In Proverbs, wisdom is often personified as a woman.²
- b) As we examine the speech of personified wisdom, we learn that the main emphasis of the entire first chapter is the fate of those who reject wisdom.
- c) This passage has what is called a “chiasm” structure.
- A Introduction: an appeal for listeners (vv. 20–21)
 B Address to the untutored, scoffers, and fools (v. 22)
 C Declaration of disclosure (v. 23)
 D Reason for the announcement (vv. 24–25)
 E Announcement of derisive judgment (26–28)
 D' Reason for the announcement (vv. 29–30)
 C' Declaration of retribution (v. 31)
 B' Fate of the untutored and fools (v. 32)
 A' Conclusion: an appeal for a hearer (v. 33)

2) Verses 20-22 Lady Wisdom CRIES out PUBLICLY to everyone - THE FIRST CALL

- a) **20 Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice; 21 at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks: 22 “How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge? 23 If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you.**

¹ Koptak, 83

² Navigators

- b) The first image that the son receives of Wisdom is startling: a woman, raising her voice to speak in the town square! Certainly the picture sets Wisdom apart in a set of roles distinct from those expected of women at that time. Like Deborah the prophetess, she leads and challenges. [Judg. 4:4-5:31] Both elements of this picture, her voice and the public setting, are repeated 4 times.³
- i) Wisdom's speech can be separated into three sections following the use of the key word "call":
- (1) Wisdom calls aloud in the street - 20-23
 - (2) You rejected me when I called - 24-27
 - (3) Then they will call to me but I will not answer - 28-33
- c) The call to everyone - How long? Pleads and threatens judgment at the same time, just as it did for **Jeremiah** [It is this rejected prophet that who comes closest to the picture we have here of someone warning and calling for repentance in public setting - 7:1-29] - **Jeremiah 4:14** - O Jerusalem, wash your heart from evil, that you may be saved. **How long** shall your wicked thoughts lodge within you?
- i) Wisdom cries out [4 places]
- (1) Street...markets...head of noisy streets...entrance of city gates
 - (a) What is the one common trait of all these places? There are people there - people need wisdom.
 - (b) Notice the parallel of how Jesus and the Apostles did ministry in much the same way - they went into much the same atmosphere with the gospel.
 - (c) The rules of wisdom are published out in the streets, not in the schools only, or in the palaces of princes, but in the chief places of concourse, among the common people that pass and repass in the opening of the gates and in the city.⁴
 - ii) What wisdom cries out - 2 Questions: How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?

³ Ibid

⁴ Henry

- (1) Simple ones that love simplicity. Sin is simplicity, and sinners are simple ones; they do foolishly, very foolishly; and the condition of those is very bad who love simplicity, are fond of their simple notions of good and evil, their simple prejudices against the ways of God, and are in their element when they are doing a simple thing, sporting themselves in their own deceiving and flattering themselves in their wickedness.
- (2) Scorners that delight in scorning—proud people that take a pleasure in hectoring all about them, jovial people that banter all mankind, and make a jest of every thing that comes in their way. But **scoffers at religion are especially meant**, the worst of sinners, that scorn to submit to the truths and laws of Christ, and to the reproofs and admonitions of his word, and take a pride in running down every thing that is sacred and serious.
- (3) Fools that hate knowledge. None but fools hate knowledge. Those only are enemies to religion that do not understand it aright. And those are the worst of fools that hate to be instructed and reformed, and have a rooted antipathy to serious godliness.⁵

d) Wisdom's Promise

i) **If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you.**

- (1) **Hebrews 12:7-8 -7** Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? 8 If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.
- (2) Lady wisdom promises that if the simple ones, the scorners and the fools will respond to the reproofs/ discipline she gives, the spirit will be poured out on them and they will begin to understand true wisdom through the Fear of the Lord.

e) **Question** - How accessible is wisdom for those who seek it?

⁵ Henry

3) Verses 23 - The REJECTION of WISDOM - THE SECOND CALL

a) **24 Because I have called and you refused to listen, have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded, 25 because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof, 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when terror strikes you, 27 when terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you.**

- i) **Because I have called you and you refused to listen** - their ears are dull
- ii) **[Because] I have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded** - they would not reach back for help
- iii) **Because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof** - completely disregarded all God's council as unworthy to heed; "I'll continue to do it my way, no matter what you say God's Word says."

(1) I will laugh at your calamity I will mock when terror strikes you, when terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you.

- (a) This is not an expression of personal heartlessness, but of the absurdity of choosing folly, the complete vindication of wisdom, and the incontestable fitness of the disaster.⁶
- (b) Pastorally speaking, I believe that this could be the sources of many of our benevolence cases.

- iv) **Psalm 2:4** - The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. 5 He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, 6 "I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain."
- v) **Romans 1:18-23** -18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth....24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.
- vi) **Matthew 7:24-25** -24 "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

⁶ Kidner

- 4) **Verses 28 - Desperation PROVOKES a PLEA for Wisdom, but it's too late**
- a) **28 Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me. 29 Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, 30 would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, 31 therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way, and have their fill of their own devices. 32 For the simple are killed by their turning away, and the complacency of fools destroys them; 33 but whoever listens to me will dwell secure and will be at ease, without dread of disaster.**
- b) **Wisdom gives two reasons why she can no longer be found:**
- i) **She has been DETESTED - 29 Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord,**
- ii) **She has been DESPISED - 30 would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof,**
- 5) **Verses 31-33 - The Final Result of Rejecting Wisdom and hitting the storm**
- a) **31 therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way, and have their fill of their own devices. 32 For the simple are killed by their turning away, and the complacency of fools destroys them; 33 but whoever listens to me will dwell secure and will be at ease, without dread of disaster.**
- 6) **CLOSE**
- a) Perhaps the easiest and most common excuse for doing wrong and falling into trouble is ignorance, that one just did not know any better. That excuse is implicitly rejected here. Wisdom is not some hidden treasure that has to be dug from the depths of the earth (compare Job 28) or the sole possession of the lonely sage sitting atop a mountain. To the contrary, Wisdom roams the streets looking for someone to instruct. The ways of right and wrong, as presented in this word of God, are open for all to read and follow.⁷
- b) Ephesians 1:17-18 - 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

⁷ Garrett,