

Woodland Baptist Church
Wednesday January 22, 2013
Seeking Wisdom Together - Proverbs 8:1-21
Wisdoms Public Universal Call

1) Introduction

- a) This chapter is the core course in the teacher's curriculum. It weaves together a number of key themes:
- i) It features the attractiveness of wisdom by bringing to full bloom the buds of personification that sprouted in 1:20–33 and 7:4, as wisdom, in human guise, calls for attention and describes her credentials in most impressive terms;
 - ii) It fills in the details of the picture of wisdom's presence at creation sketched in 3:19–20;
 - iii) It connects wisdom with the fear of the Lord by naming wisdom as the chief God-fearer (v. 13; see 1:7);
 - iv) It links wisdom to practical deeds of righteousness and justice (v. 20; see 2:9–15);
 - v) It contrasts wisdom's positive and profitable call with the seductive beckoning of the temptress whose face has appeared on virtually every page of these speeches (2:16–19; 5:1–23; 6:23–35; 7:1–27);
 - vi) It illuminates the path of righteousness, the only viable route in life (v. 32; see 4:18–27);
 - vii) It underlines the importance of choice by showing that issues which lead to life, on the one hand, or death, on the other (vv. 35–36), call for the strongest personal response—love (vv. 17, 36), the absence of which is tantamount to hate.¹

2) READ PROVERBS 8

- a) This is wisdom's second appeal - **1:20-33 - 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 Hubbard, David (2004-07-30). The Preacher's Commentary - Volume 15: Proverbs: Proverbs (p. 99). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

i) Notice the similarities to tonight's passage

3) **Verses 1-5 - Wisdom SPEAKS to ALL mankind**

a) **Does not wisdom call? Does not understanding raise her voice? 2 On the heights beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; 3 beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud: 4 "To you, O men, I call, and my cry is to the children of man. 5 O simple ones, learn prudence; O fools, learn sense.**

i) **Wisdom and understanding [of the truth] is making a public call to everyone, there is no special class/race/sect of people - the voice is shouting out to anyone who will listen and heed the advice.**

ii) The 4 locations of the call:

(1) *the heights beside the way* - the hills on the way to the city as close as right outside the city and as far as the eye can see.

(2) *crossroads* - place where the paths meet - most likely on the outside of the city but probably visible from the city.

(3) *Beside the gates in front of the town* - these would be the primary gates to the city, the main entrance where travelers and merchant would come in and out.

(4) *The entrance of the portals* - these are doors and entrance ways throughout the city.

iii) She has no intention of letting her righteous cause be drowned in the sea of wicked propositions that threaten to engulf the young—propositions from greedy savages (1:10–19), from men of lying speech (2:12–15), from women of smooth words (2:16–19), from the perverters of righteousness (4:14–17), from wretches who sow discord (6:12–15). The battle is joined, and a shaky trumpet will not summon the troops. Wisdom leaves no doubt about the importance and meaning of her call.²

b) **4 "To you, O men, I call, and my cry is to the children of man. 5 O simple ones, learn prudence; O fools, learn sense.**

²Hubbard, David (2004-07-30). *The Preacher's Commentary - Volume 15: Proverbs: Proverbs* (p. 101). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

- i) To men and everyone else the cry of wisdom is intended and the admonishment contains two pleas:

- (1) *simple ones - learn prudence* [good judgment]
 (2) *fools - learn sense* [a discerning awareness]

4) **Verses 6-11** Wisdom speaks What is **NOBLE** and **PRECIOUS**

- a) **6 Hear, for I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right, 7 for my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips. 8 All the words of my mouth are righteous; there is nothing twisted or crooked in them. 9 They are all straight to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge. 10 Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold, 11 for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.**

- i) **I speak noble things...from my lips come what is right...my mouth utters truth...wickedness is an abomination to my lips -**

- (1) Wisdom's call is reliable (vv. 6–9). In a society that bristled with perverse speech—crooked, foolish teachings, unreliable opinions and advice (2:12; 6:12–15)—words that you could bank on were worth their weight in platinum. The cluster of terms describing wisdom's teaching is a who's who of commendable expressions: "Excellent" (or "outstanding," v. 6) suggests a loftiness and nobility of subject matter; "right things" (v. 6) and "right" (v. 9) ring with integrity and uprightness; "truth" (v. 7) connotes accuracy and dependability; "righteousness" (v. 8) points to straight talk that has a helpful, healing intent; "plain" (v. 9) also means straightforward, on target in terms of truthfulness and moral rectitude. Part of wisdom's reliability is her rejection ("abomination," v. 7) of everything that is the opposite of truth: "Wickedness" (v. 7) is the inner turbulence of those who choose against God's ways and consequently disrupt the stability of their communities; "crooked" and "perverse" (v. 8) both depict twistedness, contortedness of speech that bends the truth either by deliberate misstatement or by conscious omission of relevant facts.³

³ Hubbard, David (2004-07-30). The Preacher's Commentary - Volume 15: Proverbs: Proverbs (pp. 101-102). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

ii) **10 Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold, 11 for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.**

(1) Wisdom's worth is displayed in terms of the most valuable things imaginable (vv. 11–12): "silver," in Israel's early history the most precious metal thanks to its scarcity; "choice gold," thoroughly refined, purged of dross, and polished to high luster; "rubies" or perhaps "red corals," rare and lustrous stones; "the things one may desire" may be the blanket term for all manner of wealth, beautiful artifacts and so forth, or it may describe "jewelry" (see NEB) which in antiquity was the most portable, guardable, displayable form of riches. Material success was undoubtedly a high ambition of the "young adults" of antiquity. Wisdom claims, with a cogency that our materialistic generation needs to hear, to be of infinitely more value than any material goods.⁴

b) **Philippians 4:8-9 -8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.**

5) **Verses 12-16 Wisdom gives Righteous COUNSEL to RULERS**

a) **"I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion. 13 The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. 14 I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have insight; I have strength. 15 By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; 16 by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly.**

(1) It is thus wisdom is manifest. It is the very character of God—that character all told out in Christ. Evil, pride, folly; all are hateful to Him who is light, and cannot abide the darkness.⁵

ii) **I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have insight I have strength.**

iii) **By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just by me princes rule, and nobles, all govern justly.**

⁴Hubbard, David (2004-07-30). The Preacher's Commentary - Volume 15: Proverbs: Proverbs (pp. 103-104). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

⁵ Ironside, logos

- (1) It is not that rulers always act according to understanding, but that none rule at all save by the appointment of infinite wisdom. "The Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and He giveth them unto whomsoever He will." This gives perfect rest to the man of faith in the midst of all the changing political scenes of earth. Let the form of the government be what it may; the chief magistrate be of whatever character he will; faith can bow in obedience, owning that "the powers that be are ordained of God."⁶
- b) **Daniel 2:20-22 - 20 Daniel answered [interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream] and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. 21 He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; 22 he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. [also 1 Kings 3:16-28]**
- 6) **Verses 17-21** Wisdom gives Love, Honor, and Wealth to those Who Love Her
- a) **17 I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. 18 Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. 19 My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver. 20 I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice, 21 granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries.**
- 7) **CLOSE**
- a) The unchaste wife moves covertly at dusk and speaks falsely; Wisdom moves publicly and speaks direct and authoritative truth. "Unlike the smooth, seductive, but deceptive speech of the strange woman, wisdom's is 'straight,' 'right,' and 'true,' not 'twisted,' or 'crooked.'" The foreign wife leads her victims to slavery, impoverishment, and death; Wisdom's speech leads her followers to kingship, wealth and life. The foreign wife inhabits the earthly and mundane; wisdom soars in heaven above space and time. Both rub shoulders in the city and appeal for the love of the youth - the unchaste wife does it erotically, wisdom spiritually.⁷

⁶ Ironside, logos

⁷ Waltke, 392