

## Proverbs 8:1-36- “Lady Wisdom”

### I. Introduction

A. Today we will be in Proverbs chapter 8, continuing in our series “Wisdom in an Age of Folly.” And here in chapter 8, we get to meet a person/voice that you’ve already heard from. The book of proverbs uses these personified voices...almost characters, to teach. There’s “The King” who is doling out the wisdom. There is lady folly, who represents the seductive nature of this world and the spirit of the age. There is the wicked man. And today, we meet Woman Wisdom. The author of Proverbs has already told us much about wisdom, but today we will see wisdom as a woman- a person. And the idea behind these characters is that each of them is “calling out” to us. Each of them is trying to convince us to go their way. To follow these characters down their chosen path. And this morning, we’ll look at where wisdom will lead us, where wisdom came from, and what wisdom looks like. It’s a long passage, all of Proverbs 8. So let me pray, and then we’re going to jump around in this text.

### II. Prayer

### III. Wisdom’s Call (Verses 1-4, 32)

- A. EXP: Starting in verse 1, we see that wisdom is a woman. If you’ve got a problem with that, take it up with God. And wisdom is situating herself to be heard. She is calling/crying out for those around to listen. She has stood on the hills near the road, at doorways, at the gate, and at the main lights in town. She has her microphone turned all the way up. And who is she calling to? To “you, oh man. And to the children of man.” Or, namely, people! Wisdom is calling to people from all around us. Remember, this is an illustration. What Solomon means is that wisdom is evident all around us. There is a natural order of things that if we look around will point us towards godly wisdom. You’ve heard some of these things from Gavin and Andrew and Luke over the last few weeks.
- B. APP: The invitation for us this morning comes in verses 6, 32, and 34. What is that invitation? To listen to the voice of wisdom. To “hear” and “give ear to.” What does that mean?

1. EXP: Here's what I think it means. Remember, there are a number of competing characters and voices that are introduced in Proverbs. All of them are going to CLAIM to be wisdom. All of them are going to claim to lead to life. But only one of them is right. Which voice are you going to listen to?
2. More importantly- how will you know it's the right voice? How can you be sure that you're listening to the right character? Everyone thinks they are right! How can I be certain? I'll do my best here as we work through the passage.

IV. Where does wisdom come from? (verse 15-16, 22-31)

A. EXP: We see in verses 22-31 that wisdom didn't wasn't late to the party. Wisdom was always there. Wisdom was with God in the beginning. Wisdom was set up as a way of the world as God was creating the heavens and the earth and everything in them in Genesis 1. How can that be? Well, when God creates by his word- remember, he speaks to create- it is with wisdom that he is operating. The wisdom of God is creating order from chaos, light from darkness, something from nothing. Amidst that creation, God creates man and gives him a special job. To also "carve out" or create. Man, made in God's image, is charged with filling the earth and subduing it. Set in the middle of Eden, God says- take this rough earth and make it look like Eden. Make it look like this, and fill it with people who look like me. That's the charge, and in order to do it, people would need wisdom. They would need to trust that God knows best and to follow his ways. We know now that the first two people didn't believe that. They ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, believing that they knew what was best. They followed the wrong character, took the wrong path, and all that has happened since then has been human beings believing they know what is best. But if you're paying attention, you might recognize these verses in Proverbs and think they sound awfully familiar. Let me read for you John 1-

1. [1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. [4] In him was life, and the life

was the light of men. [5] The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...[14] And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-5, 14)

B. EXP: What does all that mean? Obviously, John is writing about Jesus. Jesus was there in the beginning with God. See, Paul says this more clearly, that Jesus is the wisdom of God!

1. *1 Corinthians 1:24- "but we preach Christ...the power of God and the WISDOM of God."*
2. *1 Corinthians 1:30- "And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God..."*
3. *Colossians 2:1-3- "For I want you to know <sup>y</sup>how great a <sup>w</sup>struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, <sup>2</sup> that <sup>z</sup>their hearts may be encouraged, being <sup>a</sup>knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of <sup>b</sup>God's mystery, which is Christ, <sup>3</sup> <sup>c</sup>in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."*

C. APP: Where does wisdom come from? Wisdom is from God, represented perfectly in Jesus. When human beings could not hear woman wisdom calling because our hearts are hard and our ears are deaf, God sent his son to model and demonstrate wisdom for us. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom. Fear meaning awe and wonder. And if you've met Jesus, you've been changed by his grace. Fixated with awe and wonder at how wonderful our Savior is. He is the wisdom of God embodied.

V. Why should I want wisdom? (verses 5-14, 18-21, 32-36)

A. EXP: You may be asking the question, why would I want this? Well, the author does a good job of making some claims here that matter! First, wisdom is better than jewels and more precious than ALL THAT YOU DESIRE. Isn't that a bold claim? Anything you could ever want? Worthless compared to getting wisdom. We get this comparison- the most valuable things in a society, silver, gold, jewels, riches- they all pale in comparison to the wisdom of God! Why would

that be? Because our priorities are messed up. The things we value in this world are not defined by godly wisdom, they are defined by our sinful nature. And God reminds us- I know what makes you tick, I know what makes you go- because I made you.

1. APP: Have you ever met someone who is happy beyond belief in spite of their circumstances? Mother Teresa is everyone's example. But there are a lot. If you've never read a missionary biography, I'd encourage you to go down that road. They always make me cry. Do you know why they make me cry? Because they challenge my values. I love money and security and comfort and long life and food and all of the things this world says matter. And when I meet people who have thrown off the chains of foolishness in this world and are more content and joyous than I could ever be, I'm immediately jealous and afraid. They remind me of this truth. Look at what the author says is at stake here if you get wisdom-

a) Verses 5-14- Noble things, truth, righteousness, knowledge, Insight, strength, sound wisdom, discretion, counsel

b) Verses 18-21, 29-36- Blessings, favor from the Lord, an inheritance, LIFE

2. And since you and I are too dim to understand what those things mean, God sends Jesus to spell it out for us. And Jesus defines what it means to be blessed. He shows us what our inheritance is (1 Peter 3- we've been born again to an imperishable inheritance)- namely, God! Jesus shows us what life is supposed to be in relation to who God is and who we are.

3. There is a little bit here of "choose this day whom you will serve" involved. Which voice are you going to follow? All of them promise life! And here's my last question-

VI. How do you know you're following the right voice?

A. I don't know anyone who starts out going- "I'm going to get super into meaningless stuff." Nobody starts out on the conspiracy theory train to nowhere. No one starts out to get addicted to video games or drugs. No one starts out to work too much and feed their greed. Those

are all symptoms of deeper problems. People who get addicted to video games have an idol of comfort and leisure that gets exposed. People with drug addictions start out wanting to feel good and often end up unable to face a lifetime of trauma. People who work too much often start with wanting to “provide a certain type of life” for their family and have an idol of security. People who get deep into conspiracy theories often have a conflated sense of self-importance and a need to be discerning and heroic. Everyone thinks their right! And that’s the problem! That isn’t a new American problem, friend. It’s been the same way since like day 8 when Adam and Eve ate from the tree and said- “we’ll take wisdom from here, we’ve got it under control.” But if everyone thinks they’re right, how do we know what and who are actually right?

B. Where are you going and who are you going there with?

1. Listen, if you are on a journey and you look around and everyone else with you are people you don’t like, you’ve started following the wrong person. If everyone around you is obsessed with career advancement and money and security, you’re following the wrong character. If everyone around you is obsessed with just having a good time. If everyone around you is planning and obsessing over politics...I could go on and on here, but you get the point. Who are you going with?

a) The heart of wisdom having “counsel and truth.”

Christians should live in such close proximity to one another that we walk through the most difficult decisions and circumstances together.

2. Where are you going? You see the end of our passage says “whoever finds me finds life and favor from the Lord. But he who fails to find me injures himself, all who hate me love death.” What’s at the end of this road you’re traveling? What elusive promise are you chasing?

C. We read in James 1:5-6- “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach and it will be given to him.” As we enter in to our time of response, let’s ask God for wisdom and thank him for sending Jesus to show us.

VII. Response