

## **THE CALL OF WISDOM** (PROVERBS 1:20-33)

***Proverbs 1:20–33 “Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice;<sup>21</sup> at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:<sup>22</sup> “How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?<sup>23</sup> If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you.<sup>24</sup> Because I have called and you refused to listen, have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded,<sup>25</sup> because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof,<sup>26</sup> I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when terror strikes you,<sup>27</sup> when terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you.<sup>28</sup> Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me.<sup>29</sup> Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord,<sup>30</sup> would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof,<sup>31</sup> therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way, and have their fill of their own devices.<sup>32</sup> For the simple are killed by their turning away, and the complacency of fools destroys them;<sup>33</sup> but whoever listens to me will dwell secure and will be at ease, without dread of disaster.”***

In the book of Proverbs, wisdom is personified by two women – “she cries out.” One is the wisdom of *God* calling to you and the other is the wisdom of *man* calling out to you as well. Both are attractive but only one leads to life and the other leads to death.

But most people (even Christians) view the wisdom of God as a hidden secret inside a riddle that can only be accessed by a magic key. They view wisdom as elusive and hard to attain. But here in Proverbs, wisdom says, “No! I cry aloud in the streets looking for ANYONE who will listen and receive my instruction.”

So, if you’re willing to listen this morning as we stand on the edge of a new *year*, the wisdom of God really is calling out for a new *you*.

### **1. Where Wisdom is Calling**

***Proverbs 1:20–21 “Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she***

***raises her voice;<sup>21</sup> at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks."***

Notice: rather than you looking for wisdom – wisdom first looks for you! Wisdom roams the streets looking for someone to instruct. The devil roams around seeking someone to *devour*. But wisdom roams the streets looking for someone to *instruct*. And she is saying, "The ways of right and wrong, that are found in God's Word, are open for all to read and learn and follow!"<sup>1</sup> As verse 33 says, wisdom is calling to "whoever will listen."

Jesus said it this way...

***Matthew 11:15 "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."***

Jesus used this phrase as a way of separating those who are truly interested in being disciplined by God, and those who are not.

By the way, that's why Jesus spoke in parables. Those who really wanted to learn would come to Him personally and say, "I need You to explain that to me" (His disciples). But most of the crowd would just shrug their shoulders and walk away. They didn't have ears to hear!

Now, notice WHERE wisdom is calling – she is calling out to you in the...

- **Streets** – Your everyday coming and going. Your daily social interaction and relationships.
- **Markets** – Where you work and do business.
- **City Gates** – Where important decisions and disputes are settled.
- **Head of the noisy streets** – Wisdom positions herself where you can't miss her IF you're willing to look and listen beyond all the noise (Some manuscripts say "on top of the walls").

Why does it say "noisy" streets? Because the wisdom of man is always shouting at you as well through the news, social media, music, opinions of others, your own sinful cravings, and a myriad of other ways that the devil uses the world system to seduce you away from God.

But through all the noise, the wisdom of God is calling to you. And God *wants* you to find wisdom – she is trying to make herself known to you and help you in (recap above).

<sup>1</sup> Garrett, D. A. (1993). *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of songs* (Vol. 14, p. 72). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

## 2. How Wisdom is Calling

As we saw in **verse 20**, wisdom is calling through a loud cry. And, if you take a broader look at Scripture, you'll see the various ways that wisdom is crying out...

- **Through Creation**

***Psalm 19:1–4 “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.<sup>2</sup> Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.<sup>3</sup> There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.<sup>4</sup> Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world...”***

***Romans 1:19–20 “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.<sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”***

Creation is crying out *visually* and *verbally* – declaring the existence and wisdom of God, which is why Jesus said the rocks themselves cry out in praise even if we refuse to join them!

- **Through Our Conscience**

***Romans 2:14–15 “For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law.<sup>15</sup> They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.”***

Paul is making the point that human beings (even unbelievers) instinctively know the difference between good and evil – right and wrong – because God (the Law-Giver) has “written it on their hearts.” He put it there within every conscience. And we instinctively know that we will ultimately be held responsible by our Creator.

But many people “suppress” that evidence and deny God’s existence (Rom. 1:18). And when you keep suppressing the evidence of God’s existence, Paul says you become futile in your

thinking, your heart is darkened, and you ultimately become a fool (Ps. 14:1).

- **Through the Church** – Christians are heralds of the Truth, proclaiming the gospel “as we go” into the streets, marketplace, and the city gates...

***Ephesians 3:10 “So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”***

What an incredible opportunity we have in 2024 to share the gospel locally, nationally, and internationally – allowing the wisdom of God to raise her voice *through us!*

### 3. Who Wisdom is Calling

In **verse 22** she says, “How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?”

So, the first group that wisdom speaks to are the...

- **Simple Ones** – The term literally means “open ones.”<sup>2</sup> Wisdom cries out to people who are naïve and “open” to all kinds of enticement – a person who hasn’t learned to discriminate between truth and lies, right and wrong, good and evil. In other words, they believe *anything* but examine *nothing*<sup>3</sup>...

***Proverbs 14:15 “The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps.”***

**Example:** Naïve young man in Proverbs 7

- **The Scoffer** – While the simple person has a *blank* look on their face, the scoffer has an *arrogant* smirk on their face. The scoffer is on the faculty at many of our colleges. He/she is the ‘free-thinking’ cynic who mocks at God, sin, and judgement.

And the scoffer is not content with his own foolishness but he recruits followers as he strives to undermine wisdom by drawing

<sup>2</sup> Strong, J. (1995). In *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

<sup>3</sup> Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., Jr., & Waltke, B. K., eds. (1999). In *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 742). Moody Press.

the simple ones away from God. Many of the elite in media, entertainment, and academia fall into the category of scoffer.<sup>4</sup>

God tells us to be on guard against their influence...

***Psalm 1:1 "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers."***

- **The Fool** – This person openly rejects God and His wisdom. They've suppressed the Truth, their conscience is seared, and their heart is morally insensitive. The fool is so occupied with the things of the world that God and Truth are of no concern to them.<sup>5</sup> Their problem is NOT a low IQ or poor education; their problem is a lack of desire to even acknowledge God in their life.

**Example:** Nabal (Abigail's husband)

#### 4. What Wisdom is Saying

- **She asks a question** (vs.22) – "How long will...
  - The simple love being simple?
  - The scoffers delight in scoffing/scorning/mockings?
  - The fool hate knowledge?"

How long will they choose to remain in this dangerous condition? Why is it dangerous? Because wisdom has called to them time and time again!

The Scriptures tell us to "Call on the Lord while He is near." And, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart." What are those verses implying? That the Lord will not always be near, and His voice will not always be heard!

The day will come, like Esau (Heb 12:17), that you seek the Lord with tears, but there will be no more room in your heart for repentance. It will be too late. Wisdom is asking, "How long will you choose to remain in this dangerous condition?"

- **She extends an invitation** (vs.23)

<sup>4</sup> Newheiser, J. (2008). *Opening up Proverbs* (pp. 39–40). Day One Publications.

<sup>5</sup> Newheiser, J. (2008). *Opening up Proverbs* (p. 39). Day One Publications.

- If you will turn (repent) at my reproof/rebuke...
- I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you.

It's the same invitation that was given through the prophet Ezekiel...

***Ezekiel 36:26–27 “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”***

## 5. The Promise Wisdom is Making

- **To those who refuse** (vs.24-32) Beginning in verse 24, wisdom says...
  - I called, and you refused to listen.
  - I stretched out my hand, and you pushed it away.
  - I offered my counsel, and you would have none of it.

And because of their response, wisdom promises the following in verses 26-27...

- Because you laughed at my invitation, I will laugh at your calamity.
- Because you mocked my offer, I will mock when terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you.

Then in verse 28-32, wisdom says, “When all these things happen, *then* you’ll want to respond. However, here’s my promise to you...

- You will call on me, but I will not answer.
- You will seek me diligently, but you will not find me.
- You will eat the fruit of your own way, and have your fill of your own devices.
- Simple one – you will be killed by your own turning away.
- Foolish one – your complacency will destroy you.

You see, God’s patience will eventually run out. Judgement will come suddenly and unexpectedly like a storm. Wisdom will have the last laugh! And on that Day – the Day of Judgement – the simple one/scoffer/fool

will have passed the point of no return. They will reap what they have sown (Prov. 1:31–32; Gal. 6:7–8).

But wisdom makes another promise to a different group...

- **To those who repent** (vs.33)

She promises: “But whoever listens to me will...

- Dwell secure.
- Be at ease.
- Live without dread of disaster.”

### Jesus is Wisdom Incarnate

In the Old Covenant, God cried out to Israel through the Law and the Prophets. But under the New Covenant, God speaks to his people through Jesus, who is the *fullness* of wisdom (Heb. 1:1-2; 1 Cor. 1:30).

- He pleaded with the lost (Matt. 23:37; 11:28–30).
- He pours out his Spirit on those who seek him (John 7:37–39).
- He gives life to all who come to him (John 1:4; 3:15–16).
- He warned that the season of mercy will be passed when he comes to judge those who reject him (Matt. 23:37–39; 21:33–44).
- He promises that those who trust him will be safe on the Day of Judgement (Heb. 2:15; John 10:28).<sup>6</sup>

### Invitation

Jesus – the wisdom of God – is calling to you this morning. But, the wisdom of *man* is no doubt shouting to you as well. Both are attractive but only one leads to life and the other leads to death.

Jesus is offering you the same invitation that He gave in verses 23-24...

- If you will turn (repent) at My reproof, I will pour out My spirit to you; I will make My words known to you.
- I’m calling. Don’t refuse to listen.
- I’m stretching out My hand. Don’t push it away.
- I’m offering My counsel. Receive it.

<sup>6</sup> Newheiser, J. (2008). *Opening up Proverbs* (p. 41). Day One Publications.