

Sunday School Lesson for June 28, 2020

Good morning, I hope you are well and blessed.

Lesson for June 28, 2020 "Wisdom's Feast" Scripture passage is from Proverbs 9.

Charlie Brown's sister, Sally, approached her brother and declared, "I think I've discovered the secret to life - you just hang around until you get used to it."

A gentleman once wrote Marilyn vos Savant with a question about life. Ms. vos Savant is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records Hall of Fame for highest IQ, (228) and had a regular column in Parade. The particular inquirer said his life was "more exhausting than he ever imagined" and wanted to know, "Is this normal?" Marilyn told him his life was indeed normal and then gave the following analogy about life. She said, "Much of the time, life is like going through the airport steering a loaded luggage cart with one bad wheel. Sometimes you just feel ridiculous, sometimes you actually look ridiculous, and sometimes all you can do is just try to push it in generally the right direction." (Parade, October, 1997)

There is some truth in both of those statement, surely there has to be more to life than just hanging around trying to get used to it, or just trying to "push it" in the right direction. Thankfully, there is. God has something to say about life. He has given us His word. Proverbs 9 breaks life down to its simplest truths and gives us life in a nutshell. May we gain from this week's lesson a sense of how pressing the world's need for wisdom is and how willing God is to provide it.

The book of Proverbs is a great resource for acquiring knowledge. It not only provides factual information to make us wise, but also directs us to the source of knowledge—God. Solomon wrote the major portion of Proverbs around 950 B.C. Chapters 30 and 31 are credited to Agur and Lemuel, respectively. When Solomon became king of Israel, the LORD appeared to him in a dream and said, "Ask what I shall give thee" (see *I Kings* 3:5). Solomon responded saying "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart" (see *I Kings* 3:9). After God granted the request, "Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country" (see *I Kings* 4:30). The book of Proverbs contains some of the three thousand proverbs that God gave to Solomon (see *I Kings* 4:32). Solomon probably spoke many of these when people came to hear

his wisdom (see I Kings 4:34). In the chaotic days in which we live, men and women need wisdom to avoid the treacherous pitfalls on the road of life. Proverbs gives timeless principles regarding human character and conduct. Jesus Christ who is the "Wisdom" of God is the "Wisdom" (see I Corinthians 1:24) spoken of throughout the Proverbs. "Wisdom" is not openly called Jesus Christ in Proverbs, He is the only Person who fits every characteristic given concerning "Wisdom" in this book. "Wisdom" is often pictured as a woman, Jesus is the ultimate subject. On earth, the church is Wisdom's "house," to which Jesus invites His guests, supported by the power and promise of God, as if by "seven pillars." Heaven is the "house" which "Wisdom" has built to entertain all the guests that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb (see Revelation 19:9); that is Christ's Father's house, where there are many mansions, and where He has gone to prepare places for us (see John 14:2).

Wisdom and Folly are portrayed in this chapter as rival young women, each preparing a feast and inviting people to it. But Wisdom is a responsible woman of character, while Folly is a prostitute serving stolen food. Wisdom appeals to the mind; Folly to the senses. It is easier to excite the senses, but the pleasures of Folly are temporary. By contrast, the satisfaction that Wisdom brings lasts forever.

The Invitation of Wisdom - Proverbs 9:1-12

Wisdom dwells in a house and not a tent. The house has a foundation which is to be solid. From it seven pillars are constructed. The seven pillars are figurative; they do not represent seven principles of wisdom. Seven, in the Bible represents spiritually complete, fullness and perfection. Verse one poetically states that wisdom lacks nothing – it is complete and perfect. If you follow God's wisdom, your life will be full. A banquet is prepared. The meat has been slaughtered, the wine has been mixed. Wine was diluted with water as much as 1 to 8 to reduce its power to intoxicate. It was also mixed with spices for flavor. Unmixed wine is called strong drink. The main activity Wisdom does in this text is to host a feast, and a sumptuous one at that. "Meat and wine were not usually consumed by common people (cf. Amos 6:4-6), which confirms that this is a special meal. This should not be understood only as a literal feast. Wisdom's own words in Proverbs 9:6 tell us that the food and drink she prepares are metaphors for the banquet of life, and partaking of the meal that she has laid out is connected with walking on the straight path of understanding. The connection between wisdom and life is frequently made in Proverbs: "For whoever finds me finds

life and receives favor from the LORD" (Proverbs 8:35). "Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor" (Proverbs 3:16) "She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed." (Proverbs 3:18) Despite the richness of what is provided, those invited to this feast are not only the wealthy and the elite. In verse four we find a special invitation given to those who are simple and lack understanding. Wisdom's desire is to teach them, instruct them, and provide a full life.

Wisdom sends out her servants to invite people to the feast (verse 3), but also issues a personal invitation herself (verse 4). She calls from the highest point of the city. She's spent so much time preparing because what she has to offer gives life. The simple and senseless can come to eat and be satisfied. They can come to get their fill of wisdom. This would be ministers who go everywhere and bring God's message calling them to be saved and to come to this supper.

The Message Bible says: "Are you confused about life, don't know what's going on? Come with me, oh come, have dinner with me!" Such an inclusive invitation is reminiscent of Jesus' parable where, after the honored guests responds with regrets, all are invited to the feast.

This passage of scripture should remind us of a passage in the Gospel of Luke, where Jesus describes a banquet in one of His parables. Many are invited but few will attend. Jesus taught: "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you that

none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper' ". (Luke 14:15-24)

Many may intend to go to the banquet, but they never make it because they get sidetracked by other activities that seem more important at the time. We should not let anything become more important than our search for God's wisdom.

Verse 4-6 speaks of, "You who are simple" advising them to listen to the worthy things she has to say. A "simple" person is one who is spiritually immature and must be teachable and willing to pay attention to wisdom's instruction and correction. The person who is "simple" or spiritually immature is invited so that he or she may become wise, and receive "understanding." *Wisdom's invitation is general; it goes out to everyone and excludes no one except those who exclude themselves. They all are welcome to the feast so that they may be helped. Those who accept the invitation will not be despised nor refused. In the same way, our Saviour came, "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (see Matthew 9:13). He didn't come to call those who are wise in their own eyes, who say they see (see John 9:41), but He came to call the simple, those who recognize their simplicity and are ashamed of it, and are willing to "become a fool, that he may be wise" (see I Corinthians 3:18).*

In the ancient world, eating or sharing of "bread" was a sign of close fellowship (see Genesis 31:54; Exodus 18:12; Matthew 26:26; Acts 2:46). For the believer, Wisdom who is Jesus Christ, calls us to "eat of my bread" that is, to taste the true pleasures that are found in the knowledge and fear of God (see John 6:50-51).

Wisdom's first call in Proverbs 1:22 was to the "simple," the scorners, and the fools. It appears that the scorners refused Wisdom's invitation and laughed at her, in her second call she invited all mankind (Proverbs 8:4) and the fools and the simple ones (Proverbs 8:5). The point is that it's a dangerous thing to reject God's invitation to come to salvation and ultimately His feast. We never know when it may be our last one.

In verses 7-9 we see that wise people receive reproof and rebuke with appreciation; fools do not. "Wise men change their minds; fools never. A wise man thinks all he says; a fool says all he thinks." - Anonymous "Too often we change jobs, friends, or spouses instead of changing ourselves." (Akbarali Jetha). When you witness to someone about the Scriptures trying to get them saved and they ridicule you for it and want to argue about it, it is best not to argue. The person who chooses human foolishness over divine truth is a person determined to live his life on his own terms.

There are two kinds of people all around us. There are those who are unteachable. They think they know what is best for their lives and you cannot tell them any different. They are called fools. Then, there are those people who know they aren't perfect. They know they need instruction and they receive the truth of God with joy. These folks are wise.

Wisdom begins with knowing God. To know God you must not just know the facts about him; you must have a personal relationship with him. James tells us: "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him" James 1:5

Wisdom says, "for through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life" (verse 11). The promise is a long life, and that's exactly what we hope for in Jesus. In Proverbs 3:1-2, He says, "My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity". So, "If you are wise, you are wise for yourself; if you scoff, you alone will bear it." (verse 12).

The invitation of folly: verses 13-18:

The feast of folly is described as offered by the foolish hostess. This has a literal meaning. A foolish woman is a woman who does not have godly ways. This describes a woman with poor morals. This also can be symbolic of the opposite of wisdom. Foolishness is rejection of God. Certainly, this person would know nothing that is truly important.

The literal of this woman would be that of the harlot woman who waits on the street corner and seduces her victims. The men who are not of God get involved in her sin. The spiritual here, has to do with those who reject God and go the way of the world. In both cases, we would have to say that they are lacking in understanding.

Proverbs 9:17 "Stolen waters are sweet, and food eaten in secret is delicious."

Forbidden delights sometimes seem sweeter and more pleasant because of their risk and danger. "Stolen waters" here is speaking of a man having an affair with a harlot. The flattering words of folly lead to death. Water that is stolen is obtained by a crime (sin). It has come into possession by the breaking of God's law. We sometimes think that the grass is greener on the other side, so we take that which does not belong to us.

Proverbs 5:15 says: "Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well".

It is interesting that wisdom offered meat and wine to her guests and the foolish offers bread and water. It seems sometimes that the world wants only the forbidden fruit. Just as it led Adam and Eve to destruction, it will bring the foolish down. Death and hell await the foolish that reject God.

Proverbs 9:18 "But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave."

Throughout the book of Proverbs, we are given the choices between wisdom and folly or foolishness. Following wisdom leads to life (Proverbs 9:6), and following foolishness leads to death (Proverbs 9:18). This week's lesson illustrates two houses and two hostesses in order to present the choices that we all face. Two houses stand, but one will fall. Two meals are offered, but one is poisoned. Two hostesses extend invitations, but one is deceptive. It is up to us to decide which house to enter, which meal to eat, and which invitation to accept. We each hope that we choose wisely.

Closing: For the love that casts out fear, the faith that sustains and the hope that never perishes, be with us now and forever more. Amen. God watch over us and take care of us.

Next week's lesson July 5, 2020 "Wisdom's Vindication" from Matthew 11:1-19.

Sources for this lesson: The Bible, Halley's Bible Handbook, Matthew Henry Bible Commentary, Live by God's Wisdom Series, by Dave McFadden, Sermons on Proverbs 9 from Tom Shepard, Retired Pastor, Bible Study.org, and The Present Word Adult Bible Lessons.