

O Lord Jesus Christ, who in a wonderful Sacrament hast left unto us a memorial of thy passion: Grant us, we beseech thee, so to venerate the sacred mysteries of thy Body and Blood, that we may ever perceive within ourselves the fruit of thy redemption, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Good morning! Good morning at home!

Despite the fact that the heat index has been in the triple digits lately, despite the late hour at which the sun disappears behind the horizon, for so many of us the summer is over. The young among us must once again leave behind the comparatively relaxed schedule of the summer months for the daily regimen of early mornings, class periods, and homework. In grade school and college, I was only ever an ok student; I only ever showed a real drive for scholarship when I got to seminary. But before that, I never really super loved the first day of school. I pray the young folks in your life are more excited than I ever was, even during another strange pandemic season.

Although I always had family, teachers, friends, and mentors doing their level best, I liked school but hadn't felt the drive to apply my talents to the project. One AP English professor, in a moment of frustration at my latest forfeiture of the talent he saw but I didn't slam on my desk, and with a face as red as Pentecost vestments, screamed: "Why won't you apply yourself?" Almost on cue for a kid in the late nineties, I responded "Whatever, man" and I was sent out of the room. It's not my finest moment, and I wouldn't learn the lesson from the incident for many years to come. But in essence, I was adrift as kid. I had very little rudder. I had knowledge and talent, but I didn't have a great reason to apply it; I lacked wisdom.

It's kind of neat, then, in a season where education is once again on our minds, that wisdom figures so prominently in today's lessons from the Scriptures. Each one, in its own way, drives home several key considerations: that wisdom is compelling and inviting, that wisdom is a vital component of godliness, and that the wisdom, power, and glory of God abides with and in us in Christ's own body.

Our little lesson from Proverbs paints a beautiful picture of wisdom's invitation. It might be a little surprising to think that this little bit of poetry is found in Proverbs. Most of us, if we think of Proverbs as a book at all, probably think of the long list of aphorisms and sayings: some helpful even now, some markedly less so. But there are other really interesting aspects of the book which help to orientate the listener or reader towards the idea that a life spent seeking after God's intention for our lives, and obedience to that intention, is a life given over to wisdom. In our lesson today, we enjoy this wonderful image of God's wisdom presented to us as a generous matriarch. She has built a dwelling and a table for a big party. She has set up a feast and sent out her emissaries to invite the wayward to her banquet so that they could begin the walk of insight. The intention of the writer is clear: that the writings to come, within the book and indeed in the entire counsel of God, are a feast for those seeking after the wisdom of holiness, of being faithful to God the Creator and Redeemer.

And this idea, that wisdom and godliness are intrinsically linked in the Scriptures was most certainly picked up by the New Testament writers, especially Paul. I mean, today, we heard that theme made explicit. He impelled that ancient church at Ephesus to turn away from the same foolish immaturity we met from Wisdom's own admonishment. Rather, Paul would have his friends in Ephesus apply Godly wisdom to their lives, preferring that they "sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs amongst themselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in their hearts" preferring that to the loud clamor of public drunkenness. "Come to the feast of wisdom," I can almost hear him say, "and take Wisdom's joy

and light back out into the streets with you as songs of thanksgiving fill the air." Wisdom has indeed built her a house and the Church can finally dwell therein through the generous invitation of Christ.

Which is exactly what we find in our Gospel lesson this morning. Though wisdom and the act of being wise do not appear in the text, the structure of the chapter and John's overall style let us know that the wise are the ones who listen to Jesus and take him seriously. The unwise, within John's Gospel, are the ones who ask questions of Jesus but do not take heart to his answers, who do not allow their hearts to be changed by his word and ministry. But for those that have ears to hear, eyes to see, a mind to be enlightened, and a hunger for God's greatest nourishment, Jesus has offered his body and blood as a means to receive life from the abundance of Heaven's infinite storehouse. Just as Wisdom invites the wayward into her house so as to set them on the greater path of faithfulness, Jesus' own body and blood offer us the same path. Even better though, he promises to abide among those who avail themselves of his body and blood, he promises to be with us, to stay with us, and to help us draw closer to the Father in the power of the Spirit.

This week, as we send our kids back to school, bless their backpacks, pray for their safety from the virus, and thank their teachers and school staff for all their hard work, it's a great time to remember that we are all still being taught by Jesus, all seeking after his wisdom for our lives. I pray that in our entrances into the feast that Wisdom has prepared for us by nature of our repentance and open hearts, we would find Christ ready to stay with us, inspiring us to sing out our thanksgiving and apply his wisdom wherever we go. But despite the fact that Jesus is much more patient than my English professor, let's rely on him and do better at turning from evil and doing good; seeking peace and pursuing it than I did on my eleventh-grade essay. In any case, I know that Christ would much rather abide with us rather than kick us out of the classroom, thanks be to God.

To The Living God be all glory, from age to age. Amen.