

Themes from Proverbs, #2--

**"Do You Want to Be Wise?  
The Call of Wisdom"  
(Proverbs 8)**

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One of my most vivid memories of my time in Israel some forty years ago  
was of walking through the narrow market streets of old Jerusalem.  
I remember the rich smells of honey and date pastries and spicy falafels,  
and the occasional braying of donkeys,  
but particularly, I remember the aggressiveness of the shop owners,  
as they tried to lure me off the street and into their stalls.

The closest thing to it in my experience had been  
walking along the midway at the state fair when I was a kid,  
with hawkers in front of every booth or side-show  
urging me, and coaxing me, to come in.

It was like that in Jerusalem—  
the shop owners would almost drag you into their stores,  
and immediately they would start selling you something,  
or at least they would start bargaining and haggling over the prices.

I can remember lowering my eyes as I strolled through the market,  
so that I wouldn't make eye-contact, for fear that if I did,  
they would have me in their grasp.  
They were calling out in the streets, selling their wares,  
with competing and conflicting voices, vying for my attention. /

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It was a fascinating time,  
and it has left me with a compelling picture  
that captures something we all experience.  
As we walk along the paths of life,  
all sorts of people are trying to sell us something.  
Now, it's usually not done in person—  
our hawkers are usually the advertisers on TV or in magazines  
and in all those irritating pop-up ads on our computer screens.

They are wooing us to attend to what they have to offer—  
often making subtle but outrageous claims  
"Buy what I have—you need it;  
your life won't be complete without it.  
It will bring you happiness."

But people sell ideas and ideologies as well as products.  
And not infrequently we get accosted by those who want to tell us  
how we ought to live.

There are the **pop psychologists** with their books on self-assertiveness training,  
or how to deal with stress, or how to look out for #1,  
They sell books with titles like:  
*The Power of Habit;*  
*Willpower: Discovering the Greatest Human Strength.*  
*Captive: The Science of Succeeding with People.*

And there are the **scientist-philosophers**  
who tell us we are just machines,  
programmed to act in certain ways  
by our evolutionary past.

And we can't forget the **pleasure-seekers**—  
who urge us to eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.

And of course, there are the **politicians on the campaign trail,**  
**and the political pundits** in newspaper columns and TV news shows,  
with their blogs and Twitter feeds,  
all selling their wares--

There are the conservatives,  
offering the tried and true wisdom of our forebears,  
but which some would see as the constricting traditionalism of the past;  
and there are the progressives,  
presenting their philosophies of liberation and freedom,  
but which others see as a reckless abandonment of common sense.

I don't need to tell you how hard these competing voices in our culture  
are vying for your attention.

They are all there—in the public square, trying to get a hearing.  
These voices cry out all the time—  
in all the various media we expose ourselves to.  
“Listen! Listen to me!” they say,  
“I know the good path,  
I can direct you to the road to life.”

We can't ignore them all and walk blindly ahead,  
almost with our eyes and ears closed—  
for that too is a choice, a choice sold like all the others.  
It's unavoidable, this marketplace of ideas.

So the question is: Whose voice do you listen to?  
Who gets your attention?  
Where do you go for direction in life?  
for insights for living?  
for skill in living well?

Where is the good life to be found?

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Voices crying out for our attention--  
this is the very image that is set before us  
in the opening chapters of the book of Proverbs.

This book offers just what I have been talking about—  
skill in living well.

We saw that last week in the opening verses—  
1:1--**"The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:  
2 for attaining wisdom and discipline;  
for understanding words of insight;  
3 for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life,  
doing what is right and just and fair;  
4 for giving prudence to the simple,  
knowledge and discretion to the young—"**

The book is couched in the language of a father addressing his son—  
1:8 **"Listen, my son, to your father's instruction  
and do not forsake your mother's teaching."**

And the bulk of the book stitches together  
various wise sayings in random rapid-fire sequence  
with no apparent connection between them,  
conveying all sorts of everyday, down-to-earth, good sense about life  
that any parent would want their children to grasp.  
They cover such topics as the value of friends,  
the dangers of borrowing,  
the worth of a word aptly spoken,  
and the perils of laziness.  
Much of it seems like a good dose of common sense,  
street smarts,  
savoir affaire or just basic social skill—  
what is now called Emotional Intelligence.

With such an emphasis,  
some consider the book down-right secular in its viewpoint.  
Even some preachers--  
I think of William Willimon, for example—  
"Generally, I dislike the book of Proverbs with its lack of theological content,  
its long lists of platitudinous advice, its "do this" and "don't do that."  
Pick up your socks.  
Be nice to salesclerks. It doesn't hurt to be nice.  
Proverbs is something like being trapped on a long road trip with your mother,  
or at least with William Bennett [author of the best-selling *Book of Virtues*]."<sup>1</sup>

Willimon is surely speaking tongue-in-cheek here,

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<sup>1</sup> *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry*, pp. 255,256.

because, surely, he knows  
that the extended introduction of the book in the first nine chapters  
makes it clear that the wisdom of the proverbs is not secular at all.  
It has an unequivocally theological foundation—  
“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” we read in one form or another  
repeatedly in these chapters,  
and eleven times in the book as a whole.<sup>2</sup> /

This introduction sets the scene for all that follows—  
and it makes clear that no wisdom for living in the Proverbs is purely secular.  
It all flows from a conviction that all wise living  
flows out of the foundation  
of a relationship with the God who created us.  
We’ll talk more about that in a moment.

But the feature of this extended introduction that I want to focus on this week and next  
is the picture it gives of various voices calling out to us,  
urging us to listen and to buy into what they have to offer.

In chapter one the wise father first warns his son about the enticing voices of evil  
that he will surely encounter,  
drawing him away from what is good and right,  
referring broadly to the voice of “sinners”—  
those rowdy, unruly, lawless peers who seem so influential,  
especially to teenagers.

1:10—“My son, if sinners entice you,  
do not give in to them.  
11 If they say, “Come along with us;  
let’s lie in wait for someone’s blood,  
let’s waylay some harmless soul;  
12 let’s swallow them alive, like the grave,  
and whole, like those who go down to the pit;  
13 we will get all sorts of valuable things  
and fill our houses with plunder;  
14 throw in your lot with us,  
and we will share a common purse”—  
15 my son, do not go along with them,  
do not set foot on their paths;  
16 for their feet rush into sin,  
they are swift to shed blood.”

“Don’t go there!” he says—“Don’t listen to those voices!”  
Their evil deeds will rebound on their own heads—  
1:18 “These men lie in wait for their own blood;  
they waylay only themselves!

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<sup>2</sup> Prov. 1:9; 2:5; 9:10; also 10:27; 14:27; 15:16,33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17.

**19 Such is the end of all who go after ill-gotten gain;  
it takes away the lives of those who get it."**

Later in these opening chapters,  
this father will also speak of the seductive voice of **an adulterous woman**  
who will so easily lead a young man down a path of destruction.  
She represents the allure of pleasure of all sorts.  
With persuasive words she leads astray;  
she seduces with her smooth talk, we read in 7:21.

And in the close of the introduction, in chapter nine,  
this wise father will describe this seductive voice  
as another woman—the woman **Folly**—  
the personification of the foolishness of sin,  
calling out with a loud and enticing voice.  
We'll talk more about her next week.

But this morning we focus on the voice that the father wants his son to attend to.  
It is the voice of yet another woman,  
and this woman is the personification of wisdom itself.

We first hear her voice also in chapter one—

1:20 **Wisdom calls aloud in the street,  
she raises her voice in the public squares;**  
21 **at the head of the noisy streets she cries out,  
in the gateways of the city she makes her speech:**

22 **"How long will you simple ones love your simple ways?  
How long will mockers delight in mockery  
and fools hate knowledge?**

23 **If you had responded to my rebuke,  
I would have poured out my heart to you  
and made my thoughts known to you.**

24 **But since you rejected me when I called  
and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand,  
since you ignored all my advice  
and would not accept my rebuke,**

26 **I in turn will laugh at your disaster;  
I will mock when calamity overtakes you—**

27 **when calamity overtakes you like a storm,  
when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind,  
when distress and trouble overwhelm you.**

1:28 **"Then they will call to me but I will not answer;  
they will look for me but will not find me.**

29 **Since they hated knowledge  
and did not choose to fear the LORD,**

30 **since they would not accept my advice**

31           and spurned my rebuke,  
 31   they will eat the fruit of their ways  
           and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.  
 32   For the waywardness of the simple will kill them,  
           and the complacency of fools will destroy them;  
 33   but whoever listens to me will live in safety  
           and be at ease, without fear of harm."

There is an urgency in this call of Lady Wisdom—  
           Embrace her now before your life falls apart and it is too late.

This image of Lady Wisdom is then picked up and described more fully  
           in chapter 8, our passage this morning.  
 And that's where I want to direct our attention—  
           to this voice, the voice of wisdom.  
 For the father in this book wants his son to listen to this voice above all,  
           and as we examine the picture of Lady Wisdom,  
           we will see why we should as well.

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Turn with me to Proverbs 8.  
 I want us to consider five dimensions of wisdom presented there.

### **I. First, consider Wisdom's Universal Call--**

Prov. 8:1     **Does not wisdom call out?**  
                   **Does not understanding raise her voice?**  
 2     **On the heights along the way,**  
           **where the paths meet, she takes her stand;**  
 3     **beside the gates leading into the city,**  
           **at the entrances, she cries aloud:**  
 4     **"To you, O men, I call out;**  
           **I raise my voice to all mankind."**

Notice where she positions herself—  
           on the heights where she can be seen,  
           at the crossroads where people travel,  
           and the gates of the city where people come and go.

This is no secret voice,  
           spoken only to some intellectual elite.  
 There is no mysterious religious initiation required.  
 This voice of wisdom goes out to all—  
           **"I raise my voice to all mankind."**

You don't have to be a Bible scholar to understand her voice—  
           this message of wisdom.  
 You don't have to have grown up in the church,  
           or live in a religious home.  
           It's for everyone.

v. 5—"You who are simple, gain prudence;"  
you who are foolish, gain understanding."

It is addressed to the simple,  
those without much knowledge;  
and to the foolish,  
those who may be on the wrong road already  
and need to be redirected.

"I raise my voice to all mankind."

The voice of Lady Wisdom is addressed to all of us here today. /

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Do you see what this means?

It means that God in his wisdom is seeking you out—  
and that's a challenging notion.

Most people have the view that religion is a matter of our seeking after God,  
in hopes of finding him--  
if you're good enough or clever enough, you just might get lucky.  
But this gives us a different picture, doesn't it.

Lady Wisdom wants to be heard—  
she is crying out with a loud voice so that all can hear.  
The question is, Will you listen to her?

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Well, you might well ask,  
Why should I listen to her?  
Why should I listen this voice as opposed to others?

To be honest, I'm always suspicious of people who try too hard  
to sell me something.  
Those shop owners in Jerusalem had a big obstacle to overcome  
if they wanted to get me to buy what they were selling.

How many of you enjoy getting those telephone calls from solicitors?  
Or what about the reputation of those aggressive used-car salesmen,  
or campaigning politicians?  
Can I really trust what they tell me?

But Lady Wisdom wants you to know that she is worthy of your attention.  
She says things worth hearing.  
She speaks with integrity about things that are good and right and true.

v. 6 --"Listen, for I have worthy things to say;  
I open my lips to speak what is right.  
7 My mouth speaks what is true,  
for my lips detest wickedness.

8      **All the words of my mouth are just;  
          none of them is crooked or perverse."**

God's wisdom won't deceive--  
it is right and just,  
not crooked and perverse.

How can you tell?  
How can you know?  
That's a tricky question,  
because what wisdom speaks judges us  
as we much as we judge it.

I think of an art gallery full of masterpieces beyond price,  
displaying eternal beauty and sheer genius.  
At one point the curator was walking through gallery  
when he overheard a tourist comment,  
"What a horrible painting.  
I can't believe they would display such a monstrosity in public."  
To which the curator responded:  
"Sir, the merit of these paintings is not in question.  
It is those who view them who are on trial!"

8      **"All the words of my mouth are just;  
          none of them is crooked or perverse.  
9      **To the discerning all of them are right;  
          they are faultless to those who have knowledge."****

It takes wisdom to appreciate wisdom—  
The implication is,  
that if you do not see the goodness of what wisdom declares  
there is something wrong with you!  
Isn't that why we ultimately have to say that wisdom is a gift from God.

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Again, notice the moral qualities of the wisdom the Bible proclaims,  
and ultimately its theological foundation—

v. 12--"I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence;  
I possess knowledge and discretion.  
13      **To fear the LORD is to hate evil;  
          I hate pride and arrogance,  
          evil behavior and perverse speech."**

The wisdom she offers is not just good advice for getting ahead in the world.  
It is commended not out of some purely practical considerations—  
"Do this, act this way,  
because it works.  
It will bring you success and prosperity."

No, because what she says is grounded in the fear of the Lord,  
her wisdom is true,  
it is good,  
it is right and just, regardless of its consequence.

Her wisdom is not just a get-rich-quick scheme.

In fact, Lady Wisdom says,

v. 10 **“Choose my instruction instead of silver,  
knowledge rather than choice gold,  
11 for wisdom is more precious than rubies,  
and nothing you desire can compare with her.”**

Lady Wisdom doesn't simply appeal to our self-interest,  
but to our highest moral nature.  
What she offers is precious.

Lady Wisdom is worthy of our attention—  
Her moral character is impeccable and unimpeachable.

She is a credible voice--  
God's wisdom can be trusted.

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But I want you to see that though biblical wisdom is good and right and true in itself—  
as it is grounded in the fear of the Lord,  
that doesn't mean that it isn't also useful—  
that is, this wise road is also a good road for us.  
Biblical wisdom is not true because it works,  
but it works because it is true.

And that, too, is part of Lady Wisdom's message--

18 **“With me are riches and honor,  
enduring wealth and prosperity.”**

It is true that God has so ordered this world  
that operating with God's principles of wisdom  
can lead to material wellbeing.

For example, God's wisdom encourages hard work, self-denial and self-discipline.

It urges us to refuse to waste our resources on frivolous pursuits,  
and to exercise wise stewardship of our resources.

John Wesley used to say that embracing the wisdom of the gospel  
almost inevitably led to upward economic mobility—  
bringing people out of poverty into an increased economic prosperity.

They would say that destitute folks who became Christians  
through the preaching of Wesley  
would first become Methodists or Baptists,  
then over time would move upward on the socio-economic ladder  
to become Presbyterians  
and then Episcopalians.

But mere material prosperity—health and wealth-- is not the main point here.

This must mean more than just lots of money in the bank.

There is a kind of wealth that is more valuable than that.

For look at v. 19—

**“My fruit is better than fine gold;  
what I yield surpasses choice silver.**

20 I walk in the way of righteousness,  
along the paths of justice,

21 bestowing wealth on those who love me  
and making their treasuries full.”

Lady Wisdom will say later in v. 35—

**“whoever finds me finds life  
and receives favor from the LORD.”**

This is the ultimate reward of those who seek her—

life—life lived in the favor of God.

The ancient Roman philosopher Seneca said, "Money never made anyone rich."

But God's wisdom can.

for it is better than gold.

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So why can Lady Wisdom make the claims she makes?

Again, why listen to this voice over others clamoring for our attention?

Look at what is claimed in vv. 22-31.

Look again at Lady Wisdom’s credentials.

8:22 **“The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works,  
before his deeds of old;**

23 I was appointed from eternity,  
from the beginning, before the world began.

24 When there were no oceans, I was given birth,  
when there were no springs abounding with water;

25 before the mountains were settled in place,  
before the hills, I was given birth,

26 before he made the earth or its fields  
or any of the dust of the world.

27 I was there when he set the heavens in place,  
when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,

28 when he established the clouds above  
and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,

29 when he gave the sea its boundary  
so the waters would not overstep his command,  
and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.

30 Then I was the craftsman at his side.”

This last verse could be translated “I was constantly at his side,”

but the meaning doesn't change much either way.

She was there when the world came into being—

that world was good—it was very good!

**“I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence,  
rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind.”**

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This passage is asserting that from the beginning

the wisdom of God has been built into creation itself;

There is a divine order to this world—

God in his wisdom made a cosmos out of chaos.

Creation itself reflects something of its wise Creator.

Hidden within the fabric of creation is the wisdom of God.

The cosmos coheres;

it is a universe; a single system--

Just as there are physical laws that govern the natural realm,

so there are spiritual and moral laws that govern our relationship with God  
and with one another.

Ps. 104:24—**“How many are your works, O LORD!**

**In wisdom you made them all;”**

This world was created with a divine order—

and it was the biblical expectation of that order that

gave rise to modern science in the West.

Natural laws embedded by God in the cosmos

lay waiting to be discovered by human observation.

Johannes Kepler – the famed German astronomer – of the 17<sup>th</sup> century,

calculated planetary orbits in great detail

through careful observation and painstaking mathematical modeling.

Observing celestial bodies left Kepler in awe of what he called the

“stupendous miracles of God”

He is alleged to have said that in these discoveries

“I was merely thinking God’s thoughts after him.”

Francis Collins, who was head of NIH here in Washington,

and who led the efforts to map the entire human genome—

he would say the same thing.<sup>3</sup>

God is the Creator,

the divine Mind,

the Architect of the cosmos.

From the beginning, Wisdom was there—guiding that creation.

And seen in this way,

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<sup>3</sup> See his book, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*

Lady Wisdom really become just another way  
of speaking about God himself.

Lady Wisdom is the one who knows how we are designed to live  
and what we were made to live for.  
Who else could tell us the way to true human flourishing?  
Who is better qualified to tell us why we are here,  
what we are here for?

**“At the very beginning of creation,  
I was the craftsman at his side.”**

In a sense, divine Wisdom presents the operating instructions for human life  
given by the manufacturer.  
When you buy a car, don't you want to know how it is designed to operate?  
You want to know that engine operates most efficiently  
with a certain octane gas,  
and with certain grade of motor oil which you change every 10,000 miles,  
and, for a manual transmission,  
when to change the gears at a certain RPMs.

These are not arbitrary instructions—  
they are built into the way the car was designed.  
That's how the engine was made to work.  
We do not make these instructions up for ourselves,  
in some cases, we may discover them through careful observation  
and even trial and error.  
But ultimately, we must listen to the manufacturer—the car maker—  
to tell us what they are.  
We can sure spare ourselves a lot of headaches,  
and repair expenses, when we do.

And this is what Lady Wisdom is claiming to be--  
the divine designer of the cosmos;  
the one who knows how we were created to live  
because she was there when it happened.  
**“I was the craftsman at his side.”**

I ask you, Who else can make that claim?

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I know of only one—  
Jesus Christ.

What does the Apostle Paul say in that passage we read earlier?—  
Col. 1:15 Jesus Christ, the Son of God, **“He is the image of the invisible God,  
the firstborn over all creation.**

**For by him all things were created:  
things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible,  
whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;  
all things were created by him and for him.**

**He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."**

The Son of God stands in that place of Lady Wisdom  
as the animating principle of creation.

More than that,  
Jesus Christ is the supreme image of God.  
He is the one who reveals what we were created to be,  
for he is the one who most fully reveals who God is.

And in another place,  
Jesus Christ is described as the Word—in Greek, the *logos*—  
which in ancient Greek philosophy was that rational principle built into creation.

Listen to these words from the beginning of John's Gospel--  
John 1:1 **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.**

**2 He was with God in the beginning.**  
**3 Through him all things were made;  
without him nothing was made that has been made.**  
**4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men."**

A philosophical Greek might nod his head in agreement that statement,  
but not to the astounding declaration John makes in v. 14--  
"The Word"—who was in the beginning with God and who was God  
and through whom all things were made--  
**That Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.**  
**We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only,  
who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."**

Lady Wisdom, that *logos* of creation,  
has become embodied, incarnate, as a human being—  
Jesus Christ.

If you want to know what creation is all about—  
what we were created for—  
you have to look at Jesus Christ.

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But let's get back to Proverbs 8,  
for there is one more important point to make.

That is this—  
All that has been said by Lady Wisdom leads to her final appeal  
and an unavoidable choice—

Prov. 8:32 **"Now then, my sons, listen to me;  
blessed are those who keep my ways.**  
**33 Listen to my instruction and be wise;  
do not ignore it.**  
**34 Blessed is the man who listens to me,  
watching daily at my doors,**

- waiting at my doorway.
- 35 For whoever finds me finds life  
and receives favor from the LORD.
- 36 But whoever fails to find me harms himself;  
all who hate me love death."

So whose voice will you listen to—  
as you seek live wisely?  
as you seek to figure out what life is all about?  
what is worth pursuing?  
what is good and what is bad?  
what is true and what is false?

Lady Wisdom says there are only two ways—  
one is the way of blessing that leads to life;  
the other is the way of harm that leads to death.

**"blessed are those who keep my ways. . . .  
Blessed is the person who listens to me"  
for whoever finds me find life  
and receives favor from the Lord.  
But whoever fails to find me harms himself;  
all who hate me love death."**

Will you listen to the voice of Lady Wisdom,  
which is the voice of God himself?  
And will you listen to the voice of Lady Wisdom  
as that voice comes to us through Jesus Christ?  
Or will turn away to some other voice?

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I remember how in my own life how I was confronted by this unavoidable choice.

I was in high school,  
listening to lots of those voices I referred to earlier—  
the advertisers,  
the pop psychologists,  
the philosophical scientists,  
the politicians and political pundits.

Where was wisdom to be found?  
What could I build my life on?  
What would lead me in the best way to the best end in life?

I hadn't really considered the voice of Lady Wisdom at all.  
(Well, I had had whispers of that voice in my childhood,  
but as a teenager, I had moved on to other things.)

But I got to know to some guys who worked with high school kids  
through an Christian organization called YoungLife.  
And through their efforts, and in fact, through the quality of their lives,

I began to hear that voice—that voice of Lady Wisdom  
in the words of Jesus Christ.

I heard Jesus say,  
“I have come that you may have life and have it abundantly” (Jn 10:10).  
That’s what I wanted.  
“Come, follow me,” he said.

Then I was struck by the stark choice that Jesus set before me—  
Matt. 7:24 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine  
and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.  
The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house;  
yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

But everyone who hears these words of mine  
and does not put them into practice  
he is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.  
The rain came down, the streams rose,  
and the winds blew and beat against that house,  
and it fell with a great crash.”

Life and Death—  
security and destruction,  
wisdom and foolishness.  
Would I attend to this voice—this voice above all others—  
the voice of Jesus?  
That was the choice—the unavoidable choice.  
By God’s grace, I found that voice compelling,  
and I still do.

How about you?  
Whose voice are you listening to?  
Only one can bring life.  
Don’t delay,  
those other voices sound attractive,  
but in the end they only lead to destruction. //

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Prayer—

Prov. 8:32 “Now then, my sons, listen to me;  
blessed are those who keep my ways.  
33 Listen to my instruction and be wise;  
do not ignore it.  
34 Blessed is the man who listens to me,  
watching daily at my doors,  
waiting at my doorway.

- 35 For whoever finds me finds life  
and receives favor from the LORD.  
36 But whoever fails to find me harms himself;  
all who hate me love death."

You may be walking in foolishness—  
you may have already begun to follow Christ—  
you know his saving power  
through his death for your sins  
and his powerful resurrection to conquer sin and death,  
and to demonstrate that he is truly God's wisdom incarnate.

Either way, say, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

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Closing Song:

**#111 *Join All the Glorious Names of wisdom, love and power***  
**That ever mortals knew, that angels ever bore:**  
**All are too poor to speak His worth,**  
**Too poor to set my Savior forth.**  
*[we will sing vv., 1,3,4,5]*

Benediction

Rom. 11:33-36 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!  
How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!  
"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"  
"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"  
For from him and through him and to him are all things.  
To him be the glory forever! Amen.

**Gleaning Wisdom from the Book of Proverbs, #2**  
**Sept. 23, 2018**

**Do You Want to Be Wise?**  
**The Call of Wisdom**  
**(Proverbs 8)**

We are constantly bombarded with voices calling out to us offering advice for how to live. The central question is, Whose voice will we listen to? The Book of Proverbs opens with an extended introduction that urges us to attend to the voice of Wisdom, personified as a woman who calls out to all. This voice is none other than the voice of God himself. Our passage shows us the wisdom of heeding this call.

**I. Wisdom's Universal Call (8:1-5)**

**II. Wisdom's Unimpeachable Character (8:6-17)**

**III. Wisdom's Unsurpassed Reward (8:18-21)**

**IV. Wisdom's Unparalleled Credentials (8:22-31)**

**V. Wisdom's Unavoidable Choice (8:32-36)**

**Response Questions:**

**"Do You Want to Be Wise?  
The Call of Wisdom"  
(Proverbs 8)**

1. What are some of the voices in our culture that cry out, claiming to offer wisdom for living? What makes them appealing?
2. What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom? Why can't science give us wisdom? Why must wisdom ultimately come from God?
3. What is distinctive about biblical wisdom? What commends itself to us?
4. How is Jesus the embodiment of wisdom? How does that encourage you to seek to know him and to follow him?
5. How is the choice of wisdom a choice between life and death?
6. Where does this sermon specifically expose sin or unbelief in your life? How does it specifically call you to change your thinking, redirect your affections, alter your behaviors, and trust your Savior?