

Wisdom Calls Aloud

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[0 : 0 0] This summer we've been kind of working through, or we're starting to really, just go through some of the wisdom that God has for us in the book of Proverbs. And we want to learn from the Lord what he has for us there.

So this morning we're in Proverbs chapter 1, verse 20. Proverbs chapter 1, verse 20. Out in the open, wisdom calls aloud.

She raises her voice in the public square. On top of the wall, she cries out. At the city gates, she makes her speech. How long will you who are simple love your simple ways?

How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge? Repent at my rebuke. Then I will pour out my thoughts to you.

I will make known to you my teachings. But since you refuse to listen when I call, and no one pays attention when I stretch out my hand, since you disregard all my advice and do not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh when disaster strikes you.

[1 : 1 7] I will mock when calamity overtakes you, when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you.

Then they will call to me, but I will not answer. They will look for me, but will not find me, since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord.

Since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them.

But whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease without fear of harm. These are profound words and sobering words.

Even after a quick read-through, I think we can all sense that there's a depth of riches and wisdom in these words. There's much that we can learn from them, but we won't get that from just a quick read-through.

[2 : 2 6] These are the kinds of words that we need to meditate on deeply and reflect on, and pray and ask the Lord for wisdom as we do.

And so let's do that. Let's pray together. Lord, in these moments, as we reflect on these words, we ask, would you speak to us? We ask, would you open our minds and our hearts that we would hear what you say to us?

Would you make it plain to each one of us in all of our different situations, just what area of our lives this applies to most and the places where we need to hear it most?

We ask this in your name. Amen. So here we are in Proverbs. And with this passage that we've just read, the first thing that we notice is that these words of Solomon are not like most words in the Bible.

They're kind of in a class all their own. They're Proverbs. They're sayings of the wise. And so we have to read them a little bit differently. We have to read them as Proverbs.

[3 : 38] A proverb is, you could describe it as a true principle that generally holds sway, or usually holds sway. We mustn't press the Proverbs too hard so that we, you know, expect them to be like laws of the universe, or like mathematical formulas, which always hold sway without exception.

They're things that are true and generally or usually hold sway. And we can see that in the passage that we've got this morning.

Proverbs 1 verse 33. But whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease without fear of harm. And of course, I think we know that there are some exceptions to this.

This is the general, the usual. Those who listen to wisdom will reap the reward, the benefit of it. Live in safety, be at ease, have no fear of harm.

But of course, there are exceptions sometimes. The righteous do suffer at times. Even the wisest and godliest of people face persecution at times. It's a proverb.

[4 : 47] It's not a divine decree. It's a true saying which generally holds sway. But not always, without exception. The second thing that we notice is that these words of Solomon are quite clever.

They're quite creative. And this is common too with the sayings of the wise. They're often said in a way that's beautiful, that's memorable.

They use all kinds of literary devices which get her attention to state the principles of wisdom. And we definitely see that here.

Solomon personifies wisdom. He speaks about wisdom as if it were a person who is standing on the street corners, calling out to people passing by in the city.

Verse 20. Out in the open, wisdom calls aloud. She raises her voice in the public square. On top of the wall, she cries out.

[5 : 49] At the city gate, she makes her speech. So even at the outset here, it's pretty obvious that to get to the wisdom in here, we're going to have to do some interpretation, some reflecting, some thinking.

What do you mean, Solomon? In what sense does wisdom call out to us like this woman in the streets? We're going to come back to this question.

But before we do, we want to take time to listen to what wisdom has to say. All of what follows in verse 22 to verse 33 are the words of lady wisdom as she calls out on the streets.

What does she have to say? We want to listen to her words. What's going on in this little picture that Solomon is painting for us? Well, it begins, as we just read, with Solomon.

Sorry. It begins with this woman calling out to people. Wisdom calling out to people. And the picture we get here is of a bustling city.

[6 : 55] And there she stands out in the open, in public, on the street corners, by the gates, where everybody is passing by. And she's calling out loud to the people who are passing by and speaking to them.

And the rest of this section, 22 to 33, is what she's saying. Her speech begins with this rhetorical question in verse 22. How long will you, who are simple, love your simple ways?

How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge? So we get a bit of a sense just who wisdom is calling out to.

She's calling out to those who are simple, which, as we talked about last Sunday, doesn't refer to simple the way we tend to think of it. In Proverbs, it refers to a person who lacks discernment and who is kind of bent or inclined towards evil.

And she's calling out to those who are mockers, to those who make light and make fun of her and her words. She's calling out to those who are fools, who are foolish, those who by their attitude and living show contempt for what is true wisdom and knowledge.

[8 : 17] And her call is a question. How long will you, who are simple, love your simple ways?

How long? The picture we get is that they're not just like this some of the time, the people passing by, but that this is the continual pattern of their lives, living in ways that show that they lack discernment, doing foolish things, having an attitude that makes little of what is true knowledge and wisdom.

And embedded in all of this is a hint at why they continually live like this.

We might wonder, why don't they learn from their mistakes? Why don't they change their ways? Why don't they see that how they're thinking and how they're living just isn't working?

And change. How come they're not becoming wise with each poor choice that they make? Well, the reason, or at least a hint of the reason, is stated by Solomon, because they love their simple ways.

[9 : 31] The problem is not that they lack true discernment and are ignorant. It's that they love the kind of living that goes with that mentality.

Let's have an example from real life. Consider the person who spends every cent that they have coming in, and then a little bit more borrowed on the credit card, month after month after month after month, buying stuff that they don't really need.

It's an example of foolish living. And the problem is not that they don't realize what they're doing. Of course they do. The problem is that they love to have more new stuff.

Whatever catches their eye, they just have to have it now. And I'm not wanting to pick on any of you who may have made some choices like that.

I have made my share of mistakes with finances as well. But wisdom is also speaking to mockers.

[10 : 39] These people sometimes hear her call and mock. As it pertains to this one area of finances. You can kind of imagine that family who is spending more than they're making and buying all this stuff to impress people around them.

They look at that other family who's driving that old used car and living in that cheaper house, spending less than they make, denying themselves some of the pleasures of life.

And if not outwardly, then inwardly. They're thinking, oh, look at their house. Look at their car. They're thinking, oh, look at their house. Taking pride and joy in the fact that they have what others do not.

All the while ignoring the reality of this massive amount of debt and interest payments that someday will catch up with them if they keep on spending more than they're making.

True wisdom and knowledge, of course, would lead you to live on less than you make. But a fool hates and despises that notion because they want to have everything good that they see right now.

[11 : 56] And even if they're not able to afford it. That's just one example of the kind of mindset that wisdom is calling out to as it pertains to personal finances.

But, of course, we could apply these words to all different areas of life, not just finances. All kinds of foolish attitudes and choices. We could apply it to relationships.

We could apply it to foolish decisions, attitudes that we carry about work. About career planning. About moral decisions. About leisure, recreation, sport, entertainment.

How we conduct ourselves in society. How seriously we take the laws of the land. We could apply these words to parenting. And most certainly and most importantly, these words apply to our relationship with God.

How long will you who are simple love your simple ways? The problem is not just that we lack wisdom or are ignorant to wisdom.

[13 : 03] The problem is that we don't like what she has to say. Because what she has to say doesn't fit with the way we love to live. It's not an understanding problem.

It's a heart problem. We continue to make foolish choices as a pattern of life. Not because we're stupid. But because we want to.

And here is wisdom calling out to us. How long will you go on living like this? How many times do you want to go on this roller coaster ride again and again.

Round and round before you realize that it's taking you nowhere. And eventually it's going to make you sick. Verse 23. Wisdom says, Repent at my rebuke.

Then I will pour out my thoughts to you. I will make known to you my teachings. Turn and acknowledge the foolishness of your ways.

[14 : 08] Listen to the rebuke of wisdom. Listen. Really stop and listen to what she has to say. And then you'll be ready to change.

You'll be ready to grow wise. I'll pour out my thoughts to you. I'll make known to you my teachings. Do you want the spirit of wisdom?

The teachings of wisdom? It starts with repenting. Which in this context means acknowledging the foolishness of our ways.

And stopping to really listen. And take to heart what wisdom has to say. But the story goes on here. The picture here is already painted.

In Solomon's parable here, the response of most people is already decided. Verse 24. But since you refuse to listen when I call.

[15 : 13] And no one pays attention when I stretch out my hand. Since you disregard all my advice. And do not accept my rebuke. He continues on down in verse 29 with more descriptions of how they responded.

Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord. Since they would not accept my advice. And spurned my rebuke.

We'll get to the consequence in a moment. But let's first reflect on just how the majority of people respond to lady wisdom. As she calls out in the streets in this parable.

The picture that we get here is that they just pass her by. And ignore her. They do not accept her advice.

They spurn her rebuke. They refuse to listen. Verse 24. No one pays attention. Wisdom is calling out to them.

[16 : 29] Excuse me, mister. Excuse me, madam. Stretching out her hand. And they just go right on by. Verse 29, I think, holds one of the keys to understanding this parable.

Since they did not choose to fear the Lord. Says Solomon. He uses this phrase in parallel.

As kind of a synonym of all the different ways that they treat wisdom. Since they did not choose to fear the Lord. I think this is the key to this little parable. This is really what this parable is all about.

Who is it who is calling out in the open to people? Offering a gracious rebuke? Calling people to stop and acknowledge the foolishness of their ways and listen?

Who is it that's offering to make the simple and the foolish wise? And pour out his spirit of wisdom? And make known his teachings? Who is it that they ignore and refuse to listen to?

[17 : 41] Who is it that stretches out his hand and offers advice? This verse gives us the key. And yet they do not choose to fear.

To take seriously his words. To regard. To respect him. It's the Lord. Yahweh. God. Now please don't misunderstand me.

I'm not saying that the Lord is a woman. I mean there's kind of all kinds of ways you could construe this here. But we probably do well if we just think of this as a mini parable.

Wisdom. Lady wisdom. Calling out in the streets. It represents how the Lord calls out to people. With his words of wisdom. And how they respond.

Yahweh. The Lord. The creator of our universe. The all wise God. Calls out and speaks in the open to people. And yet on the whole. The majority of us treats him like the person that we might find in the mall.

[18 : 51] At one of those little kiosks. Trying to sell you another skin care product. We treat him like the telemarketer on the phone. That's calling from some far off country.

Oh. Don't want to hear that. Click. Ignore. Pay no attention. But the big difference is that deep down inside we all know.

That he. The Lord. Is not like either of those. And that what he has to say is right. It's true. So what are the consequences of all these people.

Passing by wisdom. Some simply. Ignoring. Some verbally refusing. Some even mocking. But none of them accepting or taking seriously what she has to say.

What are the consequences? What comes next in the parable that Solomon is telling? Let's read from verse 24 down to 32. But since you refuse to listen when I call.

[19 : 56] And no one pays attention when I stretch out my hand. Since you disregard all my advice. And do not accept my rebuke.

I in turn will laugh when disaster strikes you. I will mock when calamity overtakes you. When calamity overtakes you like a storm.

When disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind. When distress and trouble overwhelm you. Then they will call to me. But I will not answer. They will look for me.

But will not find me. Since they hated knowledge. And did not choose to fear the Lord. Since they would not accept my advice. And spurned my rebuke.

They will eat the fruit of their ways. And be filled with the fruit of their schemes. For the waywardness of the simple will kill them. And the complacency of fools will destroy them.

[20 : 54] So what are the consequences of ignoring wisdom? Eventually the tables will be turned. Those who mocked. Those who made light of wisdom.

Will themselves become a mockery. Those who laughed at her in the streets. Will themselves become a laughing stock. And when will this happen?

On the day that disaster strikes. The day of trouble. The day of calamity. Solomon uses five statements here. In verses 26 and 27.

All in a row in parallel. To emphasize just how certain. And how devastating things will be. For those who ignore wisdom. For those who ignore the Lord God. And his words.

And when it comes. That day of disaster. It will come quickly. With little to no warning. Like a storm. Blowing in seemingly out of nowhere. Like a whirlwind.

[21 : 52] Like a tornado. Just whipping in out of nowhere. There will come a day. When the tables will be turned. And we've seen these kind of moments.

I mean not like the ultimate judgment day. But we've seen and we've felt these kind of moments. Where the tables have been turned. When it comes to wisdom.

Maybe you've experienced the same thing as I have. When you're driving along the highway. And there's some icy patches on the road. And so you're driving below the speed limit.

And all of a sudden. Out of nowhere. This guy comes ripping up. Beside you. And he's going well over the speed limit. And you think to yourself.

What an idiot. And then minutes later. You see that very same truck. Half buried in snow. In the ditch. Wisdom versus foolishness.

[22 : 54] And you kind of chuckle to yourself. Wisdom. Always. Has the last laugh. Maybe some of you have been that guy in the truck.

Hopefully not. The point is not here that God takes pleasure. When people are ruined. Or that he laughs at them with like a. A delight when disaster strikes.

No. He doesn't. We know that from other scriptures. The point is that someday the tables will be turned. And wisdom will have the last laugh. God's words of wisdom will be vindicated so clearly in the sight of all.

That those who disregarded him will be put to shame. For having done so. They will be seen as the fools that they have been. And that they are. Verse 31.

Tells us. That in that moment. They are getting. What they deserve. Verse 31 says this.

[24 : 01] Since they would not accept my advice. And spurn my rebuke. They will eat the fruit of their ways. And be filled with the fruit of their schemes. They will face the consequences.

Which naturally arise. From foolish. And sinful behavior. And we can. We can all apply these words. In the ultimate sense.

To the final judgment of God. To the final consequence. Of ultimately rejecting him. But we can also apply these words. To everyday situations.

And decisions. To which God has spoken. If you. Let's go back to finances for a moment. If you ignore God's wisdom. Regarding finances. And pursuing wealth.

Spoken of throughout his word. And you continue to spend more than you make. And borrow as much as you can. And spend more than you have. Save nothing. Invest nothing. Borrow more.

[24 : 56] Spend more. You will find yourself. As the Bible says. A slave to the lender. To the banks. And if you continue on with that.

There will come a day. When you will wind up in the midst. Of financial disaster. And ruin. And all the consequences. That some ripple off.

Into the future of your life. That go with that. That's the fruit. That's what naturally comes. From making foolish choices. With your finances. And Solomon says.

The Lord says. You will eat that fruit. And suddenly that guy. Who lived with contentment. Below his means. And managed his money well.

Will be seen for the wise steward. That he is. And again. This isn't just about finances. But you could apply these words. To all kinds of areas in life. You reap.

[25 : 51] What you sow. You'll. Eat the fruit. That comes. From the decisions. That you make. Whether good or bad. Whether in finances.

Relationships. Marriage. Parenting. Work. And of course. Ultimately. In the most important aspect. Of your life. Your relationship with. God. Listening.

To wisdom. Listening to the Lord. And his words. Makes all. The difference. In life. And there will come a day. When it is.

Too late. A day of regret. Verse 28. Then. They will call to me. But I will not answer.

They will look for me. But will not find me. Do you feel the sting of regret. In those words. A day when we must face.

[26 : 49] The consequences. Of our own foolish decisions. And God will not. Bail us out. He is. Now. Today. Giving us the opportunity. To listen.

To repent. To. Fear him. To believe his words. To trust him. To find. As we read earlier. Life. And safety. And peace.

And forgiveness. And wisdom. Wisdom. But eventually. The window of opportunity. Will be closed. And you will face. The ultimate consequences.

Of your choices. Metaphorically speaking. You'll go back to that spot. On the street corner. Where you heard wisdom calling. I'm ready to listen now. And she'll be gone.

And you'll be left. To what you've brought upon yourself. And to regret. Yet. These are sobering. Words. Yet they are a gracious.

[27 : 46] Warning. From Solomon. And from God. Perhaps these words. Are the jolt we need. To wake up from the slumber. Of foolishness. That we've slipped into.

If not in the big. Picture of our lives. Maybe in an area. Or two. Of our lives. The consequences. Of ignoring God.

And his wisdom. Are devastating. And it's of the utmost importance. In life. For us. To listen to him. To humble ourselves.

Before him. And acknowledge. Our foolishness. And our sin. And listen to. What he has to say. Not just with our heads. But with our hearts.

So how do we do that? If. Wisdom. Wisdom. Speaks. In the city streets. In this parable. How does it speak to us today. In our culture.

[28 : 42] And in our lives. Well we've already. Traced the source of wisdom. To God. This parable is about him. Speaking to us. And how we respond.

And so how do we get. His words of wisdom. Today. In our. Corner of the world. In a very real sense. Just like in this parable. God. Calls.

Wisdom. Calls out to us. In the open. God's words of wisdom. Are not written. Just on one. Scroll. That's buried.

In a. In a cave somewhere. That nobody has access to. In. In our days. His words of wisdom. Are. Very much. Out in the open. We have them.

Preserved for us. There are millions of copies. Of the words. That he has spoken. The Bible is the most. Published book. Of all time. Guinness Book of World Records.

[29 : 40] Estimates. That it's got over. Five. Billion. Copies. That's five. Thousand. Million. Copies. Published. Since the first one. His words.

Are available. To us. Probably. Every single one of us. Has one of these. Sitting on our shelf. At home. Or sitting on the nightstand.

The question is. Do we stop. To listen. To them. Or do we. Just pass them by. And go on our way.

And pay no attention. I've got more important things. To attend to. Today. Things that I love. More. Or. Maybe we do stop.

Maybe we do pick it up. And read a little bit. But maybe we do it. Kind of the way. That we would. Have a conversation. With that person. At the kiosk. In the mall. We don't want to be rude.

- [30 : 36] We want to say hello. And acknowledge. But we're looking for the chance. To get out of this conversation. We're just there. To be polite. That won't do us any good.
- Wisdom is calling for our attention. Right here. God is calling for our attention. And he offers us something wonderful.
- Wisdom. Which leads. To safety. Protection. Life. Salvation. Great blessing. Words. Which in some cases.
- Will avert the day of disaster. In many areas of our lives. And bring prosperity instead. And words. Which.
- In the day when disaster must come. Trouble must come. Will carry us through the storm. Like an anchor for the soul. In here.
- [31 : 38] God has given us. The ultimate words of wisdom. Which will prepare us. And see us through the ultimate day. Of disaster. Which is coming on the world. The day when Christ returns.
- To judge. To save his people. And to punish the wicked. Is that how you see this book? For us today.
- In our corner of the world. This is how wisdom calls out to us. My hope and my prayer is that. All of us. In humility.
- Would bow before the Lord. In his word. In his word. Every day. And acknowledge the ways. That we have been foolish. That we have been sinful.
- Acknowledge that we have loved those ways. Sometimes. The good news is this. Through Jesus. God's son. There is forgiveness. And this promise.
- [32 : 35] That we read here. Stands. Whoever listens to me. Whoever listens to me. Will live in safety. And be at ease. Without fear of harm.
- Maybe not in the immediate sense of those words. But for sure in the ultimate sense. Eternal life.
- Whoever has ears to hear. Let him hear. Let him hear. Let him hear. Let's pray. Father in heaven.
- We thank you that you have. Spoken to us. And we ask that you would. Forgive us for the foolishness. Of our ways. Lord you know what that is.
- In each of our lives. You know what that is in my life. We offer that up to you again. And admit. That we have done those things. We have thought those ways. And we ask that you would forgive us.
- [33 : 35] That you would cleanse us. And that you would help us. To truly listen. To what you have to say. For those things. Those areas of our lives. Make us wise.
- Lead us. On. The road that leads to peace. And safety. And life. And make us a blessing. Because of that.
- To all the people around us. We ask in Jesus name. Amen.