

Lady Wisdom and Madam Folly

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] Psalm 100 in the Scottish Psalter on page 362, singing to the tune Old 100th. All people that on earth do dwell sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

Him said with mirth his praise foretell, come ye before him and rejoice. And that call in the first line of the psalm is still very relevant to our day and always will be.

While the heaven and earth remains. Because all people, all human beings are called to come to the Lord, to know the Lord, to worship the Lord, to sing his praises.

That's why we evangelize. So that people will come to be drawn into fellowship of God himself. All people that on earth do dwell sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

We stand as usual to sing. All people that on earth do dwell sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

[1 : 20] In serf with mirth his praise foretell, come ye before him and rejoice.

Know that the Lord is God indeed. We are his law, he doth us be.

We are his law, he doth us be.

And for his sheep, he doth us be. O enter then his gates with praise.

Praise God and bless his name always. Praise God and bless his name always.

[2 : 45] His mercy is forever. For it is seemingly so to do. For it is seemingly so to do.

For it is seemingly so to do. For why the Lord our God is good. His mercy is forever sure, His truth that all times firmly stood, and shall promise to each endew.

Let's once more join together in prayer and call upon the Lord in prayer. Lord our gracious God, we give thanks that in these words we have been singing, Lord, you have reminded us how seemly, how appropriate it is that we sing praise to you and worship you.

You are our Creator, you are the Redeemer of your people, and we owe you that praise. And we pray tonight, Lord, with glad hearts that our praise will be acceptable in your sight.

We thank you for the one, the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we address you and through whom we offer you our praise. We thank you for the assurance that we have in your word that our praise is made acceptable to you in him, and for his sake and because of him.

[4 : 27] Help us, we pray, Lord, to be filled with gratitude and wonder that we have such a position this evening. Grant to us that our use of this building for your worship tonight will prove to be an occasion of blessing to us.

We thank you for every blessing we can look back upon as we look back upon our lives, and as we look back upon the history of this congregation and many other congregations we know of, and even the history of your church in the world as we find accounts of that throughout history.

We thank you, O Lord, that from the moment that people began to call upon the name of the Lord, and so you owned the people for yourself, a people who in this world were placed to bring honor and glory and praise to your glorious name.

And Lord, we thank you tonight that we have come to enter upon the number of such people. And we pray that while we are unworthy of such a great privilege, nevertheless, O Lord, we may know of your worthiness being a stimulating and heart-honoring matter for us to know.

Grant, Lord, we pray that as we gather here in your presence, your Holy Spirit will be evident in our midst. And we thank you that through your Spirit you are present with your people.

[5 : 51] And we give thanks, O Lord, that your Holy Spirit takes your word and makes it effective in the lives of your people. And this, Lord, is our prayer tonight. However much we have known your blessing in the past, or known the work of your Spirit in our hearts previously, however much we have been in the ways of following you perhaps for many years, we confess, Lord, tonight our need of you.

We confess that we have a need of a fresh outpouring of your Spirit, so that our hearts will be refreshed, so that we will know, Lord, the benefit of being in your presence, and the benefit of being taken by you as your people, so that we bring honor and glory to your name.

Lord, remember us, we pray, as a congregation, and remember us in this week that we've entered upon today. We do pray that you'd bless us in all that we anticipate by way of services of worship and activities in this coming week.

We pray for the impending induction at the end of this week. We ask, O Lord, that your blessing will be evident in our midst. And we pray for the Smith family as they come to settle with us.

And we pray for Cal Murdo and his ministry here, and for Johan, and for their children. We ask that you would grant to them, O Lord, a sense of your own presence, a sense of the rightness of their being here, through your own leading and through your guidance of them.

[7 : 21] Remember the congregation in North Uist that valued his ministry so much, O Lord, and that will miss him as they have now relocated to Stornoway.

Oh, bless them, we pray. And give them even their time of vacancy to know much refreshment from on high, to know many souls being born again, to know the gospel being blessed amongst them.

We ask that you would guide them towards a further ministry in the future. We pray, Lord, tonight for all of our number who are unable to be with us this evening.

We think of those who have contracted a COVID infection. Lord, we know that there has been an increase in these past days of COVID infections in our midst.

We pray that those who have contracted, and we know ourselves, we pray that they will know your blessing and your healing hand upon them. We pray for each and every family affected thereby, and for all individuals too.

[8 : 24] Remember, as we pray in our neighborhoods in this community, Lord, continue to provide for us, to watch over us, to give us your protective care, to bless the means that you have given to us with regard to our health, both physical and mental.

Remember, too, tonight those who are mourning the passing of loved ones. Every week that goes by, O Lord, we hear of others who have lost loved ones in this congregation and beyond.

We do pray tonight, Lord, for your Spirit to console those who are hurting, those who are grieved in their minds and hearts, and those who look to you for strength.

We pray that you would give them, Lord, of your Spirit to comfort and to encourage and to console them as they go on missing loved ones now gone. Gracious one, we pray too for those tonight of struggles with their faith, struggles with their place in the world, with meeting other people, different kinds of struggles, O Lord, that we meet with from time to time.

Bless those who feel overstressed. We ask that you would give them, Lord, your own strengthening, your own encouragement. We pray for those who suffer from various kinds of addictions.

[9 : 45] We thank you for the help available, and we pray that that will be blessed to them. To that end, we pray for Road to Recovery, for David as he heads up that work. We pray for the work of the shed.

We ask that all who work there will be blessed. We pray for safe families as they begin, Lord, here in our own locality. And we ask that you would graciously bless them as they seek to enter in upon the work further here that they have already engaged in in so many places in the mainland.

Grant them your blessing, we pray, and encourage them, and all who are in leadership of them.

We, too, ask for your blessing, Lord, for our own local provisions in our schools, in the health board, in our hospital, in our hospice, and in health services.

Lord, grant them, we pray, your blessing, your ongoing provision for them. Lord, make us thankful for these means that you have provided us with in your goodness.

And grant to us, O Lord, that we may truly value them, and that we may know the blessing of the Lord upon them. Bless our children, we pray at this time. Continue to bless them as they come to the end of their session in Sunday School and tweenies.

[11 : 03] And grant, Lord, that all that they have learned and all that we were given evidence of today at the prize giving. O Lord, God bless these young lives, we pray.

And as we think later tonight, O Lord, of the message of your word, that shows so clearly that we as adults and children are pulled in two directions through the powers of the world and also the call of the gospel.

Lord, may our young people know of your Holy Spirit uniting them to Christ and giving them to be rooted and grounded in him. And so to be able to resist all the temptations that seek to call them away from him.

Graciously then, bless us, we pray, and bless the world in which we live, our own nation, and all the trials and difficulties that we find. O Lord, as we bring these things to you in prayer, so we pray for our governments, for those in authority, for those who have to exercise law and order, for those, Lord, who are facing different social problems as they deal with people on an ongoing basis. And we pray for those today, O Lord, who may have heard that they're losing their work. We ask for the unemployed, that you'd bless them, bless those facing crisis in their families through lack of income.

[12:23] Especially, Lord, in these days when so much is curtailed by way of income, and when the cost of living, O Lord, has increased so much. We pray for those facing these problems.

And we ask that you would help us to demonstrate our love for them, and enable us, we pray, to be of whatever support we can for them. And so, Lord, we ask now that you'd continue to bless us here.

Hear this our prayer and pardon us our sins and accept us freely for Jesus' sake. Amen. Now, our next psalm of praise is Psalm 62.

I will sing Psalm 62 in the Sing Psalms version. That's on page 80, singing verses 5 to 12, and the tune this time is Herongate. Now, Psalm 62 from verse 5, And we'll sing on to the end of the psalm. Find rest, my soul, in God alone. Find rest, my soul, in God alone. Find rest, my soul, in God alone.

[13:57] In heaven, my hope is ever sure. My city fortress, sheltering road.

In heaven alone I am Savior. My honor and salvation rest.

On God my love and mighty heart. O people, trust in Him always.

To Him alone, Lord, I am Savior. The low-born man is but a breath.

The high-born man is but a light. Within a balance, side by side.

[15:34] They come to nothing but a sight. Do not speak after wealth by force.

Or triumphant, their God in King. And even know your good in peace.

Set not your heart on what is vain. My God has hope, and I have heard, That you are strong and loving, Lord, Each one according to his deeds.

You will assure and be reward. Amen.

Let's turn to read God's word now. We'll find that this evening in the Old Testament. And it's in the book of Proverbs and chapter 9. Chapter 9 of the book of Proverbs.

[17:19] We'll read through the whole of the chapter. Wisdom has built her house. She has shewn her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her beasts.

She has mixed her wine. She has also set her table. She has sent out her young women to call From the highest places in the town. Whoever is simple, let him turn in here To him who lacks sense, she says, Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed.

Leave your simple ways and live, And walk in the way of insight. Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse. And he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury.

Do not reprove a scoffer or he will hate you. Reprove a wise man and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man and he will be still wiser. Teach a righteous man and he will increase in learning.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And the knowledge of the Holy One is inside. For by me your days will be multiplied, And years will be added to your life.

[18:26] If you are wise, you are wise for yourself. If you scoff, you alone will bear it. The woman folly is loud. She is seductive and knows nothing.

She sits at the door of her house. She takes a seat on the highest places of the town, Calling to those who pass by, Who are going straight on their way.

Whoever is simple, let him turn in here. And to him who lacks sense, she says, Stolen water is sweet, And bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he does not know that the dead are there, And that our guests are in the depths of Sheol.

Amen. May the Lord bless to us, Reading that portion of his word, To his own praise. We are going to praise him once again, Before we turn to this passage. And it's Psalm 106, On page 378.

Psalm 106, Page 378, Singing verses 1 to 5. Give praise and thanks unto the Lord, For bountiful is he, His tender mercy doth endure unto eternity.

[19 : 42] So on through to verse 5, That I thy chosen's good may see, And in their joy rejoice, And may with thine inheritance Triumph with cheerful voice.

The Psalm is concerned, To be found and to be known, Among God's people, So that through the remembrance of the Lord, With the love that he shows to his people, He will visit him with his salvation.

So that he will see, The good of God's chosen people, And rejoice in their joy. And may that be our prayer, As we sing these words of the Psalm. Give praise and thanks.

The tune is Bedford, Give praise and thanks unto the Lord. Give praise and thanks unto the Lord, For bountiful is he, His tender mercy doth endure unto the Lord. Give praise and thanks unto the Lord, Give praise and thanks unto the Lord, For bountiful is he, For bountiful is he, His tender mercy doth endure unto eternity.

God's mighty words, Who can express all the glory of God, For bountiful is he, His tender mercy doth endure unto eternity. God's mighty words, Who can express, Or show forth all his praise.

[21 : 20] Blessed are they, Blessed are they, That judgment keep, And justly do always.

Remember me, Remember me, Lord, With that love, Which thou to thy Thou art thou hast bear, With thy salvation, O my God, To visit me, That I draw near, That I thy chosen's good may see, And in their joy rejoice, And may with thine inheritance,

Try on with cheerful voice. Now if you turn with me please to Proverbs chapter 9.

I'd like to try and cover the teaching of this chapter this evening, which we've entitled Lady Wisdom and Madam Folly.

If you imagine tonight receiving an invitation to two wedding receptions, That were actually going to be held on the same day, On the same occasion.

[23 : 18] You might have a bit of difficulty juggling as to which of these you would actually choose to go to. And of course you'd be taking lots of things into consideration. You wouldn't want to offend either party, And you would want to actually try and make a choice on what you see are the best options.

Well, if you look at this chapter tonight in some sort of way like that, Think of it as an invitation to two wedding receptions at the same time. You can see one has been from what we've called Lady Wisdom.

Wisdom has built her house all the way through to verse 12. And the second one is from Madam Folly or Madam Foolishness, Who also sends out her invitation for you to reject Lady Wisdom's invitation, And to choose instead that you come to the reception that she, Madam Folly, has actually laid out for you.

Now, of course, in the ordinary sense, it's not desperately important which of the wedding receptions you would choose ordinarily. But it is when you think of these two invitations in this chapter.

Because one obviously leads to what is called here life, instruction, and all that's associated with that. The other really leads to death and ultimately to lostness.

[24 : 48] And wisdom in Proverbs is frequently mentioned, as you know, it's one of the chief topics with which the book of Proverbs deals. And wisdom in the book of Proverbs is not something just confined to someone that has natural insight.

Wisdom is very much part of what it means to know God and to accept the ways of God as against any other way. You can see that really from verse 10 here, where wisdom begins, or you might even take it as the foundation of wisdom being the fear of the Lord.

And we mentioned the fear of the Lord in a study some time ago, not very long ago, where we mentioned that, saw that the fear of the Lord has to do with the awe and the reverence and the love and the respect that we owe to God.

And it used to be the case, though not so much nowadays, I'm sure, that those who followed the Lord, Christians who actually valued and respected and followed the ways of the Lord, would be known as God-fearing.

God-fearing was a very honorable and still is a very honorable term. Although it's out of fashion and although it appears to the world to be very negative, something that you wouldn't want to be labeled with in the Bible, it's a huge, huge honor to be known as one of those who fears the Lord.

[26 : 15] Because God-fearing people are people who respect and follow the ways of the Lord through the Lord Jesus Christ.

So Proverbs, as it deals with wisdom, it sets out wisdom and foolishness by way of personifying them as two women. Two women who are calling people as they pass by their respective homes, calling them to come and partake of their banquet.

They have made a preparation, they've set up a banquet, and each wants people who are passing by to come and take of their banquet rather than the other one. And as we'll see tonight, the woman wisdom is a very elegant and beautiful woman, whereas the woman folly or foolishness is very ugly and has, is associated with, everything that's ugly in life.

And it's a way in which the book of Proverbs, as one of the wisdom books in the Old Testament, Psalms and Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, these are lumped together as the wisdom books.

Although wisdom runs through all of the books of the Bible, of course. But the wisdom books are particularly to do with teaching wisdom, teaching this fear of the Lord, teaching why it's important, teaching why, what it leads to, teaching various aspects of that fear of the Lord.

[27 : 45] And so here as we come to these two alternatives, you like, we have, as we say, the elegant woman, wisdom, and the ugly, dark woman, foolishness, folly, the opposite of wisdom.

The alternative life to a life of obedience to God. And as you see that you can actually trace all of this right into the New Testament. Of course, it's pretty much the same, almost exactly, as Paul is saying when he wrote to the Corinthians, where he talks about Christ, the wisdom, and the power of God.

And where you have the same competition between that which is against God and that which is on God's side. You remember how Paul there said the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are saved, being saved, it is the power of God.

And as he went on through there, you remember, he said that the Greeks seek after wisdom, the Jews demand signs, and the Greeks seek for wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, stumbling block to Jews, and foolishness to Gentiles.

But to those who are called both Jews and Greeks, that's an important emphasis. He says, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

[29 : 06] Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Where do you see the wisdom of God? Where do you see the things that this lady wisdom sets out in Proverbs 9?

Where do you see them most clearly of all? You see them in God in Christ. You see them in the person of Jesus, in the work of Jesus, in the death and resurrection of Jesus, and everything that you find in the New Testament and in the Gospel emphasis that here is the Saviour, here is the wisdom of which the book of Proverbs so frequently spoke.

Wisdom of salvation, the wisdom of knowing God. So let's look at these two invitations. First of all, Lady Wisdom's reception, verses 1 to 6.

And then you'll find what's on the menu and the invitations themselves. Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn her seven pillars, she has slaughtered her beasts, she has mixed her wine, she has set out her tables, she has sent out her young women to call from the highest places in the town.

Whoever is simple, let him turn in here to him who lacks sense. She says, come and eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways and live and walk in the ways of insight.

[30 : 20] You can see the description of her house. It's a house that's really grand. It's a mansion. It has all of these pillars. Some people think that it actually represents the temple. But in any case, it's a very grand edifice.

And that really is in keeping with the topic of wisdom itself, because wisdom is such a grand thing. Wisdom is such a beautiful thing. Wisdom is such a great thing.

And it becomes the emphasis on wisdom that Lady Wisdom has actually prepared such a magnificent place in which her reception is actually being held.

And of course, that illustrates for us the grandeur of God's salvation. The grandeur of the wisdom that is in Christ, as we saw Paul writing to the Corinthians about it.

There is no wisdom but that wisdom in Christ that's worth speaking about. The grandeur of that wisdom, the beauty of that wisdom, the greatness of that wisdom in contrast with the wisdom of the world.

[31 : 21] The Bible is presenting it to us in a way that shows that all the representations of it in the Bible are fitting of the topic itself. And what's on the menu in Lady Wisdom's house?

Well, she has a banquet. She has slaughtered her beast. She has mixed her wine. She has carefully set her table. And she sent out her young women with the invitation to call people to come to that reception.

In other words, it is very much to do with the best possible food, with the finest of ingredients, with the finest of dishes. Everything that's set on the table just speaks of sustenance and substance and beauty.

And the Bible very often describes the salvation that God has provided for us in Jesus as a grand banquet.

And that everything we find set out in Jesus for us is, spiritually speaking, the finest possible spiritual food. Let me just remind you of one of these passages in Isaiah's prophecy.

[32 : 33] If you find it, Isaiah 25. Isaiah 25 speaks about this banquet that God has provided. Looking ahead in Isaiah's day to the days of the Gospel.

And looking ahead to the way in which God's provision there would be so rich and so full and so meaningful in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's Isaiah 25, verses 6-8.

Here is how Isaiah described it for those of his own day in a prophetic way. On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food.

A feast of well-aged wine. Of rich food full of marrow. Of aged wild wine well refined. And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples.

The veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever. And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces. And you can see how the description spread into the emphasis there on spiritual life.

[33 : 42] The life that is so full of beautiful spiritual life. Represented by the best possible banquet. Here is what the Lord is going to prepare. And here is what is on the Gospel table for us tonight.

Here is what God is saying, I have prepared for you. I've prepared it for all people. It is an open invitation that is given. Lady Wisdom has set forth her servant. She is calling you and she is calling me to this great banquet tonight.

So that you and I will partake of this great feast. And if you just imagine for a moment. It is not really imagination. It is fact.

But just think for a moment. At the preparation of this great banquet. Lady Wisdom, even from these few words in chapter 9 of Proverbs, you can see she has gone to great expense and great detail and great outlay in providing this banquet for those that she is inviting.

Now how much more is it the case that that when it represents salvation in Christ, how much more is the reality in Jesus himself? Think of what it took to prepare this Gospel table, this Gospel banquet for the likes of you and me.

[34 : 53] How did the Lord set about preparing it? How was it actually provided for us? What did it take to provide this Gospel banquet for you and for me?

Well, you know the answer to that, I'm sure, already. It actually took nothing less than the price of Christ's life. He laid down his life.

He died the death of the cross. He rose again from the dead. All of that, step by step, is God preparing this wonderful banquet in the Gospel for us, in his salvation for us.

And all of these wonderful steps are God setting out his table and saying, Here, that's it now finished. All the food is fully prepared. It's laid out on the table for you.

And here is Lady Wisdom saying, Come and partake of this feast. Take up the invitation, because it's an invitation to the very best that God himself could provide.

[36 : 00] Now, God, tonight, expects that you and I will send in our RSVP. And there's no date on it, because he expects you to do it immediately.

Whenever you hear the Gospel call inviting you to life in Jesus Christ, to know the Savior as your own Savior, God doesn't say, respond to me by next week or by next month or by such and such a date.

He says, This now is the day of salvation. Today, if you hear his voice, don't harden your heart.

Don't actually send in your RSVP now by way of saying, Well, I'll leave it for the moment.

Because remember, leaving it for the moment is really the same thing as refusal. That's what it amounts to. And here is Lady Wisdom.

Here is the Lord. The Lord, through what he has done, preparing this wonderful banquet in the Lord Jesus Christ for us, the salvation that's in him. He's actually saying, Turn in here.

[37 : 09] She says here, Whoever is simple, let him turn in here. Now, that doesn't mean somebody who is really of a low intellectual capacity. Simple in the use of it here in the book of Proverbs actually means, it's got the idea behind the word of someone who needs to be taught, who has a mind that requires instruction.

And you can see how that in the book of Proverbs, in the first few chapters at least, you find, Hear my son, the instruction of a father. My son, my son, my son. It's a father instructing the child and teaching wisdom to the child.

Well, here is the word simple really behind it, as we say, has the idea of a mind that needs instruction. But you see, a mind that needs instruction can be led and can be misled, can be led in one direction or in the other direction, can be led in the way of accepting Lady Wisdom's invitation, or else alternatively and sadly and devastatingly and destructively, accepting Madam Folly's invitation.

You know these two voices for yourself. We're all familiar with them, I'm sure. Whenever we hear the gospel message, there's also something else there in our hearts and our minds that says, you don't need to do it just now.

That's Madam Folly calling and inviting you to listen to her side of it and to accept her view of things and for the moment not to comply with the voice of Lady Wisdom.

[38 : 46] And that's why both wisdom and foolishness are represented here as two women, each of them calling to those who are passing by.

You know this I think is very relevant indeed to us all, but relevant particularly in our day to our young people and to our children. Because this is exactly what they're facing.

And that's why we're so thrilled this morning to see all of these youngsters from creche right through to Bible class coming to the prize giving. And what a wonderful thrilling occasion that was.

But really what is behind, what's in our minds as we see that, is not just rejoicing at the number that do come to Sunday School and to these other activities and so on.

We also are very much aware that what we're doing is seeking to set them in the way of accepting Lady Wisdom's invitation. Because out there they're facing the invitation on the voice of Madame Folly.

[39 : 49] And it's there in our society, it's there even in our school setup, where even from government recommendations, we find elements in the teaching throughout the curriculum in our land that is really at odds with the Bible.

And you'll find not just in terms of spiritual, moral education, but also in terms of what sort of lifestyle people ought to live, people ought to choose.

Questions that really are set in young people's minds that ought never to be there at that early stage. That's Madame Folly's attempt to draw young people away from the truth, from the Lord, from the House of Wisdom, from the banquet of salvation.

And it's a privilege and it's our duty as a church, but also of course in our homes and our families, to actually set out these alternatives clearly for our young people, which is what we try to do.

As we try and say to them, look, here's the voice of Jesus, here's the voice of God, here's the invitation of God to come and accept what He lovingly and meaningfully and patiently is setting out for us in the Gospel.

[41 : 09] But we teach them too that there's another voice in the world, there's another voice you'll hear, there's another power at work that will try and ridicule these things, that will try and say to you, no, don't go down that route.

Don't listen to that voice. Instead, take the route of Madame Folly. Take the route of worldliness, of sin, of putting God aside and putting Him out of your life.

And it's so relevant that in the voice of the Gospel and truth on one side, there's also the voice of sin and death on the other side. Friends, let's never forget our children need our prayers daily so as to face these issues with the teaching of their Bible in their hearts, with the voice of Lady Wisdom completely outdoing and drumming out the voice of Madame Folly.

And we pray that you who have young families and who bring so faithfully your young families to church, to listen to the Gospel, to be part of the worship of God, we pray that your dedication and your commitment of the children to the teaching of the Gospel, the teaching of the church, the teaching of the Bible, that it will be blessed by God that your young children will grow up in the way that you want them to grow up, following the ways of the Lord, the ways of Lady Wisdom, not of

Madame Folly.

So here is Lady Wisdom's reception. All the way through there to verse 12, you have her invitation, you have some things that she specifies in terms of wise living.

[43 : 00] And when you turn to Madame Folly's reception from verse 13 to the end of the chapter, you find some similarities, some things indeed which are identical interestingly enough, but you'll also find things which are very, very different, indeed opposite to what you find in the invitations and the setup of Lady Wisdom.

First of all, the hostess herself. The woman, Folly, is loud. She is seductive and knows nothing. You see, she's such an opposite person to Lady Wisdom because what you find is that her emphasis is on the ways of sin, the ways of darkness, the ways of ignoring the voice of Lady Wisdom.

And you go through the book of Proverbs and you find chapters like chapter 7, for example, the words of the book of Proverbs and the Bible. And as we often say and see as we go into passages of the Old Testament, they're absolutely up to date for the day we live in, for the things we're facing, for the situation our children are facing as well.

And as you go through chapter 7 there, you can see from verse 4 how the warnings that are set out there. And then from verse 10, the woman meets him, this ugly Madam Folly.

[44 : 24] She meets him dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart. She's loud and wayward. Her feet do not stay at home. Now in the street, now in the market.

At every corner she lies in wait. She seizes him and kisses him. And with a bold face she says to him, I had to offer sacrifice. Today I've paid my vows. Now I've come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly.

And I found you. And I've spread my couch with coverings, colored linens from Egyptian linen. I've perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. Come, let us take out fill of love till morning. Let us delight ourselves in love. For my husband is not at home. He has gone on a long journey. He took a bag of money with him. At full moon he will come. In other words, he's away for a long time. And with much seductive speech she persuades him. With her smooth talk she compels him. While you and I are in church here tonight, there are thousands of our fellow human beings of all age groups, embroiled and enmeshed in the seductive ways of Madam Folly.

[45 : 35] Enmeshed in her tentacles, in her net. They have listened to her voice. They have followed her advice. They have taken up her ways.

And in the practices of so many sadly in our land, the sinful leanings of our hearts have capitulated to the voice of Madam Folly.

You see, having a worldly good time, we all know what that is. Some of us perhaps, thankfully, have never been part of that ever in our lives, but most of us have been.

And we thought that having a good time was the way to live. Having a good time in the ways of the world, in the sinful practices of the world. We thought that that was the best way we could possibly live.

And we listened to the voice that said to us, Oh, don't go with these religious people. Don't actually go to be involved in church attendance and listening to the gospel, and the kind of preaching that sets out the ways of sin and the ways of death and the ways of salvation, and all of these things that really people nowadays don't want to hear.

[46 : 52] That's the voice that says to you, Don't go down that route. Don't listen to these people. But you know, friends, having a good time in worldly terms is really just a covering for spiritual emptiness.

Covering for spiritual emptiness. Look at the people tonight that are involved in having a good time in a worldly sense, whether it's on a stage, whether it's at a concert, whether it's at any of these sort of activities, whether it could be Glastonbury or something smaller than that, ways of the world.

There are many other ways that you could mention along with that. I'm not confining by any means to that, or just picking out these deliberately. They're just examples. But all of these people who are living for the world and following the ways of Madame Folly, what are they trying to do?

They're trying to get something into their hearts that will satisfy. Something that will meet our deepest human needs. Something that will last for us. Something that will really build us up and give us a buzz against all the negative things that we come across in life.

And the Bible is telling us they might give you a buzz in a certain sinful sense. There are such things, as the Bible says, as the pleasures of sin. They're the things which Moses refused, but they're described in Hebrews, and in chapter 11 of Hebrews, as Moses refused them and chose instead to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than the short-lived pleasures of sin.

[48 : 31] You might have a whole lifetime of the pleasures of sin under the seductive ways of Madame Folly. But that's the end of them.

They're short-lived. And eternity is long without end. And there is no way back beyond the grave. There's no opportunity to relive your life. You can't come back and say, well, I made a mistake the first time, but now I know better. What the Bible is saying to you is, you know better now. And what the Word of God is saying to us all is, here is wisdom. And here is Madame Folly trying to drown out the voice of Lady Wisdom.

And as she cries out, this is the invitation that he's setting out. And you notice how she sits at the door of her house. She takes a seat on the highest places of the town.

[49 : 33] And you see that is the same exactly as what you find in verse 3. She has sent out her young women to call from the highest places in the town. I don't think that just means the highest, you know, in terms of natural height.

It also means surely in terms of influence. And the fact of the matter is, as you well know, in our society today, invitations from Madame Folly are sent out from the highest positions in the land. Because some of those in the highest places in the land, in our political system, in our government, are actually already capitulated long ago to the voice of Madame Folly.

And are recommending the ways of Madame Folly to us and to our children. From the highest places. She takes a seat in the highest places of the town.

Calling to those who pass by, Turn in here and take of my banquet. A sad, sad situation. A sad situation for Scotland, for our land.

[50 : 42] That really had such a magnificent impact from the Reformation all of these centuries ago. But you know, the gospel of the Reformation is still our gospel.

The truth of the Reformation is still our truth. And that's what we seek to have as an offset to the ways of Madame Folly. But what a sad spectacle it is.

That so many, even in the highest places, are following and recommending the banquet of Madame Folly. And sadly, many are listening and accepting the invitation.

Pray for our government. Pray for those in places of authority and influence. Pray for Christians amongst those who represent us in Parliament and in the Scottish Parliament.

Pray for those who are struggling to present the Christian view. We often find them criticized. We often find that they're singled out for criticism. When something happens and maybe they have a difficulty of really not complying or having a collective responsibility in government, as often is the case.

[51 : 58] Pray for those Christians in government. Pray for those who have made it known openly that they are the Lord's. They have an exceedingly difficult task nowadays. They are facing the seductive ways of Madame Folly.

They are facing those who have long since capitulated to Madame Folly and have influence in our land. And they are giving such a wide place to pressure groups that actually set out immoral ways of life that they recommend to our people.

And this is what Madame Folly is saying. What's on the menu with Madame Folly? Well, as we saw in chapter 7. She says here in chapter 9, Turn in here.

Stolen water is sweet. Bread eaten and secret is pleasant. Chapter 7. I don't need to read it again. It's very graphic. The Bible doesn't actually hide the things which really need to be stressed.

It doesn't pull any punches. It sets things out as they are. These are the ways of the world. These are the ways of sin. These are the ways of debauchery.

[53 : 06] These are the ways of a lifestyle that is at odds with the ways of God and with the ways of wisdom. Adultery. Sexual immorality. All of the things that are associated with that and related issues.

Human life. The life of the unborn. Those who are vulnerable in society.

The pressure brought upon those in medical practices to accept euthanasia. To go down that route that Madame Folly sets out for us as a society.

Hence, this is our situation. We have the advantage of the gospel. We have the advantage of knowing the truth. We have the responsibility and the privilege of living that truth.

Of saying to people, don't listen to Madame Folly. Come instead and listen to the voice of Lady Wisdom. Come and experience beauty and integrity and moral enhancement.

[54 : 14] And so that banquet is all about what is wrong. What is sinful. What is impure. And I say to the young people here, especially tonight.

Don't fall in with the ways of the world. Look after your life. Look after your moral reputation. Look after what you're doing with your life from day to day. And especially, don't listen to Madame Folly. Don't listen to the voice of foolishness.

The voice that tells you it's a wist of time to follow Jesus. And a voice that says, you'd be far better off forgetting all these things about the Bible.

You know that voice is not from God. You know that voice is the voice that hates God. The voice of Madame Folly, Madame Foolishness.

[55 : 12] So here is the great contrast we have in the chapter. And then look how it finishes. Here is Madame Folly. She's described. You can see what's on her table.

That sinful lifestyle that's set out there. Unabashedly. Grotesquely. Without shame. And look at how it finishes.

Here is somebody who has complied. Who has actually listened to her invitation and goes to take her banquet. And he hears, stolen water is sweet.

Bread eaten in secret is pleasant. Nobody knows you're doing these things. But he does not know that the dead are there.

And that our guests are in the depths of Sheol or hell or the grave. Different ways of translating that. You see, she's left her guest list has not actually been advertised in the call that she set out in the invitation.

[56 : 17] She mentioned nothing about the other guests who are coming. But here is the reality of the situation. Here is God telling us to listen to the voice of Madame Folly.

She's hidden the fact that her guests are the dead. That doesn't mean the literally dead. It means the spiritually dead. That her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

He does not know that the dead are there. She didn't tell him beforehand. And sadly many people find out too late. That the guests of Madame Folly are the dead. And you come to realize when you join them.

I didn't know about this. But tonight God is telling you. There are two voices. Two invitations.

Two receptions. Two banquets. Two women. A woman of beauty. And an ugly woman.

[57 : 18] A woman of integrity. And a woman of debauchery. And each of them is calling for your obedience. And God is saying to you.

Don't be a fool. And turn away from wisdom. Because the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. And the knowledge of the Holy One is inside. For by me your days will be multiplied. And years will be added to your life.

So tonight we have the two voices. The two banquets. We have a choice to make. And surely there's no doubt which choice you're going to make.

And I'm going to make tonight. The way of Jesus. The way of life. The way of sin. The way of death. The door. The door.

[58 : 25] To worldly happiness. Enters into. A corridor that leads to Sheol. To death. To hell. On the other hand.

The door to eternal happiness. Is Jesus himself. I am the door. By me if anyone enters in.

He shall find. Life. And may God bless these thoughts to us. Let's pray. Our gracious Father we thank you.

That you have highlighted for us in your word. The distinction between life and death. And the two ways that we find described in your word. All the way through your word.

Remember oh Lord the way that. You taught people during your days on earth. That there was indeed a broad way that leads to destruction. And the narrow way that leads to life.

[59 : 25] And few there be that find it. Help us Lord to be among those. Who follow that way to life. And to take pleasure and delight in it. We remember tonight Lord those who are walking in the way of death.

Those who are openly in defiance of you and of your word. And also those who know your word. And those who have known the gospel. For many years and yet have not. Capitulated their minds to Jesus. Who have not accepted him fully as their own. Lord bless them tonight if they're here. Or any other place where the gospel is proclaimed. Lord may it be a time when many are born again. And brought into the ways that lead to life. Hear us now we pray for Jesus sake.

Amen. Our final singing tonight is from Psalm 31. Psalm 31 verses 16 to 20. That's on page 37. [60 : 27] And the tune is Rockingham. Page 37 at verse 16.

Upon your servant shine your face. Save me in your unfailing love. Lord let me not be put to shame. For I have cried to God above. But like the wicked suffer shame. And silent in the grave abide. Suppress the lying lips which speak. Against the just with haughty pride. Your goodness Lord is very great. Prepared for those who fear your name. You show your goodness openly. To all who your protection claim. Your presence hides and shelters them. From those who plot to take their life. And in your tent you keep them safe. From evil tongues that stir up strife. These verses in Psalm 31 to God's praise. Upon your servant shine your face.

[61 : 36] Save me in your unfailing love. For I have cried to God above.

God above. But let the wicked suffer shame. But let the wicked suffer shame. And silent in the grave abide. That diocese coordin women page. Episode 32 Philippines 9. Le 2017 The just with all divine.

Your goodness, Lord, is very great. Prepared for those who fear your name. You show your goodness openly to all who your protection claim.

[63 : 23] Your presence guides and shelters them. From those who plowed to take their life.

And in your tent you keep them safe. From evil tongues that stir up stride.

I'll go to the main door this evening after the benediction just now. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[64 : 38] Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.