

12 S. after Pentecost 8/15/21
Proverbs 9:1-10 15B

WISDOM HAS BUILT HER HOUSE

“Wisdom has built her house” (v. 1). Ok, so ... where exactly is that house?

I ask you that because the book of Proverbs sets before us two paths: the way of wisdom and the way of folly. There is a struggle, tension, between following Wisdom or following foolishness.

To help us understand this, and especially to help us understand the words of our reading this morning, let me back up for a minute and explain what Proverbs, and the Bible, means when it says “Wisdom”. Wisdom is another name for Christ Jesus, 2nd Person of the Trinity, True God and True man. I point that out to you because sometimes, with our human reason, we tend to think of wisdom, being wise, as straight A’s in school; or being able to fix a computer; or... Just as Jesus is called “Emmanuel,” or “The Good Shepherd,” or “The Bread of Life,” He is also called Wisdom, as Paul does in 1st Corinthians, “Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1:24).

On the other side of the coin, folly, foolishness, is sin, the breaking of the Commandments. So, the book of Proverbs is forcing you to answer a very simple question: Are the you going to take up your cross and follow Jesus, the way of Wisdom, or continue in you sin and unrepentance, the way of folly, which leads to death and hell?

This is the same struggle that exactly what Jesus puts before the crowd in our lesson this morning, just in different words. Our Gospel readings these past Sundays have all been from the 6th chapter of John’s Gospel. A large crowd on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover followed

Jesus because of the signs, the miracles, they saw Him do (v. 2). He feeds them with the bread and fish, and they are so impressed with that, that they want to take Him “by force” to Jerusalem to make Him their king, so that He could do what Moses did and give them bread to eat every single day. And that sets up the Bread of Life discourse that Jesus has with them. And they do catch on – they catch on that Jesus is not going to give them loaves of bread to eat every day of their lives, as He had done in the wilderness. But rather than believing He is the Bread of Life, they grumbled (v. 41). They grumbled because He failed to meet their expectations. God so loved them that He wanted them to live forever, so He sent the Bread of Life in the flesh. But they wanted only bread for today, so their stomachs would be full.

When Jesus didn’t meet their expectations, “many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him” (v. 66). Which causes Jesus to ask the Twelve, “Do you want to go away as well” (v. 67)? To use the words of the book of Proverbs, those that went away chose the way of folly. So, Jesus poses the question to the Twelve: do you, too, want to follow folly, or follow Me, Wisdom?

Did you notice who these people were? The Evangelist notes for us that these are, “Disciples,” “After this many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him” (v. 66). Disciple – believer. That’s you. You have been baptized into Christ. You were asked the day of your confirmation, “Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession (the faith you confessed in your confirmation vows) and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?” And, oh how the devil wants you to fall away from it. It’s no joke to take sides against the devil. So, we find

ourselves struggling in the Church Militant; struggling between wisdom and folly; between following Jesus or the folly of sin.

Wisdom has built her house. And so has folly. In the verses immediately after our lesson ends, the 9th chapter of Proverbs says this,

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!" (vv. 13-16)

By the way, you notice in the words of our lesson that Wisdom, Jesus, is preparing the marriage banquet for us in heaven. But, Folly, sin, just sits, and calls and invites, and waits for her next gullible victim.

You know that cry and invite, don't you? The Apostle Paul reminds that in these last days, "...people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear" (2 Ti 4:3). And Folly tells those itching ears that they are too good for God to condemn to hell; that you can marry anyone you wish as long as you love them; you will be your own god on your own planet one day; that is perfectly fine to remain angry with your neighbor; that rather than fold your hands and pray for your neighbor, you can gossip about your neighbor and their marriage problems; and folly calls and calls.

And you know what that Folly gets you in the end? Death, for the wages of sin is death (Ro 6:23).

But, Good News of the Gospel is this: "Wisdom of built Her House". Or, to use the words of our Gospel reading, Jesus is that bread that came down from heaven and gave His flesh for the life of the world.

Do you recall the one story we have of Jesus' youth? The Evangelist Luke tells us that when Jesus was 12, His parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast, which was their yearly custom. When the Feast was over, they started for home and realized Jesus was not with them. They returned to Jerusalem and looked for Him for 3 days. The last place in all Jerusalem they looked for the Son of God was ... the House of God, the Temple. And their Son spoke to them, "Why were you looking for Me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house (2:49)?"

Jesus was in His Father's House because He came to do His Father's business. And that meant overcoming sin for us by dying for the sins of the world.

Perhaps nowhere do we see that clearer than in Gethsemane's Garden. There, He is sorrowful and troubled, He sweat drops of blood, and prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will" (Mt 26:39). The Father's will was done when the Bread of Life gave His flesh to be beaten, whipped, crowned with thorns, and nailed to the cross, where He overcame sin so that you, Dear Child of God, are forgiven.

And He rose again the 3rd day to build His house. And He built it right here in Beulah, North Dakota, at 801 Beacon Lane. He has built this House for you because you hunger and thirst for Righteousness, so Wisdoms calls, "Come, eat of My bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Let your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight" (vv. 5-6).

Here, He corrected and reproved, gave you instruction, taught you, when He called you and enlightened you the waters of your baptism. Here, you hear and learn His Word that makes us wise unto salvation in Jesus

and trains you in holy living. Here, He feeds you with the bread of life, as you eat and drink the life-giving Body and Blood of Jesus.

God does His work in you through these means because living a Christian life is a struggle. In this Church Militant, the fight is fierce and the warfare long, as we follow Wisdom, with the Folly of sin calling to us all the while. But, we have Christ. He built His house here at 801 Beacon Lane to shelter us from all the stormy blast, and He has prepared the marriage feast of the Lamb in heaven, where we will rest from all our struggles.