

September 11, 2022

Scripture: Proverbs 1:20-23 Wisdom shouts in the street; in the public square she raises her voice. Above the noisy crowd, she calls out. At the entrances of the city gates, she has her say: “How long will you clueless people love your naïveté, mockers hold their mocking dear, and fools hate knowledge? You should respond when I correct you. Look, I’ll pour out my spirit on you. I’ll reveal my words to you.”

Message: Finding a Word: Listening to the Texts by Pastor Jenn

How many of these common words of wisdom were you taught by your family members?

Never leave the house with wet hair

Always hold the door open

Mind your p’s and q’s

Practice makes perfect

If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all

Every generation passes on wisdom for living, wisdom that is believed to help a society prosper. Proverbs is Israel’s traditional wisdom that passes on life experiences that they have been through and how best to survive what may come.

Here’s the background to this book. In 1 Kings 3 we read how King Solomon is offered the gift of anything he wants from God. And Solomon chooses to discern what is right and what is evil. God gives Solomon the gift of wisdom. Wisdom literature in the Bible offers writings of what is right and what is evil as guidance to one’s life. Wisdom literature is found in the Biblical books of Psalms, Job, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs that begins, **Wisdom shouts in the street; in the public square she raises her voice. “How long will you clueless people hate knowledge? You should respond when I correct you. Look, I’ll pour out my spirit on you. I’ll reveal my words to you.”**

With those words, we recognize that there has been some concerns and trials that the Israelites faced, when this book was written, so wisdom, must be heard. Therefore, what is to follow are proverbs. The word proverb is defined as: a traditional saying or phrase that expresses a perceived truth. Proverbs often give practical advice and are based on the shared human experience.

Here are some proverbs from the book:

Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Proverbs 22:6 Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Proverbs 28:13 Those who conceal their sins do not prosper, but those who confess and renounce them find mercy.

Notice these words of wisdom deal with the core of the Jewish faith, to love God and love others. These words call upon Israel to reflect on their relationship with God and with others, just as they call upon us to do the same. And we should. We should be reading our Bibles more often and reflecting upon its words. Because when it comes down to it, when we need advice, or guidance, we need words of wisdom to listen and learn from, to hold onto, because we never know when we may need those texts.

It is the 21st anniversary of 9/11. Most of us are old enough to remember that day. We remember the shock, and the helpless feeling we had as we watched buildings being attacked, while there was nothing that could stop it.

I was actually driving to Washington DC that day, from Harrisburg, because I was going to seminary from my first appointment in Halifax. But as I got past York, and heard the attacks in DC, I got off the road and called my parents, who lived near DC at the time, only to be told not to come down as DC was shutting down.

I headed home. And as I did, I listened to everything unfold on the radio. Like how some Muslim extremists were claiming the attacks, even though I knew that is not the way of the Koran nor the Muslim faith, sadly that's how destructive extremists can be with their faith.

Then I kept hearing about the people rushing into the buildings to help. Praying for their strength and safety, along with the victims.

At that point I also began to wonder what does this mean for the future? For you see I had just found out, a few weeks prior, we were expecting our first child. What *was his world going to be like?*

Like many, I spent most of the day of weeping and praying. But then I called together a service at the church and as we gathered that evening, I passed around the Christmas candles I brought out of storage, and we shared the light of Christ with each other as I read these words of wisdom from Psalm 46.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Come, behold the works of the Lord;... He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. 'Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.' The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

This Psalm was written during a time when the Israelites felt like the world around them was falling apart, as empire after empire was attacking them. *Yet God called upon them to look beyond the noise, be still and know God.*

Just as I shared these words 21 years ago, I share it with you today, because *no matter the difficulties that may arise, we have God on our side, the Lord of hosts is with us*, God is our refuge, our strength, and when we are still, when we know and recognize the blessed assurance in that truth, revealed in the Word of our Lord, the wisdom of our God that speaks.

And so today we are going to take a few moments to center ourselves on God's word. There is a tradition called *Lectio divina* which means divine reading that invites us to hear scripture read, then meditate on it. I will share a combination of our Scripture texts today, and after I read them, I will invite you meditate on them, let them speak to you as Shawn plays music quietly in the background. Then if and when you feel moved, you can write or draw what the divine reading said to you.

Reflection: Appointment with God

Wisdom shouts in the street; in the public square she raises her voice.

¹ God is our refuge and strength, a very present* help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; ³ though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.⁸

Above the noisy crowd, she calls out. Look, I'll pour out my spirit on you .I'll reveal my words to you."

¹⁰ 'Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.' ¹¹ The Lord of hosts is with us.*

Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Holy Wisdom, nudge us into new insights for living the fullness of life with You and with each other. Take us deeper into the place where our own knowing is touched by your hand. We join this prayer with all those offered during this time with you, and we pray together the prayer of Jesus: Our Father...