

Proverbs 9:1-6. Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars. ² She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table. ³ She has sent out her maids, and she calls from the highest point of the city. ⁴ "Let all who are simple come in here!" she says to those who lack judgment. ⁵ "Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. ⁶ Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of understanding.

Hear Wisdom's Invitation

- 1. Recognize Superior Wisdom*
- 2. Walk in the Way of Understanding*

A good Christian woman sat in her regular seat at the Bible class table and said to her pastor. "The more I learn in this class the more I realize I have so much to learn about God and his Word." The point that this woman was trying to make is not that her Bible classes were somehow lacking in their ability to help her know it all, but to the contrary, the more she learned in the Bible classes she attended, the more she realized there was just so much wisdom that God gives to us in his word.

The Bible is rich with wisdom. In his Word the LORD gives us spiritual wisdom. And yes, many of us have known from infancy, these Words of God that that make us wise for salvation. We know how our God sent his Son to save us sinners. In his Word our God informs us of the problem of sin and then goes on to detail the beautiful and gracious means, and the manner, and the method by which he saves us. He then also shows us our purpose as redeemed and forgiven children of the most high. Not to end there, the LORD in his mercy gives us instruction and encouragement on how we are to carry out our purpose of serving our God with a thankful heart. Through historical accounts, through both poetry and prose, parable and clearly stated truth, he tells us about himself and what he has done for us. He shows us his love, his care, and his will for our lives. He details his desire that we would be saved and that we would live with him in the realms of eternal paradise.

Our LORD reaches out through his Holy Word gives us a feast of eternal wisdom and his word wells us for us with wise and practical instruction for the day to day. The LORD speaks of how we are forgiven are we have eternal life through our crucified and risen Savior, and he speaks to how we, with our Savior's help, are to live our lives as citizens and neighbors, and children and parents, husbands, and wives, friends, employers and employees. Our God warns us of the dangers that would be wise to avoid, and gives instruction in the ways that are good. No matter our age, our academic capability, or our spiritual maturity, we can always learn more about our God and his Word and his will for our life. And all of this is not merely about some pursuit to fill the head with knowledge, it is not just about mere facts, but it is about obtaining and

receiving the wisdom that God has in store for his people. It is about feeding our souls, strengthening our faith, He calls out to us and our LORD has a strong desire for us to hear his Word, to be strengthened in our faith, brought closer and closer to him, so that we may become wise for salvation and wise in the ways of righteousness. His word includes everything that our LORD would have us believe and to do. And so it is only natural that he wants us to hear his Word. He wants us to take in every last bit of wisdom that we can. To taste every morsel, to drink in every drop of his heavenly wisdom.

The book of Proverbs describes God's gracious invitation and burning desire that we would have such wisdom in a rather unique way. In Proverbs chapter 9, wisdom is personified as a woman. And of course because this is the wisdom that comes from God this is no ordinary woman, but this is one who is clearly extraordinary. Imagine that scene that Solomon describes. This is a woman who is well to do. She has built her own house, and it is far from some shanty she just threw together, but it is house that was carefully crafted, complete with seven, no doubt, elegant, pillars adorning this structure. And there in this home that she has made is nothing short of a feast, complete with the finest of meats and wine all perfectly prepared by her for her guests. What a marvelous setting? What a magnificent feast? Clearly this is a place to be! Clearly this Wisdom is a cut above the rest.

The wisdom of the Holy Scriptures still stands out as a wisdom that is clearly superior, just as much as it did in Solomon's day. Today, information and knowledge is so incredibly accessible and yet God's Word still stands out as superior. Today we live in such an information age that with just a few clicks, a few taps, a few key strokes you could read newspapers from around the nation, you could read the USA Today, the Washington Post, or the New York Times just as easily as your local newspaper. You can research facts, gather up and take in information from around the world, faster than you could ever do this before. In fact not only can we search out information, often it comes to us. Email boxes are filled with the day's top stories, our Facebook and Twitter feeds nudge us with the latest news. The nightly news and the daily newspaper, books and magazines, blog posts and infomercials, documentaries, episodes of satirical news and TV specials surround us and call out for our attention as they offer their take on wisdom and knowledge. That which is laid before us on a daily basis in this information age can be a cluttered mess of the good and bad that we wade through. And while some of this information can be enriching and entertaining and educational some of this information can also include the wisdom of this world. And so while it might not be necessary to throw all your books and magazines, get rid of your computer and TV, we must at this be aware of the influence such things can have on our life. The wisdom, really, the foolishness of the world seeks to crowd into our life through all these mediums and creep into our thinking as advertising and opinion pieces and things posted on the internet and watched on TV try to sell us on worldly values. Foolish and worldly wisdom is often wrapped up as required reading and subtly and sometimes not so subtly the wisdom of this world seeks to influence how we live, and what we believe.

The wisdom of this world many times urges us to serve self, to ignore or contradict God's holy will, and listen to the ways of the world and our flesh. We are invited to snack on and indulge in the junk food of this world that often has detrimental effects on our spiritual health.

It is in this setting, in this midst of such a quagmire of information, and worldly wisdom that God comes to us and offers us this most gracious and lovely invitation. Come and listen to me. Come and receive my wisdom. Come into my house that is uncluttered and lovely. Feast upon that which is good and excellent. In the midst of this world filled with so much information and junk food wisdom the words of the Holy Scriptures continue to stand out, all the more, as lovely and wise. The LORD wants us to recognize that his divine wisdom is superior to anything else that this world can offer. More lovely than all the knowledge in this world, more nourishing than the false wisdoms of our time, is the Wisdom of our God. Picture again that display that we see here in the book of Proverbs. An elegant house carefully crafted. A wonderful meal so meticulously prepared.

One would expect from experience in our culture and our world that such extravagance is only for the elite. However, this finest of feasts is for all, as Wisdom sends out her maids to the highest point of the city so that everyone and anyone could hear. And this is the message: ⁴ ***“Let all who are simple come in here!” she says to those who lack judgment.*** ⁵ ***“Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed.*** ⁶ ***Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of understanding.***

Wait, what! ***Let all who are simple come in here!*** Is God calling me simple, is he calling me dumb? This all sounded really good when we were talking about a mansion and a feast, but there is a hesitation, a chaffing that comes about as we hear the words, ***“Let all who are simple come in here!”*** In this age of information that we live in we can easily settle into the thinking that I know enough. At the very least, if I need to I can look it up later. In our pride we like to think that we have it all figured out.

Rather than an insult let us understand what that woman at that Bible study table recognized. We are not perfect. As sinners we will never have a complete understanding of God and his holy will. We are to recognize that there is always room to grow. There is always knowledge to be gained and most importantly wisdom from God that is to be had, held onto and enjoyed. When compared to God and his brilliance,

when compared to God's understanding we are terribly lacking in our understanding, we are so terribly incapable of living how the LORD wants us to live even though he so clearly lays it all out before us. We are simple and he is holy. We lack understanding and it is clear in the way that we live, and yet God is rich in mercy and patience and love and so he sends out and extends that gracious invitation. Come in, eat my words, drink in my mercy. Learn more and more about who your God is and what he has done for you. He prepares such a lovely feast, he lays it before us day after day, and he calls us to partake of his excellent Wisdom.

Once we recognize such wisdom as good, as superior, once the LORD leads us to have a hunger and thirst for his word and his wisdom, what we do with that wisdom is

key. After all, the very word wisdom implies more than mere knowledge, but knowledge in action. Wisdom is the quality of good judgment. Wisdom has been defined as the ability to think and act using knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense, and insight. It is one thing to be aware of the wisdom of God, it is another thing to actually heed its call. We are to take in this lovely feast that God has prepared for us, to drink in his Wisdom, his love, and his instruction, but how is this then going to affect our daily lives? How is that good judgment, that wisdom, going to be displayed in the choices that we make and the lives that we live.

I think our lesson from the book of Ephesians speaks to this in a very practical way. ***Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹ Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

As we gather here, we regularly gather together in God’s house for a spiritual feast. We are nourished and fed by the Wisdom of God and together we are strengthened and then sent on our way, not just so that we can be filled with knowledge and facts about God, but we come and we are encouraged so that we may live – not as unwise but as wise. Our LORD has cleansed us and saved us through Jesus Christ, and he has set aside as his own dear children to live a life of righteousness and follow the paths of understanding that he has laid out for us. But the days are evil, sin surrounds us, the foolishness of this world seeks to mislead us, so we come back time again to be strengthened and instructed, nourished and fed. The clutter of this world and its sinful wisdom that has collected and rubbed off on us during the past week is rinsed off us of and the clutter that has collected is cleared away from before us so that we know what the LORD’s will is and we can clearly see the path that he lays before us. Our God wants to avoid greed, and immorality, drunkenness, and debauchery. All these things the world often paints as good and pleasurable and wise, but by God’s grace we know better. We have been given the wisdom of our LORD which gives us wisdom to live our lives by.

So let us encourage one another so that we not only recognize and savor this wisdom that comes from God, but let us encourage one another so that we avoid the easy, simple and sinful ways of this world and follow instead the path of understanding and wisdom that comes from our God. Hear the gracious invitation for the Wisdom that comes from God. Wisdom that makes it clear how God wants us to live our lives and Wisdom that reveals how our Savior in his unparalleled love gave his life for you and for me. Come and come back again and again to drink in and eat this wisdom that comes from God because we can never know enough. Amen.