

Proverbs 9:1-6  
August 19, 2018 – 13<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

## Wisdom Keeps Calling

✦ All prepared (vv.1-2)

✦ Blessing with abundance (vv.3-6)

In the Name of Jesus “*who became for us the wisdom from God...*”<sup>1</sup> dearly redeemed believers:

Did you ever have someone say something that rings a bell? It’s been rattling around in the back of your mind, then, “Ding!” someone points out the obvious. A professor’s comment years ago: “There’s a lot of theology in science fiction.” He was talking about *Star Trek*, but *Star Wars* fits too. Low cost movie collections are bringing back old titles you might never have watched otherwise. One rang that bell again. It was all about searching for life in outer space. (They assume the *Big Bang* is absolutely true, but any possibility of God the Creator must be false.) Except our hero finds three orbs on a moon of Saturn and two other places unknown. They channeled messages through him all the way back to the beginning of the solar system! It’s so important for him to follow his dream that he divorces his wife who has already waited for him five years back on earth. (An act of kindness?) He had to find out why “they” had sent him these messages. But the point of all his discoveries? “We are not alone.”

And all the Sunday School kids say, “I knew that! Jesus is always with us. God created us. The angels are all around to protect us from harm. Of course we’re not alone!”

Of our world the Holy Spirit says through Paul: “*Although they claim to be wise, they have become fools....*” (Romans 1:22) Makes you glad, doesn’t it? **Wisdom Keeps Calling.** Don’t worry it’s...

✦ All prepared (vv.1-2)

Today the dear Holy Spirit takes us to the table, to the temple and to the tabernacle.

At first glance this seems like *personification* where a writer takes an abstract idea like **Wisdom** and puts personality on it. “*Wisdom has built her house. She has carved out her seven pillars. She has prepared her meat. She has mixed her wine. She has already set her table.*”<sup>2</sup>

**Wisdom** as a builder is popping up in the WELS Kingdom Worker search for a world wide a Builders for Christ Director. Echoing our text: “*He has filled them with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills. Exodus 35:31*” A manager of building projects will require “*knowledge*” – in Hebrew basically the “data.” How you put that “data” together requires “*understanding*” – the ability to think in the abstract, looking a plans and seeing in your mind’s eye what it should look like on the ground. But to be the Director for Builders for Christ requires a special gift from *the Spirit of God: wisdom*. Where does that begin? “*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*” (Proverbs 9:10 NIV84)

Why has **Wisdom** “*carved out her seven pillars*”? We can’t get too dogmatic about this, but faithful Bible scholars have observed that *seven* comes up in contexts of *judgment*. *Judgment* against someone is *condemnation*. You’ll find that especially in Revelation. But *judgment* in someone’s favor is *acquittal*. That’s another reason why *seven* seems to be the *covenant* number. *Three* is constantly used in lists for the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. *Four* earth – N-S-E-W. *Seven*: God for us.

But now the preparation picture actually gets a little messy, even gruesome. Sounds plain enough in English: “*She has prepared her meat. She has mixed her wine. She has already set her table.*”

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:30 – EHV ~ *Evangelical Heritage Version* (<http://wartburgproject.org>). NPH, © 2017 (800-662-6022).

More literally, that would be, “*She has slaughtered her sacrifices.*” Where would you go in Israel to find slaughtered sacrifices, and poured out wine on tables? Hard to miss the temple here, isn’t it? Hundreds of innocent animals were sacrificed year by year according to God’s command, even though none of that blood could wash away a single sin. Yet the lesson for the Jews and for us through them is this gruesome truth: “*Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*” (Hebrews 9:22 NIV84)

If you know your temple sacrifices, there was one called the Fellowship Offering that was much like a picnic with steaks on the grill. Everyone in the family was supposed to enjoy it, even the priests. That was another way of picturing the innocent lamb on the altar with wine poured out for fellowship. Does that sound like a foreshadowing of Holy Communion? The Holy Spirit points us there with that famous quote from Isaiah: “*He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.*” (53:7 NIV84) We share in the blessings of that sacrifice as often as we receive Christ’s body and blood – in, with, and under – the bread and wine by His command and promise in His Holy Supper. Years ago a member told me how his pastor would always say, “Come, for all things are now ready.” Reminds you of this, doesn’t it? **Wisdom Keeps Calling – All prepared.**

We need that comfort of **Wisdom’s** special meal because we live in a violent world where we are still targets of evil all around. “*Yet for your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.*” (Romans 8:36 NIV84) “*Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.*” (Revelation 5:6) **Wisdom** keeps...

#### ✦ **Blessing with abundance (vv.3-6)**

<sup>3</sup>*She has sent out her servant girls.*<sup>[SEP]</sup>*She calls from the highest point in the city,* <sup>4</sup>*“Whoever is naïve, let him turn in here.” To someone who lacks sense she says,* <sup>5</sup>*“Come, eat my food,*<sup>[SEP]</sup>*and drink the wine that I have mixed.”* Folly will call from on high with much the same words. Listen to **Wisdom**.

From the table to the temple, and still at the temple, remember how Satan proved to be God’s “ape” again? Luther liked to say that, “Satan is God’s ape.” Whatever God does, Satan will try to copy in a mocking way. So as **Wisdom Keeps Calling** “*from the highest point of the city,*” you may remember when Satan tempted Jesus. The old evil foe took Jesus to the highest point of the temple and dared Him: “*If you are the Son of God,*” he said, “*throw yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”* (Matthew 4:6f NIV84) Jesus fights foolishness with **Wisdom**. As God’s Word Incarnate, **Wisdom** prevails.

And that is how **Wisdom** wins out for us in practical, hands on matters too. We still enjoy God’s **Blessing with abundance** just as the Israelites did out there in the desert with Moses. From the table to the temple to the tabernacle – **Wisdom Keeps Calling**. And only “*the fear of the LORD*” could give you a beginning of **Wisdom** to understand how awesome this really is in real life.

Building the tabernacle in the desert, Moses said to the Israelites, “*See, the Lord has chosen Bezalel...of the tribe of Judah, and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts.*” (Exodus 35:30ff NIV84) He had abstract *understanding* of *designs* given by God in heaven for *master craftsmen* with *the ability to teach others*. They called on “*every skilled person to whom the Lord had given ability and who was willing to come and do the work.*” But even the folks without those skills found **Wisdom Blessing with abundance**. It’s in the one problem: “*The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the LORD commanded to be done. Then Moses gave an order and they sent this word throughout the camp: ‘No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary.’ And so the people were restrained from bringing more.*” Such overflowing generosity is the Holy Spirit’s “*grace of giving.*” (2 Corinthians 8:7) Word and sacrament power up our offerings and financial management. **Wisdom Keeps Calling**. Amen.