

True Wisdom

Text: Proverbs 9:1-10

Hymn: "Lord Jesus Christ, You Have Prepared" (LSB 622)

Freaky Friday is a comedy about a mother and daughter forced to adapt to each other's life by living in each other's body. Kind of silly. One of the scenes, at least in the 2003 version, for school each day as the daughter is dropped off, the mom yells out, "Make good choices!" That's not a bad idea. It certainly beats what Jill and I were doing for a while; influenced by the 1990 comedy *Home Alone* we'd send our children off with, "Keep the change, you filthy animal!" and pretend to shoot a machine gun.

But, no, maybe better to follow Jamie Lee Curtis's example and say, "Make good choices!" Because that is every Christian parent's prayer that their children make good, wise decisions. But how will they know what is good and wise? How will our children, including the kingdom's newest member, Dylan, learn wisdom? Where do any of us learn true wisdom? What is wisdom?

King Solomon prayed that God would give him wisdom. And Solomon's words in our text today are about exactly that, wisdom. It speaks of wisdom being a builder, a preparer of a banquet, a server of a fine drink, an inviter of the simple and those who lack sense to her feast, and an instructor of dealing with wise and foolish people.

Nations and kingdoms have wrestled with wisdom. Trying to define it. Trying to master it. Trying to re-invent it. And trying to keep God out of all of it.

A thousand years after King Solomon, St. Paul wrote, "Who is the one who is wise?" "Where is the debater of this age?" "Greeks seek wisdom." "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" And then a little later, St. Paul says, "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men" (1 Cor 1:20, 22, 25).

This world's wisdom is always foolish. The world's wisdom is always silly and reckless and, quite frankly, evil. Adam and Eve's desire to be like God and to rise above His law by eating of the fruit of the tree, they thought it most wise. But it was so foolish, and they brought sin into the world. The descendants of Noah put all their worldly wisdom together to build themselves a city and a tower, with its top to the heavens, to make a name for themselves. They thought it was most wise but God babbled their wisdom and made them all look foolish. Egypt, such a strong power in the world with its pyramids and gods of nature, and God knocked down their little gods with plagues. He delivered His people out of slavery and how foolish this superpower looked with its horses and riders fallen into the sea!

Nation after nation. Power after power. With their military might, their scientific expertise, their philosophies of building a perfect world on earth, one by one toppled and confused and defeated by God. Foolish Babylon. Foolish Roman Empire. Foolish Third Reich.

But our worldly wisdom will still win out, won't it? Our human minds and intellects and superiority will evolve into a superhuman wisdom yet, won't it? Is there any limit to man? Oh, how the wisdom of the world shines and glows! Surely riots in the streets, toppling statues and storming capitols will bring peace to the world! Surely hating and jeering at police officers will bring law and order to society! Surely the killing of unborn children will bring freedom and dignity to the human race! Such wisdom!

Surely my idols of money and control will bring me joy and contentment in this world! Such wisdom! Surely my gossip and slander of those in my own little circle will make me look good and strengthen my relationships! Such wisdom! We've got to hand

it to ourselves—our accumulated self-confidence, self-esteem, self-worth, and self-adulation—has paid off! We have become wisdom superheroes, almost perfecting the world, haven't we?

Of course not. We are worse than simple and lacking in sense. We are foolish. Chasing one worldly claim to wisdom after another. Like some big game, we grab the latest and best worldly wisdom that pops its head out of the hole and claim we've finally grabbed wisdom until something better comes along and we grab for that instead! What wisdom are you pursuing? What wisdom are you chasing after to make you content and satisfied? Where do you put your whole life and eternity? What wisdom gives you pleasure that has put an end to all of your fretting and striving in this world?

When you search your heart and your soul and your very purpose in life, the meaning of your existence, and where and how you will spend all eternity, in which treasure box of wisdom have you placed all of your hope and eternal life?

True wisdom is Jesus Christ. In Hebrew, the word for wisdom is feminine, which is why Wisdom is often portrayed as female, but don't let that confuse you. In the passage immediately before ours this morning, Wisdom herself speaks and describes herself as existing even before creation, as a master builder, who made the skies and established the fountains of the deep.

Wisdom, in other words, is more than a *what*. Wisdom is a *who*. The Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity. The One the Gospel of John calls the Word. He is the Father's voice to this world and He reveals the Father's heart. He is eternal Wisdom. And He gives us true wisdom, wisdom that remains when everything else is

gone, that brings us through every misfortune we suffer in this world and ushers us into heaven on the Last Day.

Wisdom, Jesus Christ, has built her house. Jesus Christ, through whom all things were made, is the creator of the world and all that is in it with all of its wisdom that comes from Him, with all of the wisdom of this world's systems and processes and cycles and intricate workings. That's God's working in creating the world.

But we rebelled against Wisdom. We rebelled against God and fell into sin and death and hell. We became foolish and gullible. We became sinful and self-confident and self-praising and self-centered and evil.

But Wisdom has come to rebuild her house. King David wanted to build a house for God, a temple for God, but God said, "No; instead I will build you a house. I will build you a kingdom that will last forever." And He was speaking of our Savior Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, who had come to this earth to recreate us and to raise us from sin and death, come to forgive us all of our sins, and to give us eternal life. St. Paul writes, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation" (2 Cor 5:17). "...a member of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone." Christ has reconciled us to Himself. He has built us—rebuilt us—by dying for us. And this is Wisdom!

"For since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through worldly wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. We preach Christ Crucified, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:21). It looks so foolish to the world, and yet the blood and the crucifixion and the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a wisdom that cannot be matched.

It is a power that cannot be overthrown. It's a treasure that cannot be compared to all the world's treasure and dreams.

So, Jesus Christ comes into this foolish world and into our foolish lives and He lays His life down for you and He invites you to Himself. How foolishly wise is that! And He prepares a meal for us. We bring our repentant hearts and He gives us His body and blood. He prepares a table for us in the presence of our enemies and He forgives our sins, every one of them. We sing "Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world," and we who are simple and lack sense when it comes to loving God and our neighbor, we hear Wisdom say, "Turn in here, Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have fixed. Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight!" And we feast at the Table of the Lord. And yet when we receive the Lord's body and blood, it is but a foretaste of the feast to come, as Wisdom, our Lord Jesus Christ, invites us to the eternal feast in His kingdom.

Do you know of any wisdom wiser than that? In this world's warring madness and absolute foolishness, we cling to the one thing needful, no more fretting or striving, but living peaceful lives, having Jesus Christ. We have nothing to offer Him, but Wisdom lays down his life to make us new and holy in His sight.

So, here's a word for our children. Here's a word for us! "Make good choices!" Which is to say, "Live in your baptism. Live in Christ who redeemed you and bought you with His own blood." He is not just Wisdom. He is *our* Wisdom. Jesus Christ. Our eternal treasure. Amen.

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