



Proverbs 1:20-33

“Wisdom is Calling, Will You Answer?”

20 Wisdom calls aloud outside; She raises her voice in the open squares.

21 She cries out in the chief concourses, At the openings of the gates in the city She speaks her words:

22 "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorners delight in their scorning, And fools hate knowledge.

23 Turn at my rebuke; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you.

24 Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded,

25 Because you disdained all my counsel, And would have none of my rebuke,

26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes,

27 When your terror comes like a storm, And your destruction comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you.

28 "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.

29 Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the LORD,

30 They would have none of my counsel And despised my every rebuke.

31 Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, And be filled to the full with their own fancies.

32 For the turning away of the simple will slay them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them;

33 But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, And will be secure, without fear of evil."

One of the things that our culture holds dear is pluralism, the idea that there cannot be one truth, or one way of salvation, there have to be many different paths to heaven.

But what the bible teaches us again and again, is that there are only two paths there is the way of life and the way of death. The way of light and the way of darkness. The way of wisdom and the way of foolishness.

Proverbs tells us that the way of wisdom is the way of the fear of the Lord, the wise hear his words and follow them. They listen to His counsel and go in the way that He has directed. Fools scorn his instructions and follow the pathway of their own fallen desires.

As we went through the book of Jeremiah we saw again and again, the Lord setting those paths before his people and telling them to choose the way of wisdom, the way of life.

Jer. 21:8 " Now you shall say to this people, 'Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.

But instead of fearing him they mocked at his messenger and so the Lord summed it up this way:

Jer. 4:22 "For My people are foolish, They have not known Me. They are silly children, And they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, But to do good they have no knowledge."

Jesus unfortunately dealt with the same problem that Jeremiah encountered. He came to a spiritually dull people, but he too set the two paths before his followers using a number of different images but perhaps the most obvious was in Matt. 7:13-14 ***"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."***

But both Jeremiah and Christ, and the other prophets did not give up, but continued to cry out to warn their people that they must choose the way of life before it is too late. Like Noah, a preacher of righteousness who pled with his people that the day of judgment was coming and that they needed to be in the ark before it was too late, the prophets spent their ministries calling out to foolish. Jeremiah's ministry could be summarized in verses 20-22 He opened his voice in the open square asking how long would they love simplicity?

But in verse 23 of this proverb we see that the speaker is more than just a prophet, it is the wisdom of God personified, incarnate, and as such Wisdom can do something that Jeremiah couldn't do. He could warn the people, but he could change them himself. This wisdom can. She says, ***"Turn at my rebuke; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you."***

This Wisdom can pour out the Spirit and change the heart. This is Christ speaking. Offering grace again to those who have refused it. As Charles Bridges puts it, ***"Wisdom, the Son of God himself, now appeals to us in all the fullness of his divine authority and grace. Full of deep love for sinners, he calls aloud. Not in the temple, but in the street, ... in the public squares;"*** He has stretched out the hand of mercy again and again, and they have refused it in a statement that reminds one of what God says in Is. 65:2 I have **stretched out My hands** all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in a way *that is not good*, According to their own thoughts;

But instead of hearing and obeying, they mock at the word of God, they scorn grace, they don't just ignore the word of God, they hate it. That's something you always see in the new atheists and those who have followed the way of folly for a long time. They don't mock the words of Buddha, they don't

waste time writing words of condemnation for Hinduism or the Norse religions, they save their greatest contempt for God and his word. I can't even read some of the things Dawkins has written about God, they are too blasphemous. They despise every rebuke, every warning, they are like foolish child headed towards destruction who hates the counsel of his mother and father and instead listens to the affirmations of his foolish friends.

They mock God and they laugh at His word, but God will have the last laugh. Now is the age of grace, now is the time to repent, but God warns that the time is coming when it will be over. God, the good king sends out his messengers with offers of peace to the rebellious city, but they fools do what the people of Ammon did to David's messengers, 2 Sam. 10:4 ***Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away.***

They ridicule them and humiliate them and send them back. And in doing so, they brought David's fury down upon themselves. Men do the same thing with God. They are sowing the wind and will reap a whirlwind. There are many stupid things a man can do in his lifetime, but the stupidest is to try to pick a fight with God, to say to Him, "I DARE YOU TO JUDGE ME!" Because God has the last laugh.

When the day of judgment comes, the Lord says He will laugh: Verse 26 ***I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes,***

27 When your terror comes like a storm, And your destruction comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you.

This is rather like what we see in ***Psalm 2:4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The LORD shall hold them in derision.***

5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure:

Then they will run about looking for grace but it will be too late. They will as he says "eat the fruit of their own way" They've set the table for a banquet of destruction, and they will eat it: As Bridges puts it:

"This seems to be adverse with the modern idea of the God of love: Does this measureless wrath seem to be inconsistent with a God of love? But God is a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24). Think about God's knowledge. Instead of it being a delight, they hated it and did not choose to fear the Lord. None of God's advice was accepted. All his rebukes were spurned. Is it not just that sinners following their own choices should eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes? The moral elements of sin constitute a hell in themselves, apart from the material fire. As Chalmers has remarked, "The fruit of sin in time, when arrived at full and finished maturity, is justly the fruit of sin through eternity. It is merely the sinner reaping what he has sown. It makes no violent or desultory step from the other, as does the fruit from the flower. It is simply that the sinners 'will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.'"

Applications:

1) Get out of the way of foolishness, the way of destruction as quickly as you can. It is not safe to be found in it for a single hour, but also, just as growth in wisdom is progressive so is growth in foolishness. We see 4 Different kinds of progressive foolishness here each successively worse:

There is the naïve, the fool, the bigger fool and then the scoffer.

Jim Newheiser puts it this way:

“The naïve is committed neither to good nor evil (vv. 4,10, 22; 8:5; 27:12). Because he has not devoted himself to wisdom, he is vulnerable to seduction by Madame Folly (7:7; 9:4). Because he has not yet given himself over to folly, there is hope that he will turn to wisdom before it is too late (9:4–6).

The fool (Hebrew keciyl) has rejected wisdom and has become morally insensitive. He is so occupied with the things of the world that the things of God are of no concern to him. His bad character and behaviour bring overwhelming grief to his parents (15:20). To try to reason with a fool is a waste of time (26:3–5).

The bigger fool (Hebrew eviyl) is used in Proverbs 1:7. This man is not merely dull like the keciyl; he loves folly and ‘despises wisdom and instruction’. Such fools must be allowed to face the consequences of their folly (10:21).

The scoffer is on the faculty of the graduate School of Folly. He is the ‘free-thinking’ cynic who mocks at God, sin, and judgement. He is hardened against any reproof (9:7–8). He is not content with his own folly but recruits followers as he strives to undermine wisdom by drawing the naïve away from God. Many of the elite in media, entertainment, and academia fall into the category of scoffer. Scoffers are to be avoided (22:10) and we should be wary of allowing such people to influence us (Ps. 1:1).”

If you are already in one of these categories you are in deadly peril! Get out of the way of destruction – remember verse 33 ***But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, And will be secure, without fear of evil.”***

2) How do you do that – Well its not just leaving the way of destruction, but getting into the right way, the narrow way, the way of God’s Wisdom incarnate!

The first adherents of Christianity did not call themselves “Christians” or what they believed Christianity, Christianity they called simply “The Way” and Christians were “the people of the way” they called themselves

Acts 9:1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest

2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

This was because they understood what Christ had said in John 14:6 -

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.