

I want to take a break this week from the book of Romans—and preach a free sermon upon Proverbs 9:1-6, entitled—Wisdom's Gracious Invitation—I want to begin with two very brief introductory matters concerning the context...

[1] A summary of the entire book—the book of Proverbs is wisdom literature—which is largely divided into two parts—chapters 1-9 and chapters 10-31—[a] chapters 1-9 contain a description of Wisdom and an invitation of Wisdom—to foolish and naive sinners, [b] chapters 10-31 tells these same sinners—after they've become wise—how they are NOW to live—but my friends—chapters 1-9 intentionally precede chapters 10-31...

[2] A summary of the ninth chapter—this single chapter contains two opposing invitations [a] Wisdom, v4—"whoever is simple, let him turn in here"—that is—turn into My house for wisdom and life, and [b] Folly, v16—"whoever is simple, let him turn in here"—that is—turn into my house for foolishness and death—these two invitations compete for the ears and souls of men—even this morning—as Wisdom's voice is heard—there's another voice being raised—and that's the voice of this foolish world—calling you to heed her invitation...

- I. Wisdom's Preparation—vv1-2
- II. Wisdom's Proclamation—vv3-4
- III. Wisdom's Invitation—vv5-6

I. Wisdom's Preparation—vv1-2

1. This passage describes wisdom personified—that is—wisdom speaks as a person who invites sinners to herself...
2. Now—let me simply assert at this point—that wisdom in this passage, and throughout these chapters, is Christ...
3. [a] His description—that is—what's said of Wisdom within Proverbs—can ONLY be applied to Jesus Christ...
4. Thus—if we were to read through Proverbs 1-9—we would find things true of Wisdom ONLY true of Christ...
5. Prov.3:13-18—"Happy *is* the man *who* finds wisdom, and the man *who* gains understanding; 14 for her proceeds *are* better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold. 15 She *is* more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. 16 Length of days *is* in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. 17 Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness, and all her paths *are* peace. 18 She *is* a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy *are all* who retain her..."
6. Prov.8:32-36—"Now therefore, listen to me, *my* children, for blessed *are those who* keep my ways. 33 Hear instruction and be wise, and do not disdain *it*. 34 Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. 35 For whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the LORD; 36 but he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; all those who hate me love death [Prov.8:12-31]..."
7. [b] NT testimony—that is—the NT expressly refers to Christ as—"the Word"—and—"the Wisdom of God..."
8. Matt.11:19—"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children..."
9. The Pharisees accused Christ of being a fraud—based upon the fact that He associated with tax collectors and sinners...
10. "But wisdom is justified by her children"—that is—He Himself was vindicated by the results of His salvation...
11. Thus—Christ is the Wisdom of God in a similar way He's the Word of God—natively and from all eternity...

12. Christ is also the Wisdom of God—in that it's in Him—the wisdom of God is made known in redemption....
13. Furthermore—Christ is the Wisdom of God—in that it's in Him—that foolish sinners are made wise unto salvation...
14. Now—it must be understood that wisdom is portrayed as a benevolent woman—with many resources and riches...
15. In fact—most commentators agree—that Wisdom is likely portrayed as a queen or princess—rich and royal...
16. Her preparations are twofold—[1] A PALACE—"Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars..."
17. Most commentators suggest Solomon here refers to the Temple—as typical and shadowy of the Christian Church...
18. 1Tim.3:15—"if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth..."
19. Here—Paul expressly describes the church in terms of a temple—as a mighty house—complete with pillars...
20. Matthew Henry—"The church is Wisdom's house, to which she invites her guests, supported by the power and promise of God, as by seven pillars..."
21. Matt.16:18—"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it..."
22. [2] A FEAST—"she has slaughtered her meat, she has mixed her wine, she has also furnished her table"—from v5 we can add bread—"come, eat of my bread..."
23. She has slaughtered her meat—or, she had her servants slaughter her meat—which was costly and rarely eaten...
24. She has mixed her wine—which likely refers to the mixing of wine with various spices—to add to its flavor...
25. She has furnished her table—that is—everything has been set on the table—the feast is complete and ready...
26. The points are two—[a] there is an abundance of provision, and [b] everything is prepared or is fully ready...
27. Perhaps I could summarize this with two words—abundance and completeness—the feast is abundant and complete...
28. In other words—every thing is fully prepared and in abundance—this is a glorious and plenteous feast or banquet...
29. Lk.14:15-16—"then He said to him, 'A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, 17 and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready...'"
30. Notice—the same two things underscored in Proverbs 9—[a] abundance—"a certain man gave a great supper and invited many..."
31. [b] Completeness—"and sent his servant at supper time to say to those invited, Come, for all things are now ready..."
32. Thus—I suggest—what we have here pictured—is the atoning work of Christ—in His life, death, and resurrection...
33. Isa.25:6-8—"And in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees. 7 And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. 8 He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken..."
34. Notice—the imagery of a feast (v6), is then described in terms of its effects in vv7-8—a full and free salvation...
35. V7—"He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations..."
36. That is—He will bare the curse—and deliver poor sinners, scattered over the entire world, from its punishment...

37. V8—"He will swallow up death forever, and wipe away tears from all faces"—that is—the salvation He secures includes glorification...
38. My dear friend—the FEAST prepared by Wisdom—is no temporal salvation—but an everlasting salvation...
39. John Owen—"The Lord Christ, the eternal Wisdom of the Father, and who of God is made unto us wisdom, erects a spiritual house, wherein he makes provision for the entertainment of those guests whom he so freely invites. His church is the house which he has built on a perfect number of pillars, that it might have a stable foundation: his slain beasts and mingled wine, wherewith his table is furnished, are those spiritual fat things of the gospel, which he has prepared for those that come in upon his invitation..."

II. Wisdom's Proclamation—vv3-4

1. Four things are mentioned concerning this proclamation—[1] its attendants—"she has sent out her maidens..."
2. It was not uncommon for a wealthy woman to have maidens—that accompanied her and functioned as servants...
3. Wisdom sends her maidens out to invite the ignorant, foolish, and poor—to come to her house and be wise...
4. This no doubt—refers to Christ sending the disciples, gospel ministers, and the church—into the entire world...
5. [2] Its authority—"She cries out"—that is—her maidens speak in her name—or better—she speaks in her maidens...
6. In other words—her maidens speak with royal authority—they speak with the authority of the queen herself...
7. 2Cor.5:20—"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God..."
8. This was the message that Paul, as a minister of the NC, had been commissioned to speak—"be reconciled to God..."
9. Notice—while he proclaimed it—he proclaimed it—"on Christ's behalf"—"as though God pled through him..."
10. [3] Its extent—"She cries out from the highest places of the city"—that is—to be heard by the ENTIRE city...
11. Prov.1:20-21—"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..."
12. Prov.8:1-3—"Does not wisdom cry out, and understanding lift up her voice? 2 She takes her stand on the top of the high hill, beside the way, where the paths meet. 3 She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city, at the entrance of the doors..."
13. Isa.40:9—"O Zion, You who bring good tidings, Get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, You who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift *it* up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God..."
14. Matt.28:18-20—"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age. Amen..."
15. Mk.16:15-16—"And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned..."
16. Lk.24:46-47—"Then He said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem..."
17. [4] Its recipients, v4—"whoever is simple, let him turn in here! As for him who lacks understanding, she says..."
18. That is—wisdom—and her maidens—invite foolish sinners—those who lack all true knowledge or understanding...

19. Now—it's interesting to notice—that Wisdom invites foolish sinners to become wise—by eating her provisions...
20. Here's the imagery—fallen and foolish man is starving in the desert of this world—too naive to know better...
21. The gospel invitation comes to him in the form of an invitation—to forsake this world and feast upon Christ...
22. To come out of this world—to enter wisdom's house—to have true wisdom—to feast upon God's provision...
23. Now—while it's true that man is here likened to a naive fool—he is also described—as a rebel that loves folly...
24. Prov.1:22—"how long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge..."
25. Thus those who are invited—are not only naive and foolish—but they are rebels who refuse to leave their folly...
26. The natively "hate knowledge"—that is—the knowledge about God, about themselves, and about salvation...

III. Wisdom's Invitation—vv5-6

A. Come and eat of my bread—v5

1. V5—"Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed"—that is—come to me and feast by faith...
2. Jn.6:47-51—"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world..."
3. Notice—believing on Christ (v47), and eating Christ (v50-51)—are the same things—to come and eat is to believe...
4. Now—most of you know—that the Scriptures use various imageries to describe the nature and working of faith...
5. Here—it's described byway of two activities—"coming" and "eating"—that is—the feet and mouth of the soul...
6. That it—the coming or believing sinner—comes with a sense of hunger or thirst—which is satisfied in Christ...
7. Jn.7:37-38—"On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water..."
8. Notice—Christ Himself cried out—just as Wisdom did—for poor and thirsty sinners—to come to Him and drink...
9. That is—for those who sense their need of a Savior—to come to Him—and find a quenching of their thirst...
10. Thus—there are two essential elements in saving faith—[1] a sense of need—here expressed by hunger and thirst...
11. What is hunger and thirst—but the expression of physical need—it's the body's confession of weakness and need...
12. Well—well friends—what is faith—but the soul's expression of spiritual need—its confession of weakness and need...
13. [2] A closing with Christ—that is—a coming to Christ and an eating and drinking of Him with the mouth of the soul...
14. True and saving faith always ends in Christ—there's a sense of need—that's met and that's satisfied in Christ...

15. Do you have to know your need—yes—but, my friend—you need to believe that in Christ there's food and drink...
16. In other words—essential to true and saving faith—is not only a sense of need—but a coming and partaking...

B. Forsake foolishness and live—v6

1. V6—"Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding"—that is—"coming" entails "leaving..."
2. To "forsake foolishness"—is to repent from your foolishness—true repentance fundamentally entails three things...
3. The word "repent" fundamentally means—"to change your mind"—to change your mind and thus direction...
4. [1] A change of mind concerning GOD—by nature—we have a very faulty view of the nature or character of God...
5. To repent is to have a new view of God—to understand that our sins—are against God and against His law...
6. [2] A change of mind concerning MAN—by nature—we have a very faulty view of the nature of sin and self...
7. To repent is to have a new view of ourselves—to agree with God what His word says is true about us by nature...
8. To forsake foolishness—is to literally—"leave or let go"—of the former notion of our native or natural condition...
9. To forsake foolishness—is to turn away from our former thoughts and beliefs about ourselves and native merit...
10. [3] A change of mind concerning the WORLD—by nature—we have a very foolish view of this evil world...

IV. Motivations

A. The FULLNESS of the feast

1. Here—I largely want to motive you who are NOT Christians—that you would come and eat of the gospel meal...
2. But—let me be clear—I also want to motive Christians—to come again—and dine upon their beloved Savior...
3. Wisdom has prepared an abundant feast—she has prepared enough meat, bread, and wine—for you, dear sinner...
4. Let me put it this way—there's a place at her table for YOU—there's meat, bread, and wine—for you on her table...
5. But—you might object—how can I be sure that's there enough food for me—the answer lies in the invitation...
6. V5—"Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed"—this invitation is genuine and sincere not fictitious...
7. Christ DOES NOT invite you to a FEAST—that's a mere mirage—it's NOT a hypothetical but a REAL FEAST...

B. The FREENESS of the feast

1. Here—I want to address the objection—perhaps your convinced that there's a FULL Feast for you in the gospel...
2. But—you object—I have no MERIT to come—I have nothing by which I can buy or purchase this feast with...

3. Well—my dear friend—this is the only thing you need—to come and buy—"without money and without cost..."
4. Notice again who Wisdom invites—"whoever is simple...him who lacks understanding...come, eat of my bread..."
5. Thus—you have a right to come—not because of anything within you—but simply because of Christ's invitation...
6. But then—you may object again—I have no STRENGTH to come—for I am only a poor and needy sinner...
7. Listen my friend—Christ comes to you this morning in the preaching of His word—He brings the feast to you...
8. Rom.10:6-8—"Do not say in your heart, Who will ascend into heaven...or, Who will descend into the abyss...but what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach)..."

C. The BENEFITS of the feast

1. In closing—I want to suggest three broad benefits to coming to Christ—and by faith—feasting upon Him....
2. [1] Satisfaction—this world—all the food and drink that it offers—will only leave us more thirsty in the morning...
3. Isa.55:1-3—"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend money for *what is* not bread, And your wages for *what* does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat *what is* good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. 3 Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you – The sure mercies of David..."
4. [2] Fellowship—Christ isn't merely inviting us to come and believe upon Him—but to fellowship with Him...
5. Rev.3:20—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me..."
6. [3] Salvation—that is—salvation from our folly—from our ignorance—from the penalty and power of our sin...
7. Though this passage speaks of many benefits—these all can be reduced into one single word—"forsake foolishness and LIVE..."
8. LIFE—that is the single benefit of forsaking folly, and eating wisdom's bread—LIFE—spiritual and eternal...