

## PROVERBS 1: 20-33

### The Call of Wisdom:

<sup>20</sup> Wisdom cries out in the street;  
in the squares she raises her voice.  
<sup>21</sup> At the busiest corner she cries out;  
at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:  
<sup>22</sup> 'How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?  
How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing  
and fools hate knowledge?  
<sup>23</sup> Give heed to my reproof;  
I will pour out my thoughts to you;  
I will make my words known to you.  
<sup>24</sup> Because I have called and you refused,  
have stretched out my hand and no one heeded,  
<sup>25</sup> and because you have ignored all my counsel  
and would have none of my reproof,  
<sup>26</sup> I also will laugh at your calamity;  
I will mock when panic strikes you,  
<sup>27</sup> when panic strikes you like a storm,  
and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,  
when distress and anguish come upon you.  
<sup>28</sup> Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer;  
they will seek me diligently, but will not find me.  
<sup>29</sup> Because they hated knowledge  
and did not choose the fear of the LORD,  
<sup>30</sup> would have none of my counsel,  
and despised all my reproof,  
<sup>31</sup> therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way  
and be sated with their own devices.  
<sup>32</sup> For waywardness kills the simple,  
and the complacency of fools destroys them;  
<sup>33</sup> but those who listen to me will be secure  
and will live at ease, without dread of disaster.'

Wisdom speaks. Wisdom is personified, and wisdom is a woman. Isn't this fascinating? The ancients thought so. Rabbinic traditions imaged Wisdom side by side with the Word of God. One was male and the other female and together they made up the complete embodiment of creation. In early Christian tradition as the Word was identified with Jesus, Wisdom was identified with the Holy Spirit. Is the Holy Spirit the feminine side of God? Hmmm.

Anyhow, let's get back to Proverbs, shall we? There is a profile being unfolded in Proverbs as to what makes one wise. A wise person seeks out wisdom and listens when wisdom stirs, convicts and calls. We already saw in the first meditation (December 1<sup>st</sup>) that the foundation of wisdom is fear (or reverence) of the Lord. This is not about being religious. It's about respecting there is a higher truth and a larger reality than me, myself and I and whatever I think is true and right. There is a larger truth and a larger wisdom beyond me that I am made to discern, discover and live into to really become my full potential self.

But there is also danger and temptation I must be vigilant against. This passage points to three kinds of people who manifest three kinds of behaviour that block wisdom from entering in. First there are the simple. A simple person is a simplistic person who prefers to see things black or white rather than delving into the nuance and seeking deeper insight and understanding. Second there is the scoffer who dismisses anything they disapprove of or don't want to hear. Jesus says "The truth shall make you free" but the truth can also be challenging, painful and call for major change in your life. Scoffing is a way of avoiding all that and making your own truth the truth with a capital T. Finally, there is the fool who resists learning anything new, anything that may challenge them to have to change perspective or see things from another's point of view beyond their own.

So what happens when wisdom is blocked and one's strategy for getting through life is keeping it simple because it's easier that way, scoffing at anything that may force one to change their perspective or take in another person's point of view or pain, or preferring to remain ignorant because one is threatened by a higher truth or justice or the demands of love that also demand ongoing change and growth in one's life to live it fully?

Wisdom will not come easy. It will often come through pain before it also grows joy. There will often be struggle and suffering even as the promise is greater love and fullness of life. Wisdom may call us to give things up and let things go, but believing in her and taking her hand on a journey further and deeper promises rewards beyond the material comforts and securities our world teaches us to be lulled by.

Are you ready to go where Wisdom may take you? We'll continue the journey through Proverbs.

PRAYER: O God creator, O Word made flesh, O Wisdom flowing through the universe in search of open hearts and minds... Carry us, speak to us, and give us what we need at this time of our lives... May you give us perspective and assurance in the face of our fears right now... May you give us greater compassion and understanding in the face of frustration at others right now... May you give us hope and promise in the face of despairing situations in a relationship or the welfare of someone we care about right now... Find us where we are and take us where

we need to go... May wisdom grow in us... In Jesus' name and through the wisdom that flows through him upon us... Amen.