

Wisdom Personified

The Old Testament lesson we heard earlier, from Proverbs, personifies Wisdom. According to tradition, King Solomon wrote the Book of Proverbs. It makes sense that he would write about wisdom – he asked God for it when he first became king of Israel. You can read about Solomon asking God for wisdom in 1 Kings 3.

He writes, “Out in the open Wisdom calls aloud, she raises her voice in the public square; on top of the wall she cries out, at the city gate she makes her speech: ‘How long will you who are simple love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?’” (Prov. 1:20-22). We worship a Triune God. What John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, called a “Three-in-One” God. The Jews, in Old Testament times, understood that God was more than the gods of their neighbors. And so, they had a Trinity, of sorts, consisting of the Creator, Wisdom, and the Spirit.

Today, we know who that Second Person of the Trinity is – it’s Jesus Christ. He’s revealed through the Scriptures. He, like Wisdom in Proverbs, calls us to repentance, and we’re given His teachings in God’s word – the Bible. We know the results of not knowing Jesus – lives lived in chaos, sin, and ultimately death.

Holding Onto Wisdom

That’s where we were, too, until we came to know Him. We get to know Jesus by spending time in the Bible. And that’s where the Gideons International come into the conversation. The Gideons play a crucial role in spreading God’s Word and wisdom. Their mission, focused on distributing Bibles in schools, hotels, hospitals, and prisons, is a modern embodiment of Wisdom calling out in public places. They ensure that God’s wisdom is available to anyone willing to receive it.

I’ve always enjoyed being able to partner with the Gideons. The testimonials they give of people who experience God through encountering His Word always amazes and surprises me. God is still in the work of seeking the lost, rescuing the captives, and freeing the prisoners of sin. Christ is still in the business of redeeming His people, and partnering with the Gideons allows us to help them help Him do that.

You know, holding onto Wisdom – Jesus Christ – requires intentionality. Our passage from Proverbs calls us to listen and act on what we hear. The Gideons do that, by ensuring God’s Word is accessible so that people have the opportunity to “take hold” of wisdom. The passage can also be seen as a wake up call to us. Oftentimes, we live our lives distracted, hearing wisdom’s call, but choosing to ignore it. Wisdom is about applying God’s truth to our everyday lives. This means that listening, learning,

and living in a way that reflects God's will, as made available to us through Holy Scripture.

The Gideons Listen to Jesus

The final part of our text makes it pretty clear. "Whoever listens to Me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm," (verse 33). If we respond to Wisdom – to Jesus – we'll live in security and peace. The world may fall apart all around us, but because of Jesus and what He's done for us, we will not be shaken. The Gideons listen to Jesus. They "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation," (Mark 16:15). The good work of the Gideons provides many people the opportunity to start this journey by encountering the Bible. And as the Church, we bear the responsibility to hold onto wisdom.

How do we do that? By seeking wisdom daily. We have to engage with Scripture on a daily basis to hear the Holy Spirit speak to us through it. We can apply wisdom in our decisions – not just head knowledge – but understanding and learning to make decisions that reflect the Truth of God revealed in the Scriptures. And finally, we share wisdom with others. We do that, when we point people to Christ. Like the Gideons, we too, can share God's word by giving physical Bibles, or by helping others understand the importance of Jesus in their lives. By doing these things, we live out our faith in the One who loved us enough to take the nails and then left the tomb empty three days later.

Prayer: Wisdom of God, from the street corners and at the entrances to the city You proclaim the way of life and of death. Grant us the wisdom to recognize Your Messiah, that following in the way of the cross, we may know the way of life and glory. Amen.