

## **“Want to be wise?” Proverbs 9:1-6**

**Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her beasts; she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table. She has sent out her young women to call from the highest places in the town, “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” To him who lacks sense she says, “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight.”**

Do you want to be wise? Who wouldn't want the gift of wisdom? It is such a great gift. Solomon, the second wisest man who has ever lived, said these words about the benefits of wisdom.

“Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her.” (Pro 3:13-15)

Better than silver, better than gold, more precious than jewels... all ancient civilization searched for it, famous Greek philosophers considered wisdom the highest of all virtues, and that's how wisdom was perceived till quite recent.

Who wouldn't want to find this wisdom, who wouldn't want to acquire something that precious? The truth is that this search for wisdom is as old as the humanity itself. It goes back to the garden of Eden as it is recorded in Genesis 3.

“But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.” (Gen 3:4-6)

Two things that are important to notice. The first, being like God is described as knowing what is good and evil. Remember, we have looked at this before, that in the first chapters of Genesis words good and evil are not about morality.

Instead, good is something that functions well according to God's good design. Remember, God looked at everything He had created, and it was “very good” (Gen 1:31). Meaning, everything was functioning as it was designed to.

The second thing, knowing good and evil is equaled with being wise. You will be like God, you will know how the world functions, and thus you will be made wise. As we read, Eve saw that the tree was to be desired to make one ... wise.

We can see that there is this close connection between being like God, knowing good and evil and being wise. We can say that the temptation for Eve and Adam was to gain wisdom, to become wise like God.

Then what went wrong? Can you guess the answer? They were looking for wisdom in a wrong place. This is one more very fitting description of what sin does to us. It makes us to look for wisdom in wrong places.

What exactly happened, how did our first parents look for wisdom at a wrong place? God had revealed what is good speaking to Adam. That is, in His Word. God's Word had revealed to our first parents the true wisdom.

But instead of listening to the Word, they were tricked to search for wisdom somewhere else. They were deceived into believing that someone else, in that situation, – God's adversary, cares for them more than their loving Creator.

That if they will turn away from their Creator and won't listen to what He speaks to them, but instead will trust someone who painted their loving God as envious and controlling, then they would acquire wisdom.

Can you see how this deception continues still today? People think that the Triune God simply wants to hide from us the wisdom and pleasures of this life, and therefore, we tend to believe that it is wiser and will lead to better results, if we listen to someone else.

This is, why the world turns their back to the Word of God. Thus, they continue to wander in darkness and foolishness. Unfortunately, this is true about many Christians as well.

So many don't really care what this God speaks to us in that Ancient Book.

What can it tell us who live in 21<sup>st</sup> century and are so wise in our own eyes? For we have Internet, and mobile phones, and cars and planes and all kinds of things that the writers of the Bible didn't have. How can that old book teach us anything worth knowing!

Think about this, how much time we spend listening to everyone else who wants to fill our ears with words and our eyes with images, and how much to our God, who wants to fill our hearts with His Spirit and our minds with His wisdom?

But how can then we be wise? How can we acquire true wisdom? It is very simple. Earlier we heard the words from Psalm 111. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Solomon explains: "For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding." (Pro 2:6)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, for He gives wisdom, and from His mouth comes understanding. Very simple, indeed. Just a few clarifications. First, what is meant by the fear of the Lord?

It is not about being afraid of our loving and gracious God. It is about having utmost respect, awe and reverence before Him, acknowledging who He is, – the Creator of everything that exists, things visible and invisible, and who we are, – His creatures, who are continually causing so many problems with our rebellion and foolishness.

In short, to fear means to have fitting and right attitude towards the Holy God. Second clarification has to do with God's name. In our English translation we read "the fear of the Lord", when in the original it reads "the fear of Yahweh".

It means that we are not talking about some generic God, we are talking about this God, who has come so close to us and has revealed and given to us His name. We can say that the beginning of true wisdom is to listen to the God who has revealed Himself to us as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Do you see what it means? The Triune God invites you to restore the same relationships with Him that our first parents had in the garden of Eden. To fear Him, to love Him and to trust Him above all things. To have Him as your God.

Paul speaks about it in our today's reading from Ephesians. "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise... do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is."

Did you hear it? Paul says the same things. To be wise is to understand what the will of the Lord is, and not to know His will is to be ... foolish. How do we become wise and how do we learn the will of God? What summarizes it for us?

Yes, the Ten Commandments. Understanding the Ten Commandments, truly understanding the Ten Commandments is what makes you wise. For they reveal to us God's wisdom. Our own Dr Martin Luther said that whoever knows the Ten Commandments, meaning, truly knows the Ten Commandments, knows the entire Scriptures. And this is exactly what we are learning in our Bible Studies.

Now, let's look at our reading from the book of Proverbs. "Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars." The Church has understood that this refers to the creation of the world.

In chapter eight of the book of Proverbs, right before our today's text, wisdom is described as someone who, listen carefully! ... was in the beginning, who was with God, and through whom all things were made... Does this remind you of someone?

In the beginning was the Word... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen His glory, full of grace and truth. The true Wisdom, the Word that was in the beginning has a name. And His name is – Jesus. Jesus from Nazareth. As Paul says in His letter to Corinthians. Jesus Christ is the wisdom from God.

Then we read further that "She [Wisdom] has slaughtered her beasts; she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table. "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed."

The Wisdom has set her table... Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine! Does this sound familiar? What did Jesus say in our today's Gospel reading? "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread,

he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” (John 6:51) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

It is right here where the Wisdom has set table for you. It is right here where the Wisdom invites you to come, to eat and to drink. It is not an ordinary meal, what He gives you with this bread and wine is the forgiveness of all your sins and the eternal life.

But who is invited to this feast? “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” The Wisdom of God invites the simple. Who are they? Those, who admit that they don’t know everything. Those who are willing to learn. Those who come humble and lowly. Those who come not boasting in their goodness but longing to experience the goodness of our loving God.

The Wisdom invites you: “Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight.” This is, what the Triune God gives to you here. Insight. The way of insight. He reveals Himself, not as envious and controlling God, but as your gracious and merciful Father and as your loving Savior.

Once you respond to His invitation, He speaks to you His words of wisdom, He reveals to you what is good and what is not. He teaches you His good design for your life, and He makes you truly wise.

You just need to be ready to receive His wisdom. And He does so much more. As He speaks to you in His Word, in His Book, or using His messengers, He sends His Spirit into your heart and restores the bond that was broken by sin.

He unites you into the most intimate fellowship with Himself and with all His beloved. He does all of this as He prepares you to be restored back to the garden of Eden. It won’t be the same place.

This time it will be the New Earth and New Heaven. The New city of God. Our God, our Creator and Redeemer Himself will dwell among us and we will know Him as our God. We will see Him as He is.

And we will be as beautiful, and as good and as glorious as all His sons and daughters. The tree of life will give there and there will be no more sin, or pain or death, instead, everlasting joy, and peace and blessedness.

The fact that you are here, listening to Jesus, is for you the beginning of wisdom. Right here is where you acquire something better than silver, better than gold, more precious than jewels...

What is more, this is where you yourself are acquired by Someone infinitely better than silver, or gold or jewels, by the Wisdom Himself, by Jesus, our Lord and Master.

And the great thing to remember as you leave is this. Wisdom may have the beginning, right here, but it has no end. For as our Lord and His Word endures forever, so will you, His wise and beloved children. Amen.