

Date: 5 January 2020
Services: Sunshine Beach and Tewantin
Series: Wisdom for the new year
Title: Christ the wisdom of God
Passage: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25
Outline: **1. Christ is foundational wisdom**
2. He is cosmic wisdom

You might think 'wisdom' is an actual person when you read the book of Proverbs. Wisdom has many faces and is repeatedly personified. First 'wisdom' appears as the Town Crier: *"Wisdom calls aloud in the street, she raises her voice in the public squares"* (1:20-21).

Then wisdom is a virtuous woman with whom we are to be good friends: *"Say to wisdom, you are my sister"* (7:4). She is the best friend you could ever have: *"Esteem her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honour you"* (4:7).

Wisdom is also a father passing on good advice to his son: *"My son, pay attention to my wisdom, listen well to my words of insight, that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge"* (5:1). Then wisdom is God's master craftsman:

"I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began ... I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep ... when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. I was the craftsman at his side" (8:22-30). So, it is natural to ask, 'Why is wisdom personified?' The answer lies in an important theological fact:

Every Old Testament book draws lines that converge on Christ. Regarding 'wisdom' these lines are fairly easy to see, because the New Testament refers to him as the ultimate expression of wisdom ... *"Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God"* and *"Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"* (1 Corinthians 1:24, Colossians 2:2). Why? Because sin has cursed the universe.

God told Adam: *"Cursed is the ground because of you ... thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you ... you are dust and to dust you shall return"* (Gen 3:16-19). Christ fixes that curse. His wisdom puts the universe back together, so it operates exactly as God designed it, faultless and perfect. The implication for us is huge!

The only way we can be wise is to follow Jesus. He made that plain in his famous sermon ... *"Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man"* (Matt 7:24). Today we'll focus on two key truths about Christ as the wisdom of God ... (two ways the OT lines converge upon Christ).

1. He is foundational wisdom (Matthew 7:24-27)

2. He is cosmic wisdom (Ephesians 1:9-10)

1. Christ is foundational wisdom

At the climax of his Sermon on the Mount Jesus said something quite astonishing. *"Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash"* (Matt 7:24-27). The point is ... wisdom is all about doing what Jesus says. Those who do are wise (safe forever) but those who don't are fools (ruined forever).

Everyone is building a house (Proverbial language for building their life). The real difference between the wise and the foolish is not the house but the foundation. The house that fell may have been an excellent house. It would have stood firm if it was built on solid rock. So non-Christians can appear wise in many ways. Their lives may be consistent with much of what you find in Proverbs. They may be hardworking, not lazy. They can be honest, morally decent, kind-hearted people. Many are charitable, considerate, unselfish, law-abiding neighbours. They are exactly the sorts of competent people you'd be glad to have piloting your plane or performing surgery on your heart. They build a very good house. The problem is not the house but the foundation. It is built on shaky ground.

They face every reality of life except the big one ... judgement day! The flood is coming but they deny it. They will stand before the judgement seat of God to give account, but they are totally unprepared. Even though they are wise in every other sense, they are fools at the most crucial point.

Why build a million-dollar house in a flood zone? The greatest reality in the universe is Jesus Christ. You must acknowledge him and live accordingly. You must receive his words and obey him. That is the crux of wisdom. This is Christ's universe. He made it and he rules it. He is your maker and he deserves and demands your allegiance. Doing so is wisdom, doing anything else is folly. Note two implications.

There is no neutral ground. Jesus demands a decision ... neutrality is impossible. *"He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters"* (Matthew 12:30). That is reality. Either your house is built on Christ the solid rock or it isn't. He is the only safe place, the rock of ages. If you are not there it doesn't matter where else you are, you are doomed and cannot escape the judgement. It doesn't matter that you are not a terrorist, or a Satanist. The ultimate reality is that you ignore Christ. You treat him as unimportant. He is not your foundation and your house will collapse. The second implication ...

Unbelief doesn't change reality. The man who built in the flood zone obviously didn't see any problem. If he really believed all his time and effort would be wasted, he'd never have built there. Suppose an engineer came along from the local council, someone who knows a lot about floods and houses and foundations. He warned the man not to build there, with clear evidence that he's building in a watercourse. He assures the man it flooded here terribly once before (Google search on Noah) and it is only a matter of time before it happens again. He warns him 'You will lose everything'. But he ignored the engineer and was swept away. *A flood-zone is a flood-zone whether you believe it or not! Life without Jesus is that flood-zone. Unbelief doesn't change reality!*

In fact, the messenger from the council **has** come, the highest council - heaven itself. He's not just an engineer but the creator and designer of all things. He made the cosmos out of nothing. He's the only real expert on floods winds and storms because he owns them, sends them, and controls them. This messenger is the Son of God who cannot lie. He has our eternal safety at heart as he warns, invites, and advises us to follow him. He repeatedly describes the terrible storm that is coming ... the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. But still sinners keep hammering nails into their houses on the sand. In reality they are hammering nails into their own coffins. Refusing to follow Christ is the opposite of wisdom.

2. He is cosmic wisdom

The whole created order was harmed by human sin and is crying out for a mighty hand to rescue it. *"We know that the whole creation has been groaning in the pains of childbirth until now"* (Romans 8:22). And that groaning will be answered. Saving the cosmos is a work of Christ. *"The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God"* (Rom 8:21). Christ is the wisdom required for fixing the whole cosmos, bringing all relationships into perfect condition. Everything will relate properly to God again.

In Christ *"all things hold together ... For God was pleased through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross"* (Colossians 1:17-20). Since the Garden of Eden Christ

has constantly restrained sin from its full deadly potential. He keeps holding the cosmos together, bringing in a new heavens and new earth.

A word for anyone anxious about global warming. Earth's real problem is not global warming ... it is humans rejecting the Creator and following the satanic serpent. Saving the cosmos is not something humans can do, even with 100% solar energy. The sun is not Messianic, nor is Greta Thunberg. Saving the universe is a work of Christ. He has done all the work (Calvary) and his second advent will reveal it.

Though Christ is truly *"the head of the body, the church"* (Colossians 1:18) he is more than that. He is actually *"head over everything for the church"* (Ephesians 1:22). He is the wisdom of God in everything because he restores the whole created order to its perfect form, where all relationships are as they should be, with no possibility of a lapse. That's why the ultimate evidence of wisdom is Christian faith. Since he is God, Christ is the greatest fact in the universe. Only a fool ignores the greatest fact. *"The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'"* (Psalm 14:1).

Conclusion

A wise person accepts God's interpretation of the universe. He believes the word of God. He knows our worst enemy appears as an angel of light. He knows God's longsuffering patience does not cancel out his strict judgement. He knows everyone will give account to God for his life. He knows that many who look for heaven will fail. He knows that without Christ there is no hope.

That is reality ... that is wisdom! Make it yours! I urge you to follow Christ the Wisdom of God. *"We preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God"* (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).