

Proverbs 1: 20-25, 31-33

About Wisdom

Wisdom calls out in the newscasts and on the campaign trail.

Wisdom calls out in the streets from Montreal to Munich.

The Syrian refugee crisis has struck a deep cord in our collective humanity. Many governments around the world are now scrambling to adequately respond to

Wisdom's call through their populace. Hopefully, we in Canada will get to that place where the immigration system is effectively modified to attune to the

Wisdom calling out from our Canadian souls.

Even though we are caught up in the September rush of activities, we hear, we feel, we heed **Wisdom's** call.

We also know that **Wisdom** is calling out from deep within us.

Wisdom is all around and always available. **Wisdom** calls out to us to take in these most vulnerable people, clamouring for a new life.

Now we are beginning to see that there is a real difference between **Wisdom** and the 'lifeboat ethics' of self-preservation. When we hear the voice of **Wisdom**, we realize that it is not our conscience talking to us. Conscience speaks through our mind, our intellect, our insecurities. The shoulda, woulda and coulda's of social convention. These are built on the shifting sands of cultural norms and scarcity models of life.

Wisdom speaks through our soul!

Wisdom is a whispering voice, a voice of care, a voice of compassion.

Wisdom, and I want to add, Divine **Wisdom** is that inner voice whispering *"Careful, someone could get hurt here."*

Whispering *"Just a minute, aren't we forgetting someone?"*

Wisdom, Divine **Wisdom** is that inner voice yelling, *"Stop, and help this person!"*

Or challenging, *"Go on, include, connect, reach out to the desperate at your gate!"*

Divine **Wisdom** is that inner voice telling us to *"Lighten up and forgive one another! Again!"*

Divine **Wisdom** is that inner conviction telling us *"Don't cop out. Don't betray yourself. Do the right thing."*

It is not the voice of rules or the local morality of the day or the ego concerns of society.

It is the **voice of relationship**.

It is the voice of **care and concern**.

It is the voice of **compassion**.

It is the voice of **integrity**.

It is the good council of **God**, guiding us into intensified humanity.

Wisdom is soul talk!

We access it in different ways. We can slow down, turn our attention deep within.

We can listen in the silence. And there it is.

We feel it as **deep connectedness**, turning an impersonal system into personal encounters because we are all in this together.

We sense the soul talk of **Wisdom** as **deep respect**. The revelation that every human life is precious and has a part to play in the grand scheme, no one is expendable.

We know it as **deep humanity**. The recognition of our own shortcomings, our own needs and so we offer the benefit of the doubt to others.

We receive it as a **shocking challenge** to stop the insanity that senselessly squanders human life.

The Application for Today

Slow down. Take a deep breath. Listen to the silence or the shouting deep within.

When we listen for it and act upon it, we intensify our own humanity, we become the **Wisdom** of **God** in our time and place. Amen.

Mark 8: 27-37

About Jesus

When we finally became grandparents, we had our new names already picked out. We had put a lot of thought and remembering into this exercise. Of course the names of our own grandparents played a significant part in our choices. So, our new identities were going to be Nan for Vicki and Grandpa for me. Now, this could have become a problem since blended families always add multiple grandparents and competing names into the mix. However, starting with a bilingual family helped us out a lot. As some of us know, none of this really mattered until the first grandchild could speak and actually told us who we were!! Nan is now Nana! Nana! Grandpa is now Gampa!?

What was your experience?

Jesus asks his disciple about his new and growing identity,

“Who do people say that I am?”

They give three answers.

1. **John the Baptist** comes back to life.
2. **Elijah** the wonder worker returning to prepare the way for the Messiah.
3. One of the **Prophets** of old reincarnated.

When asked, *“Who do you say that I am?”*

Peter answers with a totally different identity, *“You are the Messiah!”*

Now, in **Jesus’** day, there were three competing concepts of what a **Messiah** would be up to. A Messiah being a person anointed by **God** and therefore set apart a certain function.

1. Davidic/military **Messiah** who would throw out the Romans.
2. Priestly **Messiah**, who would purify the Temple and restore right worship.
3. Prophetic **Messiah**, who would bring justice to the people and right relationship with **God**.

None of these images were not divine titles at the time. Rather they represented a specific human being set apart for a special service to **God**. But these three concepts didn’t capture what **Jesus** was about!

Jesus begins to explain that the real **Messiah** the real ‘**anointed one**’ identified and set apart for a specific function takes his message to the authorities in Jerusalem without military protection.

He arrives and acts without priestly authority.

He delivers his message without prophetic bombast.

He will allow himself to be handed over, rejected and killed if need be.

We know the story, Peter doesn’t like this response. In fact, he can’t stand it and tells **Jesus** so. Here we have an example of the all too familiar scenario of who we need **Jesus** to be rather than who **Jesus** actually is.

So who is **Jesus**?

What three things do we know for sure about him?

Contextually we can say that **Jesus** was a Jew, a small town provincial Galilean and an illiterate peasant. He grew up speaking Aramaic not Hebrew, and most likely not Greek. If he went to synagogue classes, he would have learned to recite Hebrew scripture much the way we learn to sing a song. Scholars consider it doubtful that a poor landless peasant would be educated in his own native tongue let alone in a classical or foreign one.

Mark, a scholar writing forty years after **Jesus’** death and resurrection assumes that **Jesus** is like him and must be literate and reflect the retainer class to which Mark belongs. White supremacist groups, going back over 100 years, and especially the Nazis denied that **Jesus** was Jewish or Semitic in background, certainly not a Galilean. So a simple contextual statement: Jewish, Galilean, peasant gets

challenged at each point and we haven't even approached the saving significance of **Jesus'** life, death and resurrection.

However, **Jesus** tells us who he is through word and deed. **Jesus'** relationship with **God**, his experience of the Divine compels him to enact his new **Way of Wisdom** which manifests in *healing, compassion and restoration*. Everyone is acceptable to **Jesus**. Everyone can be made whole and restored back to community. Compassion makes room for everyone. He is compelled to take this new **Wisdom** to the authorities in Jerusalem. They will either become his followers or his executioners. **Jesus** allows himself to be handed over for their decision. This **allowing Wisdom** is the centrepiece of what the true **Messiah** is about.

It is not about what's right but what helps.

It is not about defining and reinforcing groups but about including everyone, for we are all in this together.

It is not about military might but about the strength of belonging to one another.

This allowing **Wisdom** manifested in *healing, compassion and restoration* comes from entering the **Mystery** in the midst of life and courageously living that mystery in the world. For **Jesus**, the **Messiah** is a mystic in action! A mystic on the move!

So the Application for Today

Jesus' new way of **Wisdom** manifests in *healing, compassion and restoration*.

How will we live this out amidst the challenges of our day? Amen.