



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY August 19 & BEYOND”

“A lot of wisdom from time to time” *(from Proverbs 9:1 and following)*



There’s an old saying, “Who doesn’t need a little _____ from time to time.” You fill in the phrase. Perhaps a little time off, a little nurture, a little humor.

We get into those situations when we just can’t seem to find the way to make a good situation about some issue or event or crisis,

and the word to fill in becomes “a little wisdom.” But “a little wisdom” sounds like a drop in the bucket compared to what we reaaaalllly need which is a whole LOT of wisdom. Maybe a little wisdom for the momentary issue. But for our whole lives, we will need more than one simple injection of wisdom. We need the boat load.

Who doesn’t need a LOT of wisdom from time to time? One of the keys of a life full of ability to handle every situation, and to make right decisions --and not just from time to time – is a life that is BUILT WITH and ON wisdom. In other words, living and breathing wisdom. The Bible substantiates that way of living completely.

On Sunday we will hear a reading from the Old Testament that comes from that oft-quoted book of Proverbs. So much of Proverbs is attributed to King Solomon, son of Israel’s King David, and upon whom God gifted extraordinary words of wisdom. But his material does not show until Chapter 10; on Sunday we will hear from Chapter 9, and thus from the end of an exquisite, longer allegory regarding Wisdom. You really have to read the whole thing to appreciate it in its fullest. Here are some verses for Sunday:

Wisdom has built her house,
 she has hewn her seven pillars...
she calls from the highest places in the town,
"Come, eat of my bread
 and drink of the wine I have mixed.
Lay aside immaturity, and live,
 and walk in the way of insight."

So, the queen, Wisdom, builds her house which she beckons us to live in, that is, to live and walk in the ways of Wisdom. Can you see that in the allegory? And by living in wisdom we will become mature, and live, and have the ONGOING insight we need to stay on “the way.” But as God knows, just saying “we will” is not always enough to keep us in the house. It is then the Pillars in that first verse that should be of interest to help us maintain the living we want in wisdom. These are “her seven pillars.” I suppose they could be “ornamental” pillars, as ancient architecture often designed. But Queen Wisdom is building this house from scratch and “hewn” the house’s seven pillars, and so I take that as not ornamental pillars, but FUNCTIONAL pillars, the house’s pillars. Hewn means carved out, in this case, from rock itself. The allegory would have us understand rock hewn as “Strength!” We should know what these are, then, so we can put them into use in our lives. If we do, then these pillars will help KEEP wisdom as our house, too.

Sadly, the allegory comes to an end several verses later, but the identity of the seven pillars is not included, before or after their introduction into the allegory. Why do they have to represent anything at all? Because this is an allegory; anything in an allegory so clearly identified and numbered as these pillars virtually always has the purpose of further meaning and teaching.

So where will we find this answer? Certainly not in the book by T.E.Lawrence – that’s the same guy who was also known as Lawrence of Arabia – entitled, “Seven Pillars of Wisdom!” That book was originally supposed to have been about seven great Middle Eastern cities, not the foundations of Wisdom. So, we look elsewhere.

The good news for us is that the President of the first Apostolic Council, James, writes about Wisdom to Jewish Christians around the year 50 or so, and describes for us seven elements of that wisdom. Interestingly, James himself is referred to as “one of the pillars” of the Jerusalem church!

The Book or Letter of James is, then, in the New Testament. But, even written 1000 years after the allegory was written, James stands clearly in the tradition of Jewish wisdom, Hebrew customs, Abrahamic faith, and the teaching of Moses. Thus, it should not be a surprise that James actually does talk about the value of Wisdom, and then, drawing upon that heritage, points to seven different aspects of divine Wisdom.

James starts his discussion of Wisdom in chapter 1, sounding very much like the encouraging allegory in Proverbs. Then, two chapters later he lists seven aspects

which can easily be understood as those seven great pillars noted in Proverbs 9. He wrote: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated (read, *reasonableness*) full of mercy and good fruits (which denotes *helpfulness*), without partiality (read, *humbleness*) and without hypocrisy (read, *sincereness*)."

Thus, a life of genuine, consistent, reliable-at-all-times wisdom is a life founded upon the fear of the Lord and supported by genuine purity, peaceableness, gentleness, reasonableness, helpfulness, humility, and sincerity. Such a house will never fall!

How are you and your life matching up? Need help in establishing a life of Godly wisdom? James has the answer, saying quite directly, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God". And "the fear of the Lord", as Jesus (and James) points to himself, is belief in Jesus Christ. In him, you will begin to find the depths of wisdom which we all seek.

Father Rob Eaton, Interim Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Proverbs 9:1-6 Psalm 34:9-14 Ephesians 5:15-20 John 6:53-59

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: **The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

8:00a Low Mass (Church)

10:30a Solemn High Mass (Church)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY: 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY: AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)