

Wisdom cries out

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- [0 : 0 0] And we turn together now to the Old Testament passage which we read together in the book of Proverbs.
- Proverbs chapter 1 and we shall read from verse 20. Wisdom crieth without. She uttereth her voice in the streets.
- She crieth in the chief place of concourse. In the openings of the great gates. In the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge.
- Turn you at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you. I will make known my words unto you.
- The book of Proverbs is a book which has been compiled with the young and the unconverted very much in mind.
- [1 : 3 7] In fact, the first nine chapters of the book of Proverbs could easily be subtitled a guidebook for youth.
- And in these chapters we have certain themes which come to the fore again and again.
- And one of the themes which come to the fore in the book of Proverbs is the theme of wisdom personified.
- Because more than once we find that we see wisdom speaking. Now, theologians down through the centuries have asked the question, if wisdom can speak, who is this wisdom?
- Who is this person who cries in the concourse, in the opening of the gates, in the streets of the city?
- [2 : 5 7] Who is it who speaks like this? And throughout the history of the church, the answer which has been given to that question is, generally speaking, that wisdom is Christ.
- And yet, you have a problem. Because, you notice, wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets, she crieth in the chief places of concourse.
- And you ask, why is it, if wisdom is Christ, why would wisdom be referred to as she? Well, I think the answer to that question, which obviously is a problem, must be that the Hebrew word for wisdom is a feminine word.
- And of course, the translators of our English Bible have been faithful have been faithful to the words which they have found in the original.
- And they obviously have to say, she cried, because wisdom is, in Hebrew, a feminine word.
- [4 : 2 8] However, when you look at the whole testimony of the book of Proverbs, regarding wisdom, you will find that there are times when wisdom is spoken of as he.
- For example, in the book of Proverbs, chapter 8, you read, the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.

I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, wherever the earth was, when there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water, before the mountains were settled, before the hills was, I brought forth.

While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world, when he prepared the heavens I was there, when he set a compass upon the face of the depth, when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep, when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment, when he appointed the foundations of all of the earth, then I was by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.

Who's speaking there? Wisdom is speaking. Christ is speaking. The eternal Christ. He is the one who speaks to us as wisdom personified.

[6 : 27] Now we want here to look at wisdom's activity as it is presented to us in these verses that we have as our text.

Wisdom crieth without. She uttereth her voice in the streets. she crieth in the chief places of concourse.

In the opening of the gates in the city she uttereth her words. And there are three things that we see here. Wisdom cries, wisdom utters her voice, wisdom utters her words.

In other words, Christ is set before us here as a preacher. and indeed I think it is true that when Christ is viewed as the wisdom of God something that he is called in the New Testament he who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

This wisdom Christ he is a preacher. Do you remember one incident in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ where he comes before us as a preacher?

[8 : 00] Do you remember after the Galilean ministry Jesus comes back to the city of Nazareth where he grew up the son of Joseph the son of Mary the son of the carpenter as he was called.

And there as was his want on the Sabbath day Jesus went into the synagogue. You know it's very interesting.

Jesus was a regular worshipper in the house of God. He went into the synagogue as was his custom.

He was always one to follow the church even although the church which he followed was to betray him. And Jesus then went and he took the scroll and he read the portion that was to be read in the synagogue on that day.

Now some of you might think that that was an awful thing but you see when ten Jews gather together in the synagogue it is quite appropriate for one of them to read the scriptures.

[9 : 20] That was part of the Jewish law part of the Jewish custom. And Jesus read the scriptures from the prophecies of Isaiah in the synagogue in Nazareth that day.

And the portion for the day was that chapter 61 the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to preach the gospel.

And Jesus didn't just read the scriptures that day he did something more. Jesus expounded the scriptures and gave the sense of the scriptures that day.

Jesus as a preacher. So in his earthly life we have Jesus as a preacher. But you know Jesus is a preacher to this very day.

You know what William Arnott a great free church man of the 19th century had to say about Jesus about God. He had this to say every law of nature and every event of history has a turn by which wisdom proclaims God's holiness and rebukes man's sin.

[10 : 46] Every law of nature and every event of history is eloquent with the voice of wisdom. Are you hearing wisdom's voice my dear friend?

Are you hearing Christ as he speaks to us in the laws of nature and in the events of history supposing you had no open Bible?

The voice of God is so eloquent in general revelation that he leaves you and me without excuse before God.

Every law of nature every event of history they all speak to us of the holiness of God and of our own sin.

Do you ever feel convicted as you look at nature? Do you ever see God's perfection in the little things of nature? Do you ever see God's wonder in nature?

[11 : 52] Which God the God who did all things well and does it speak to you of your own sin and the way your sin has marred the good things that God has made?

Do you hear God's voice in the events of history? Do you hear God's voice in the events of providence in your own life my friend? Do you hear God's voice speaking to you in the ups and downs of your daily life?

Your family life? Do you hear God speaking to you in these things? Well he does Christ speaks in all of these things but then also above all of this I think we can say that we have the Lord's voice that is a prophet of God we could say within every man because you see God speaks to us through the voice of conscience and what does the voice of conscience say well the voice of conscience can only do two things the voice of conscience can absolve or condemn these are the two things that conscience can do the voice of conscience can absolve or the voice of conscience can condemn and it seems to me that anyone here with an informed conscience a conscience taught in the word of

God has a conscience which condemns because you see the Bible is always as it were the push behind the informed conscience and what does the Bible have to say about you and me and our sin the Bible has this to say about us that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God every one of us there's no exception the Bible has to say that we have all sinned wisdom cryeth wisdom utters her voice wisdom speaks her words is wisdom speaking in your conscience my friend is wisdom speaking in your life day by day my friend do you hear this voice just look secondly at the places in which wisdom cries wisdom cries outside in the streets in the concourse at the opening of the gates now it's very often very very obvious that what

Solomon in the Proverbs is meaning when he says wisdom cried outside in the gates in the concourse in the meeting of the people what's he saying he's saying this that wherever people are wherever you are you can't get away from the voice of wisdom listen to the places outside in the streets in the concourse at the opening of the gate these were the places where people gathered in a Jewish city wherever people are the voice of God and the voice of wisdom is to be heard and I wonder tonight are you hearing this voice are you hearing it in the places where you gather together are you hearing it in the street on the road are you hearing it at the opening of the gates are you hearing it everywhere you go does the voice of

[16 : 11] God follow you some man once wrote a poem called the hound of heaven some of the words of that poem are most eloquent to the man to whom God by his spirit and in his wisdom has been speaking this is what the poem the hound of heaven says at its beginning it fled me down the nights and down the days it fled me down the labyrinth in ways of my own mind my friend is the hound of heaven following you is the voice of God following you so that you can't get away from wisdom's voice as he cries to you to repent of your sin you can't get away from God you know some of us in our foolishness have tried to escape is it true that you have tried to get away is it true that you have done your utmost to quench the voice of

God spirit in your life so that no longer he will worry you or bother you or so that no longer you will be put out by the voice of wisdom crying I wonder tonight if there are some of God's children here who are thankful to the Lord that when they tried to escape from the voice of God in his gospel and the voice of God in their conscience and the voice of God in their providence are you thankful that he didn't go away are you thankful that he stayed with you and that he is still with you and that he is still following you despite all the efforts that you have made to escape oh my friend wisdom's voice is it following you is it going with you in the streets is it going with you to the gatherings to which you go I know men and women and they've done their utmost to get away from it they've gone into a life of worldliness and into a life of the pleasures of sin and they've tried to get away and to quench out in all the pastimes that they could but the fact was they couldn't get away they couldn't escape even to the very point of sin the voice of

God would follow them is it through in your life is God's voice following you in such a way that you can't get away despite all that you try to do you can't get away wherever you go wherever you meet whatever you do the voice of conscience is following you and the voice of God in your conscience is still following you I wonder my friends if some of the young people of this congregation know the voice of God in this way I wonder if some of you young ones who are still in school will be able to know the voice of God following you when you may leave home and leave the security of your home and your community you know I feel very often for the young people of

Lewis I remember hearing a few years ago about a group of them in London they were living almost like a commune they were giving themselves over to every kind of sin giving themselves over young loose people who had gone away from home and yet you know the voice of wisdom can even go there because I know of one young man who was living like that given over to all the pleasures of sin and I know of at least one of that community who was plugged like a brand from the burning and was saved and was born again and was changed in his life before he died as a young boy I know people like that and who knows my friend but that voice is following you who knows you young people but there are some of you and you can't get away try as you might you can't get away from the voice of

God in his gospel but to whom is the voice of wisdom speaking well there are three classes mentioned here you simple ones you scorners you fools just oh it's a very solemn thing that God would call you a simpleton it's a very solemn thing that God would speak to you as a scorner it's a very solemn thing that God would speak to you and call you a fool and yet that's the kind of people to whom the voice of wisdom is raised in the gospel tonight you simple ones, you scorners, you fools now I wonder what is meant by ye simple ones how long will you love your simplicity well I think that a simple one the kind of person to whom the voice of God is crying here it's a person who wants who wants to be somehow or other running with the hares and hunting with the hounds you want to remain uncommitted you don't want to be counted among the sinners but you know despite yourself you're counted among the neglecter there's a sin that God speaks of in his word and you know what he says about that sin he says how shall we escape if we neglect so great so great a salvation tonight there are simple ones in this community there are simple ones maybe in this congregation and that's just where you stand it's not that you want to be out and out anti-Christ it's not that you want to be known for your sin and your daring in sin no no you just want to neglect it you just want to put off thinking about God you want to put God in a little corner of your mind in a little corner of your heart where he can be conveniently produced when you need him is that true?

[23 : 54] is that the kind of God that you have? a convenience God? a God that can be produced in trouble?

I wonder you know how often we pray isn't it true that there are some of us and oh we couldn't say that we never pray but there are some of us and the only time in which we pray is when we're in a tight spot when we're in a tight corner yes we'll go and pray then but we don't pray at other times we don't seem to need to pray at other times and you know what God says to people you just make a convenience of God and a convenience of prayer how long you simple ones will you love simplicity?

is God addressing you tonight as a neglected as a simple one one of these people who just goes ho-hum to the gospel one of these people that seems just to pass it by not caring really whether you get converted whether you get Christ or not as long as you can go on with your own wonderful world what is your wonderful world?

what is it? is it really as good as you kid yourself on it is? is it really as good as you pretend it to be this world that you want to hang on to and stay away from Christ?

is it really all that wonderful? oh you say what about the pastimes and the pleasures and the dancing and all the rest what about the things that I can have while I am still unconverted?

[26 : 00] you know my friend there's a hymn that says that heaven above is bluer and the earth below is greener to those eyes that have been enlightened greener far than Christless eyes have ever seen and I want to tell you young people tonight that there are pleasures in Christ that you've never tasted oh if you know if you were to know the sweetness of sin forgiven would you be still longing after the pleasures of this world?

if you knew what it was to have peace with God would you still be wanting the things that make you hang on in this world?

would you still be wanting that? no no you simple ones how long will you love your simplicity? and then there's another group you scorner who knows but there are some here and to you religion is just one big joke it's one big joke it's something that you can have a laugh about you laugh about Christians you laugh about Christ you laugh about your soul you make a joke about it all it's all just something that you've got to get rid of like water of a duck's back so you scorn it all oh my friends you know that the bible tells me that there were scorners in every generation scorners and to turn to Christ scorners scorners scorners you know friends what it is to scorn the gospel

I'll tell you one thing that it is to scorn the gospel and the church is here with an open door and when you don't come in and you'd rather sit at home that's something that's one way in which you can scorn the gospel scorn the gospel people who sit at home rather than come under the sound of the everlasting gospel and come to hear what God has to say to them with regard to their souls you know another way that you can scorn be a scorner to have a bible by your bedside or in your home and never open it you know another way in which you can scorn God to have a room in your house where you could go outside to pray to God and never go to prayer just please my friends are the hallmarks of the scorner the empty pews the closed bible and the knees that never bend to God the empty pews the closed bible and the knees that never bend to God that's the story of your life it's the story of your life very often the story of an empty pew in the house of God is the story of your life a closed bible that is held and have ever opened in your home in your bedside is that the story of your life is the story of your life knees that never bend to the

God who made you to worship and adore the creator is that the story of your life that's the story of the life of the scorn and then turn over the other side of the page of a scorn of life what what will you find you will find that the scorn is the companion of fools because that's the third kind of person that we have here how long you fool will you understand will you will you hate instruction will you hate instruction who's the fool when the bible has two or three fools in it the bible has two or three fools in it and I'm going to mention that one of the fools of the bible is in the gospel of Luke and he was a man and you know this everything was going well for that man things were just falling into place in his life he had no problems in fact the story of his life was a story of building more barns so that he could get on better in this world in fact this fool he was a materialist he lived for time and he died in time and he went to eternity living for time he was a materialist his whole life was given over to industry in this world that's the kind of life he had everything in the world came second to his prosperity and he sat down one day and he started thinking and this is what he said what will

[31 : 35] I do he said I don't have enough space to store all the grain that I have here was a man and he was going to make a grain mountain and he said I'll pull down my barn and I'll build greater ones he was at just the picture of a 20th century materialist there's nothing new under the sun you know the bible gives us ten pictures of the men of 1989 and this is one of them and God calls him a fool when the world of monetarism would call him a wise man God calls him a fool the world on its standards would say what a wise man he's building bigger barns he's making a better living he's getting on in the world everything in our society very often must give way to getting on getting on ambition that's it but you know

God stepped into that man's life that night I will say to my soul he said soul eat drink and be merry because eat drink and be merry everything is going fine with this God stepped in and he said well full tonight your soul will be required of you and I wonder if there are some here and that's the way their life is going prosperity upon prosperity materialistic gain upon materialistic gain everything in the garden is holy and you're holding your arms and you're saying to your soul take thy meaning eat drink and be merry and God comes to you one night and God says to you one night though fool tonight your soul will be required of you that's the first fool in the

Bible but there's another fool that I want you to bring to your attention in the Bible too and this is the man of whom Psalm 14 says the fool hath said in his heart that there is no God now I wonder if that fool was an atheist I don't know I don't know if he was an out atheist at all because you see what the Bible says there is this the fool hath said to his heart there is no God in other words this is a man who lived his life as though God didn't really matter he hates instruction he hates the teaching of the Bible he hates the teaching of God's word he doesn't want to go God's way and he wants somehow or another to snuff

God out of his thinking altogether do you know who he's like it's just like the self sufficient man the man who's able to go on without God that's this man the fool he hates instruction he hates the gospel really oh he would never say it out and out he would never say that he hates the gospel because you see he might lose his standing in society by saying that he hates the gospel he might not say it out and out there are some sadly who come out and out with the feelings of their heart and they say we don't want the gospel we don't want any of these things there are some in this community you know them and I know them and they live their lives like that and they are saying openly we don't want the gospel do you know this some of these poor people don't want the gospel and are so self sufficient you know that they have decided to go with the new consciousness as it's called they've decided to go with the new theology as it's called they've decided to go with the godless way as it's called and very soon the new consciousness and the new theology gives way to the new morality because you've seen them and

I've seen them in all the glory of their self sufficiency and where do they end up they end up not only in hell but they end up on the human scrap heap because of their self sufficiency they can't go their way they're fine they don't want god but off hence where do they end but be sorry for the way their life is turning out you can't but be sorry for them you can't but go out and pity towards them do you feel pity towards some of the young men in this community young men and the story of their lives very often is a week on and a week off the booze they've been self sufficient they're going their own way and they know better than everyone else they know better than those of you who come here and those of you who are in

[38 : 03] Christ they know better than that and you just watch the poor poor souls preparing for an eternity and they don't know the way in which they're going as often as not but what does wisdom say to them I want to come to wisdom's message and it's this three times wisdom says how long how long how long and I wonder tonight is wisdom saying to yourself here you simple ones I believe that some of you are here simple ones why because although you come to church and although you come to hear the gospel you're quite content to go on neglecting the real issue your religion but still basically neglecting your relationship with

Christ is that the story of your life well I'm going to tell you something tonight that Christ Jesus in glory God's wisdom is asking you a question and the question that he's asking you is this how long how long and then what about you scorners you laugh and you joke about it all but it's not really something that causes you a great deal of concern in the last analysis the Christ of God is asking you tonight how long you fools who hate instruction God's Christ is saying to you tonight how long do you know this unless you repent unless you turn to Christ unless you turn away from your sin and seek the Lord while he is to be found the how long of Christ will become too long how awful my friend if in a lost eternity you lift up your eyes and the

Christ who was saying to you for so many years how long you simple ones will you love simplicity how long you scorners will you love will you love your and you are lost for all eternity but tonight Christ's voice doesn't say to you too long while you are still under the preaching of the gospel no no he's saying to you turn turn that's what god is saying to you sinner on the broad road that leads to a lost eternity he's saying to you turn turn do you do you remember the words of

Ezekiel in that wonderful passage in chapter 33 our moderator read it one day this week at the assembly turn ye turn you for why will you die O house of Israel turn ye turn ye for why will you die you know Christ is saying to you tonight my dear friend turn at my reproof it's not just the reproof of any preacher it's the reproof of Christ and finally I'm going to just say this and I'm going to end with this to those who will turn at his reproof do the impossible you know that you can't turn of yourself but Christ is calling to you tonight to turn and he's saying to you to turn and not only is he calling to you but he gives all those who will turn to him a promise and this is what he says

I will pour out my spirit upon you I will make known my words unto you that's what he says I will pour out my spirit upon you I know that you can't turn but do you know friend that in your turning to Christ God pours his spirit upon you that's what will make you turn God pouring a spirit upon you and he promises tonight those who turn that he will give them a spirit you know I believe with all my heart that there are some of you here and you've come to the conclusion I just can't do it I can't believe I can't repent I can't do anything of that nor could I nor could the longest serving Christian in this community do it without the aid of God oh wouldn't it be a wonderful thing tonight if you knew and I knew together what it was to cry to God to help us help us to turn and if we knew the help and the aid of the spirit of God enabling us to turn at his reproof to follow

[44 : 59] Jesus to follow Christ and he says something else to him I promise you in turning at my reproof that I will make known to you my words do you ever wonder you know about the Bible you go to your Bible some of you here perhaps for many years now you've been seeking Christ but it's all such a mystery to you you've never really turned to Christ but still you've got a hunkering after him somewhere or another you would love to be a Christian but you just don't have it you can't get hold of it you can't reach it you can't understand it do you listen to what Jesus is saying what wisdom is saying tonight he's saying this turn you at my reproof and I will make known my words unto you you know friend what you need tonight and what

I need is this that in true spiritual repentance repentance we turn from our sin to Christ but in true spiritual repentance we put the world behind us and the cross before us and in true spiritual repentance we say no turning back no turning back what about you the bible talks very very solemnly about some people and this is what it says about them that there are those who turn back to perdition and there are others who believe to the saving of their soul what will you do will you turn back to perdition or will you believe to the saving of your soul and tonight

I have a question for some of you who are seeking for Christ and yet who will not let go and my question to you is this question of Christ to the simple to the scorner to the fool how long how long how long and I wonder tonight I wonder tonight if for some of you how long is going to turn into too long may God bless his way to let us pray gracious God grant us thy spirit so that we will hear wisdom's voice calling to us and saying how long turn you at my repute and

I will pour my spirit upon you and ye shall know my words graciously hear us on behalf of our unconverted friends in this place and draw them to the place where they will be made willing to follow Christ and all for Jesus save God man