

**Sermon Transcript from June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016**  
**The Way Life Works**  
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What we've been doing is, the past couple weeks, we've been talking about the problem of evil, especially out of the book of Job. And, for the next several weeks, we're going to continue on in what's called "the wisdom literature" of the Old Testament. So, tonight is Proverbs, next week is Ecclesiastes and then the week after that is Song of Solomon. That's an entire book in the Bible about sex. So, now you're listening. So, next week is Ecclesiastes and then the week after is Song of Solomon. It should be really really fun. The way that we like to look at these – well, let me pray and then we'll talk about these. Okay. Ready?

Let's pray.

God, thanks a ton for your love for us. Thank You that Your mercy triumphs over judgment. Thank You, God, that more than anything what You want to express to us is Your love. So, we pray tonight that You would open our ears to hear, Spirit, what You want to say. Amen.

So, the wisdom literature of the Old Testament is several different voices or characters, if you will, coming from different perspectives about the wisdom of God. So, if you were to personify these different voices according to the book, it would go something like this: the book of Proverbs – which we're going to get into tonight – is this wise woman. She's observed thousands of people and sees the patterns of the cause and effect of how life works. When people act a certain way, lady wisdom wants to tell you what the results will be. She wants to convince you that the wisdom of God is the apex; it's the ultimate that humanity can achieve. She wants you to know that this is an attribute of God that He's willing to share with you, and she says, "Forget everything and strive after this wisdom."

That's lady wisdom. But, then there's the book of Ecclesiastes and, if this could be personified by a character, it would be a skeptical guy from Portland. He's like, you know, middle-aged, he's got his glasses on, he hangs out in the coffee shop at Powell's, he's read everything, he's done everything, he's been everywhere, he has a family, he's made a lot of money and lost it and made it again, and he's kind of like this guy that, you know, he's an academic and he knows a lot and, if you were to sit down and talk with him in the coffee shop at Powell's, he would say, "You know, yeah. Wisdom's great, but life's complicated. It's not that simple."

He would like to tell you that he offers a counter balance, the other side of the coin, of wisdom. Yeah, sure, wisdom's important. But, he would say, there's actually more to life. That's Ecclesiastes.

And then, finally, there's Job... or job, depending on how you pronounce that one. He's an older man, he had a family and wealth and he lost all of his children and then, later, regained them in life. And he is this guy that actually led a wise, upright, righteous life, yet tragically lost it all. And Job raises that question that we've all asked: "Why do bad things happen to some of the best people?"

How do you make sense out of that in God's world? Job addresses that question. So, each of these different voices in each of these different books are wisdom from God, but they come in different forms and in different perspectives. It's almost like you need to sit down in the coffee shop with all three of them and hear each of them out and then respond accordingly.

So, that's kind of a framing for the wisdom literature and, tonight, we're going to just look at Proverbs. So, if you would, turn with me in your Bibles or on your iPhone to Proverbs 1. What we're going to do is just an overview of how to approach the books of Proverbs and why it's super super important. I think you're going to like it. I have no idea what you're thinking, but I'm thinking you're going to like it. Proverbs 1:1. And, by the way, a little bit more before we read this. I can hear you still flipping. So, you go to Psalms, big book, and then you go one more to the right from there. You'll find it. If not, just look at your neighbor.

So, the book of Proverbs is broken up structurally simply. The first 9 chapters of the book are these speeches and then the 10th chapter through the 31st are these kind of couplet, for the most part, proverbs in earnest. So, kind of these wise sayings, these reflections on life and the way it is. But, the first section of chapter 1 that we're going to read right now

just kind of gives you the reader's digest, super small snapshot, what is this whole thing about, who wrote it and that kind of deal. So, let's read it. It's really helpful. Ready now? Okay.

Proverbs 1:1: **"The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:**

**"for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight;**

**"for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair;**

**"for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young –**

**"let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance–**

**"for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.**

**"The fear of the Lord..."** – and notice, if it's all caps "LORD," that's Yahweh, God's personal name. So, "The fear of Yahweh..."

**"The fear of [Yahweh] is the beginning of wisdom, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."**

So, written by Solomon son of David, some of the proverbs are from other people, but the majority of the book is this compilation of Solomon's wisdom and, quite simply, the book exists to gain wisdom, knowledge, insight. And, before we go too far, we kind of have to define "what is wisdom?" What's interesting is the Hebrew idea behind it so much bigger than just what we would think of as wisdom. And the Hebrew word is "chokmah." Can you say it one more time? "Chok" with a [throaty sound]. Clear your throat there. "Chokmah." Ready? We're going to say it together. One, two, three. "Chokmah."

Yeah. You got it. Whoa. That was a bit much right there. Someone was clearing their throat the whole time. "Chokmah" is this universal law woven into the fabric of the universe. It's actually described that when God created everything that exists, He did it through "chokmah." All of creation is ordered and coheres to "chokmah." It's a set of cause and effects in the universe that you can choose to work with or against. It's kind of like if you've ever worked with wood. I'm not like a super wood guy, but, you know, if you've worked with wood before, you know that there's a grain and, if you cut along the grain and you're going to sand and finish the wood along the grain, it works well. But, if you go across the grain and try and sand across the grain, it's difficult. It creates issues.

And that is this idea of "chokmah." It's a universal flow in the universe. And I know what you're thinking. It sounds a lot like the force in Star Wars. Right? And John Mark's not here, but we do have a picture of John Mark with his Star Wars family. And, if you haven't been to Bridgetown, welcome to Bridgetown. We're a Star Wars church. John Mark's on vacation but in his heart right now he's just feeling like, "Oh, man. I think they're going to be okay at Bridgetown tonight."

So, lady wisdom looks at these patterns in relationships – family, sexuality, business – and she invites you into this flow of "chokmah;" of wisdom. She's basically saying, "Look, all of the universe works well when you're in step with wisdom."

That's her argument. Now, if you read much of this book you'll see right away that there's this literary structure where, basically, it's a father writing to his son. So, look at Proverbs 1:8.

It says, **"Listen, my son, to your father's instruction."**

Or Proverbs 1:10, **"My son,"**

And then Proverbs 2:1 says, **"My son,"**

And it goes on and on and on. The structure is this father speaking to the son. So, the question is, "Okay, why? Why is it so important that this dad needs to impart all this wisdom to his son?"

And the answer's pretty obvious. It's because young men can be really dumb. And I can

say that because I was a young man. And it's true. I mean, think about it. The age for men, 18-25-year-olds, that's the highest death rate, the mortality rate, for men is during that time. Some of you guys are almost through. You can make it. You're going to make it through. Then, after 25, it drops off. Because, even biologically, the frontal cortex of the brain, which helps us make decisions, isn't even fully formed in men until after 25. So, I'm just saying, as one dude to some other dudes, we definitely need this wisdom. It's a certain kind of medicine that we need.

And ladies, don't feel left out. Because, as the story goes on and wisdom is personified, it's personified by lady wisdom. She not only represents Yahweh, the Creator God's wisdom, she represents Him Himself. So, as we continue on, a couple things I just want to point out about Proverbs as you're reading.

The first thing is this: there's a difference between information and wisdom. Wisdom is not information. So, think about this: a few hundred years ago in our country, a person, if they took everything they learned in their entire lifetime, all the information of a lifetime, it could fit in a newspaper, like a daily copy of the New York Times. That was it in their entire lifetime. But, today, in our current culture, we're in a state of information overload. Every day we wake up to news alerts on our phone, we open our web browser to unending amounts of information. I mean, you can watch, now, a movie at home and, if you're watching and you're like, "Hey, where's the setting? Where did they film this? Where's the location they're filming? This is really cool in this movie." You can pull out your phone and type in "whatever movie you're watching" and "locations" and then boom, it's right there.

Like, "Who is that actor? I don't know who that is."

Type in the character's name. Boom. All of it. There's information to an absurd level. Have you guys watched any movies on Amazon Prime? There's this bar on the side that, if you're watching on your laptop and you hover your cursor over it, there's basically a little profile of the actor that's on any given scene. There's location stuff, there's trivia information for older movies that are noteworthy. I mean, it's almost distracting. You could read this whole sidebar and miss the entire movie. There's information upon information.

And, if you think about it, in our city, who doesn't want to know about the latest thing? Our city has something new that you can know about every day. A new restaurant, a new development, a new donut. It's just constant, right? And even in our city there's like this shame if you don't know about the latest thing. People are like, "Hey, have you been to Pine Street Market?"

I'm like, "No, I haven't eaten there."

They're like, "Oh, man. I thought you would've by now."

You're like shamed publicly for not knowing new information. That's the air that we breathe, right? But, here's the thing: wisdom is different than information because it's not new. It's timeless. Unlike info that needs to be updated, wisdom and Proverbs has withstood millennia. Millions of people, literally, from thousands of different cultures, from tons of contexts, have tried out the wisdom of God in Proverbs and proven that it's good. And wisdom is different from information because wisdom has to be lived out. It's not just like some trivial factoid that's useful at a party or in a game to know some detail about some random thing.

Listen, information is valuable for a moment and then it's useless. It's like a boarding pass, if you've flown on a plane ever in your life. If you haven't, you totally should. But, if you've flown recently, you're given this boarding pass with the gate and your seat assignment and your name on it and it's really important, right? You get through security and you're like, "I've got my boarding pass," then you're on your way to the gate and you have to go to the bathroom and you're like, "Okay. I will put the boarding pass in this pocket." Then you do your thing and you come back out and you're like, "Where's the boarding pass?"

You know? You've got to have your boarding pass. You go through and they scan it through the gate and you're like, "Oh, please God. Don't make it pop up and say that I'm on the terror watch list or something." And it scans and you're like, "Yes! I made it!"

You look at your boarding pass for your seat, you get to your seat and then, all of a sudden, the boarding pass is useless. It becomes a bookmark after that point or it's just

like you leave it. It just doesn't matter. But, for a moment, it's the most important thing in the world. And that's what information is like. Factoids, sound bites, trivia are valuable for a second and then they're discarded and thrown away. But, wisdom, unlike information, reminds us that the decisions that we make actually have consequences. Wisdom teaches us that even the super-informed in our day and age can still be foolish. You can know everything about culture, you can know everything about your profession, real estate, finance and still be totally out of step with the flow of God's wisdom and be a fool.

I mean, like a woman who has advanced successfully in her career and climbed the corporate ladder and more responsibility and more notoriety, bigger paycheck, she can seem so smart in that realm and yet have a marriage at home that's falling apart. I mean, think about it. We all know people who are super well-informed, successful, and yet their personal lives are a wreck. Because, too often, we mistake information and intelligence for wisdom. They are not the same. Wisdom is skilled living, and we need it, I need it to know how to navigate the ins and outs of daily life, relationship, marriage, family, business, sexuality, everything. We desperately need wisdom.

And one of the things that's super helpful about wisdom is that it's practical; it's down to earth. Okay? A simple way to think about wisdom is this: it's knowing how to say and do the right thing at the right time. Wisdom has to do with what sociologists call "emotional intelligence" or "EQ." You've heard of "IQ," right? Intellectual intelligence, right? "EQ" is emotional intelligence. This is what we call social skills or street smarts. It's the skill of handling interpersonal relationships, knowing how to say and do the right thing at the right time. The other day, you know, I was downtown, northwest 23rd, with my son and my wife and we're walking up by Levi's and Urban and we're going up to Cost Plus World Market and this guy, who we don't know who's a little bit just different and super friendly in a weird way, comes right up next to us and he's got this blazer, like a sports jacket, on, and I don't know if he had anything underneath. It might have been just that.

He walks right up to us and he's like, "Hey. I got the sport jacket." Or something like that. I'm like, "Hey, dude. I don't know if I know you." And my son, Simon, doesn't skip a beat – he's 16 – and he's like, "Hey, man. That thing's cool."

And the guy's like, "Yeah. I need to get some leather elbow patches on it."

And Simon's like, "Yeah. And maybe some glasses."

And the guy's like, "Yeah, man. Totally!"

You know? And they just chatted up a little bit and then the guy opened the door and we went into World Market and, thankfully, he didn't follow us. But, the thing is is that Simon expressed, in that moment, like, sometimes somebody like that comes up to you on the street and you're like, "Hey, dude. This is weird. I'm going to run." You know? Or you just ignore them. But, Simon just jumped right in. He was like, "Oh, yeah. Hey, man. That jacket is cool."

Some people just have that naturally. That's that idea of "EQ." Some would say that this emotional intelligence is even a greater indicator of success than IQ. Some have said that, often times, the "A" students end up working for and working under the "C" students. But, you can't have both. So, if you're like, "Perfect. I'm going for all Cs."

No. You can't have both. But, Proverbs guides you in this ability of knowing how to say and do the right thing at the right time. So, I just want to show you a couple of these super practical – these are like "how to be a better human" proverbs. Okay? Are you ready for this? One person. Okay. The rest of you guys just listen in.

Proverbs 27:14: **"If anyone loudly blesses their neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse."**

Right? Most of you guys are like, "Duh." But, you know, I think I've shared with you before. I like to get up early, make coffee and then I'm usually the first one down in the kitchen and, as my kids are waking up and coming down and my wife's coming down I'm like so excited to see everybody. I'm an extrovert and I've been alone for like 10 minutes so I'm like, "Where is everybody?"

And, certain members of my family, who will go unnamed, when they come down, I'm like, "Hey, it's so good to see you. Oh my gosh. How'd you sleep? Are you ready for breakfast? What's going on?"

And I get like a, "Ugh."

Their greeting back to me is a grunt. And I actually had talked to them before and I repented of this, but I would be like, "Hey, you know, you should be more friendly. What's up?"

I thought they were in the wrong. But, actually, I'm in the wrong. According to Proverbs, you don't expect that kind of greeting early in the morning. So, if you want to win friends and influence people to be well liked, do not greet loudly early in the morning.

Next one. Proverbs 27:2: **"Let someone else praise you, and not your own mouth; an outsider, and not your own lips."**

Well, what does this mean? Basically, let's be real and agree that nobody likes someone who brags or constantly talks about themselves. The call of wisdom is to develop the skill of actually loving the other person by asking them questions and drawing them out. And, not too long ago, Jenny and I – my wife and I – had this interesting experience with this. We were at a wedding and we're one of those people – I don't know if this has happened to you – who always end up with the worst seats at the meal at the wedding. You know how it works? It's like everybody's talking, milling around, doing whatever you do, you're talking to people. I don't know what you do at a wedding. Just talk to people. You're talking, I talk a lot, and then they're like, "Hey, go ahead and grab your seats," and, unless you're the bride and the groom, it's kind of a free-for-all usually.

Like, "Grab your seats," and all the peasants are trying to get a seat, you know? I'm one of them. But, I have horrible luck and Jenny's like, "What is wrong with us?"

I'm like, "I don't know."

But, we always end up where all the seats are gone. Like, we were going to the cool table and it was taken. You're like, "What?" And then you look around and you're like, "Oh my gosh. There's not even any seats." Like, we get a card table in the parking lot and they're like, "Yeah, we'll bring some food out... if there's any left."

You know? I've been to a wedding where I had to sit on the grass and everyone else was in seats and at tables. Okay? And I've been to weddings, actually, with a lot of you guys and some of you guys think it's like musical chairs. You're like hovering around the chair and then they're like, "Hey, get a seat," and you're like, boom, right there. I know your game. So, we're at this wedding and we're sitting at the last table and we're sitting next to this lady that we have no idea who she is. All of our friends are somewhere else and we're with this lady and we don't know who she is. So, Jenny and I are just like, "Hey, so, tell us about yourself."

So, we'd ask a question and she would talk for like 30 minutes and then we're like, "Wow. Okay, well, do you have any family?" And then another 30 minutes. Basically we just asked her questions – brief ones – and then she talked a lot. And, by the end of the dinner, she said this: "You know what? I really liked getting to know you guys."

Ironically, I don't know if that really happened. And then she said the best thing ever. She said, "And this has been one of the most interesting conversations I've ever had."

I was like, "Well, it was easy. You just talked the whole time."

But, here's the thing: Proverbs teaches us how to interact with people in a way that's winsome; in a way that people walk away feeling encouraged, feeling honored. If she's here tonight, she's probably not feeling honored. I'm still a work-in-progress. Sorry about that. But, these are just, basically, the practicality of Proverbs – I'm really sorry if you're here. I'd love to hear more about how you're doing after. But, not too much. Kidding. She's totally not here. If she is, I'm going home after this out the back.

But, proverbs are just helpful in how to be liked by others and how to, in general, not be annoying. This is the grain of life; the way that life works best in God's world. But, the wisdom in Proverbs is not just about life hacking. It also deals with morality and what's right and what's wrong. This brings us to this concept of the fear of the Lord. The fear of Yahweh.

If you remember, at the very beginning, Proverbs 1:7. Look back there really quickly. It says, **"The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom."**

So, the idea behind this is basically that the first step to getting into the flow of "chokmah," the flow wisdom, comes with this concept of fear of the Lord. So, what does it mean? The fear of the Lord does not mean that you run away from God in terror. It actually means that you respond to Him in humility. Listen, if there's anything we should be afraid of, it's life without God; it's life being alone on your own. But, if you are a follower of Jesus and if you want this life, the good news is He invites you into the very life of God. He wants to be with you and He is safe and trustworthy.

You know, a couple years ago we began this journey of learning more about the Holy Spirit and listening prayer and that God actually speaks to us today. And I was – and I've shared this before – really afraid to slow down and have that silence to really listen to what God wanted to say to me. I mean, I thought that if I did that, if I was quiet and I heard God's voice, He would just remind me of all the ways I've screwed up. And I don't know about you, but my mistakes and my shortcomings are in front of me already and I'm like, "Great. Now, I'm just going to take this time and I'm going to ask God to speak and He's just going to point out all the things I've done wrong."

But, what happened when I finally got to that place of still and quiet and said, "Spirt, speak. What do you want to say to me," it was the exact opposite. Just like the words of that song, God's mercy triumphs over His judgment. He delights in showing mercy. All of the judgment that I deserve has already been taken care of on the cross with Jesus. When I slow down and when you slow down and you listen to God's voice, what He wants to speak over you is love. And now, I have probably the best experiences I have had in the past two years have been these moments when God just overwhelms me with His love and His joy.

And for me, oftentimes, it comes with this emotion of laughter and tears and that's what hearing from God and the heart of God is like. And wisdom begins with this acknowledgment that God is the center of the universe, not us. He is a good king, but I'm not the king. So, let's flesh this out a little bit more, this concept of the fear of the Lord, alright?

Proverbs 3:5 says, **"Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding."**

The fear of God means I'm saying, "God, You're the one that I'm going to trust for good and evil. I'm not going to lean on my own understanding and how I define it. Instead, I look to You as my good king."

Wisdom comes from outside yourself. It's from God, imparted to you. You see, my understanding of life and situations and even ethics isn't always right. I don't know it all. I need God to guide me and to show me how to walk in this wisdom. And, by the way, the end of that verse right there, the second part is "acknowledge him in all your ways and he will make your paths..." – okay, a couple of you guys went to Sunday school – "...straight."

Here's' the thing I want to say about that really quickly. Remember that this is the book of Proverbs, not the book of promises. The way this works out is you get in the flow of "chokmah," you live according to wisdom, and the likelihood, the majority of the time things do work out according to that. But, the reality is we're in a battle of the world, the flesh and the devil that's fighting against us and, sometimes, case in point, Job. You'll be living the right way, you'll be honoring God and living in the flow of wisdom and tragedy still comes. And God is there and that's very much what we heard from Job.

Next one. Proverbs 3:7: **"Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil."**

So, just like Adam and Eve, we just choose. Do we want to have this so-called wisdom from our own perspective, our own eyes, or are we able to say, "No, God? I fear You. I honor You. And You can tell me, You can guide me. I want You to give me Your wisdom, not my own."

And this, you can see, practically, like in the workplace – I mean, picture somebody that just came out of college and they're in their first professional career and they're in a culture in the workplace where they're asked to lie; to falsify numbers. And everybody there on their team and their company does it. It helps the company. Everybody's like, "Hey, man. You're guaranteed not to get in trouble. This helps the company. This helps us. This is just what we do here."

How does the fear of God and wisdom interact with that? Well, wisdom says, "Quit the job and run."

And you're like, "Well, this is my first job. I need this to build up..."

No. Wisdom says you quit the job and you run. And it's like, "Well, then what about a paycheck?"

Wisdom says that, in the long run, justice will be served and all of those who are corrupt will be found out. The things that people have done in secret will be exposed. And those who fear God and do justly will be rewarded. Fearing God leads to acting wisely and trusting that, in the end, He's going to take care of you.

One more thing about Proverbs. At the end of the opening speeches, turn with me now to chapter 7. At the end of these speeches are two final invitations. As I said before, chapters 1-9 are the intro to the book, all of the speeches and they leave you, at the end of chapter 9, with a choice. So, let's. Begin in chapter 7 and we're going to read the first speech and invitation and then we'll read the second one. Are you guys with me?

Proverbs 7:6. A little story with an invitation in there. Are you ready? This is the father speaking.

"At the window of my house I looked down through the lattice.

"I saw among the simple, I noticed among the young men, a youth who had no sense.

"He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house

"at twilight as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in.

"Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.

"(She is unruly and defiant, her feet never stay at home; now in the street, now in the squares, at every corner..." – it's kind of creepy. It's like she's everywhere – "...she lurks.)

"She took hold of him and kissed him and with a brazen face she said:

"Today I fulfilled my vows, and I have food from my fellowship offering at home.

"So I came out to meet you; I looked for you and have found you!

"I've covered my bed with colored linens from Egypt."

Which I guess are nice. I don't know. I haven't seen them. Apparently they're really cool.

Proverbs 7:17: "I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.

"Come, let's drink deeply of love till morning; let's enjoy ourselves with love!

"My husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey.

"He took his purse..." – think like "man purse;" satchel – "...filled with money and will not come home till full moon."

"With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk.

"All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose till an arrow pierces his liver,"

Ouch.

"like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it will cost him his life.

"Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say.

"Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths.

"Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng."

That means there's a lot that she's killed.

"Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down into the chambers of death."

So, what's imbedded in that little narrative is a speech, right? The seductress woman comes out and she's basically trying to lure this young man in to her house and, ultimately, to her bed. And that is a representative of falling in foolishness. And it's an invitation from her to anyone who reads this to follow her way. But now, conversely, let's go ahead and flip to Proverbs 9 and let's hear another invitation.

Proverbs 9:1-6: "Wisdom has built her house; she has set up its seven pillars.

"She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table.

"She has sent out her servants, and she calls from the highest point of the city, 'Let all who are simple come to my house!'

"To those who have no sense she says, 'Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of insight.'"

Now, skip down to verse 13. Now she's speaking about folly.

She says, "Folly is an unruly woman; she is simple and she knows nothing.

"She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city,

"calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way,

"Let all who are simply come to my house!'

"To those who have no sense she says, 'Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!'

"But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are deep in the realm of the dead."

Period. So, here's the contrast: two invitations to two different meals and two different women. One, the seductress. Her husband's gone, she's got some food, she's got her bed made out and her lips are dripping like honey in her seductive speech. And then, on the other hand, you have lady wisdom. Her house is at the highest point in the city and, in the ancient Near East, this is where the temple would be. The temple is where God meets with man and I think what's happening here is that lady wisdom is shown in the place of where God's temple would be and she's representing the creator God, Yahweh. And she's inviting anyone that will listen to eat with her. And the greatest difference is lady wisdom says, "Eat with me and you will live," and lady folly says, "Eat with me and it will be really good."

It's kind of like the stripper at the club or the dealer offering a high. It's going to be really good and it's going to end in death. She says, "Come with me for a really good time," but then what Proverbs says is, "But what you don't know is that all who eat with her are dead."

It's like, "Everybody who went in and joined her for a meal ended up dead and buried under the house."



That's the contrast. Choose today. Which will it be: life or death? And the key is: who do you trust? Who are you loyal to? The invitation tonight is that there is a force in the universe of wisdom that God Himself is part of, and He invites you in. Lady wisdom invites you to join and says, "This is the way life works best. Follow me into it."

But, we have to ask the question. What if you're here tonight and you have not tapped into the life giving force of wisdom? You've been listening to the wrong voice and you went to dinner at the wrong woman's house, so to speak. I mean, what if you're here right now and relationally, sexually, financially you have made unwise choices? You've been outside of God's best for your life? What do you do then? The answer is clear. You run to Jesus tonight.

If you've been living outside of wisdom, come back in tonight. You just simply have to admit that, with all our intelligence, there are still things that you got wrong. Give up your autonomy. Let Jesus be your king. Let Him comfort you tonight. You know, as we were praying before the gatherings, one of our guys from the church said, "Hey, man. I just have this really strong sense that, tonight, God wants to say to some people to taste hope."

And he's like, "But, it's not just 'taste hope,' it's actually 'be overwhelmed with hope.'"

And, if you are in a situation right now in your life and you feel like, "Man, I do not see a way out. I do not see the light at the end of the tunnel. This is bad."

I think, tonight, God wants to offer you hope. And that hope comes in the form of Jesus. You see, Jesus is the embodiment of God's wisdom. Paul said it this way in 1 Corinthians 1:30. He said, **"It is because of God that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption."**

You guys, if you want to know wisdom, it's Jesus. Jesus, the way He lived, the way He spoke, the way He related to God the Father and to others, that was a perfect life of wisdom. One scholar said it this way:

"The message is clear. Jesus is wisdom herself."

Tonight, turn to Jesus. And, for some of you, maybe you need wisdom about a decision you have to make or direction in your life and the answer for you is to come to Jesus. God actually loves it when we call out to Him for wisdom. He says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, ask God who gives it freely and abundantly."

That's a prayer that God loves. "God, give me wisdom. I don't know what to do. Show me."

He loves to show you. He rewards those who seek after Him. He is good. He wants to overwhelm you with His love. And this wisdom can be found in Jesus by His spirit here tonight.

Let's pray.

If you'd just go ahead and just clear off your lap. We're going to have a couple moments of silence and let's just invite the Spirit. Holy Spirit, we just ask You to come, to speak to us right now, God. What do You want to say to us? We're listening. Holy Spirit, come.