

Victory of the Lamb – Seeing 2020 – January 26, 2020

Proverbs 8:12, 27-31 and 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 – The Embodiment of Wisdom – Pastor Bill Limmer

When we lived in southwestern MN, we had a black lab who, by decree of the head of the house (not the person standing here), was not going to be a house dog. It didn't take long before the winter temperatures were brutal. My father-in-law gave me some wise advice. "Build a doghouse in the garage using a corner of the garage so that way you only have to build two sides and the top." I got some wood and began to saw away. Then I used a hammer and some nails to piece it together. I don't think we have a picture of it, I hope we don't have a picture of it, because SURPRISE! Who knew that one could mess up just building two sides of a kennel and dropping a piece of plywood on the top for the roof? It was a very crooked creation.

Today we are continuing our series *Seeing 2020* and we are going to see what many will find out to be some surprise when it comes to wisdom. So, let's dive in.

Proverbs 8:12, 27-31. **I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,**²⁸ **when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,**²⁹ **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.**³⁰ **Then I was constantly at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence,**³¹ **rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind.** God created the world in wisdom. What is it in creation that impresses you? Cause you to have awe or wonder or brings you delight? Is it the invisible or the vastness or something in between.

Victoria Falls, the largest waterfall in the world, is located between Zambia and Zimbabwe. Because of the mist that Victoria Falls creates and because of the sound of the rushing water, the African name for the Falls is "Smoke that Thunders." I quiz you, how do waterfalls not run out of water? I am sure that a couple of people know the answer, but the first part of the answer is because God made it that way in his wisdom.

Scientists, physicists, and chemists spend their life exploring what God has done. What may be a surprise to many is there was gravity before Sir Isaac Newton discovered and named it after he saw an apple fall from a tree. And the apple that fell had carbohydrates, proteins, DNA and RNA, and hormones before nutritionist, chemist and scientist ever figured it out. Francis Collins PH. D. Head of human Genome Project – "The God of the Bible is also the God of the human genome. His creation is majestic, awesome, intricate and beautiful." Romans 1:20 says, **For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made.** As we look at the created world with all of its largeness and smallness we can understand that the God who put this altogether is full of creativity, power, kindness, love and wisdom

We often think of wisdom being found in dusty books in large libraries or searched out in nanoseconds on Google. Wisdom is not just information of knowledge. The writer of Proverbs portrays wisdom as a person. (Proverbs 8:30,31) **I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence,**³¹ **rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind.** Who is this I? Who is this wisdom? John 1:1-3 gives us the answer. **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was**

God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. The I, the wisdom, in Proverbs 8, is the revelation of God himself. Wisdom is the person of Jesus.

And wisdom, that is Jesus is, (Proverbs 8:31) **rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind.** So Jesus in wisdom, because that is who he is, has made the world. He is rejoicing over creation like a proud kindergartener with her latest refrigerator worthy artwork. And Jesus is even rejoicing in/over mankind – that’s you.

When you rejoice over someone, love someone, value someone, you do things for that person. Jesus delights in you to this degree, that the one who created the whole world, that created you, would allow himself to be crucified for you. Crucifixion was not only one of the most painful and disgraceful forms of death but also one of the most dreaded methods of execution in the ancient world. The way of the cross is the way of blood, sweat, pain, tears, tremors, death, power, and the cross of Jesus is all that plus the way of love and wisdom. (1 Corinthians 1:18) **For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 22 Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.”**

The wisdom of God is upside-down wisdom. To the Jews who wanted God to give them freedom from their Roman landlords, in our way of thinking we would say from the Republicans or from the Democrats. They just wanted a life of comfort, privilege and security. But Jesus came for a different kingdom so the cross was a stumbling block.

The Gentiles wanted power to exert over someone, not to submit to someone. They wanted reason and logic, something to figure out. They considered the talk of sin and the need for forgiveness as foolishness. So they laughed at the idea of God taking on human flesh and perishing on the cross. To the Gentile world the good news of Jesus is uninformed.

One NFL quarterback says that he is not much for Christianity because he seems to think it is a binary situation, of us vs them. Heaven and hell. Not realizing that in the wisdom of God there is grace that people get second chances all the time and that the ultimate price was paid by Christ. The quarterback said, "I think organized religion can have a mind-debilitating effect, because there is an exclusivity that can shut you out from being open to the world, to people, and energy, and love and acceptance. I don't believe in a God who wants to send most of his creation to a fiery hell." I don't believe in that God either. I believe in that God who is love and wisdom sent his son to be out substitute so that no one would have to go to hell. I believe in the God who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of truth. The proof is the cross.

Luke 19:10 says, **The Son of man came to seek and save the lost.** The word lost means ruined, broken. And so, Jesus reached out to those with messy lives, messed up on the inside or on the outside or both. So, I ask you, is the cross of Jesus wise enough for you? Is the cross enough for you or do you think you need to try harder to win God's approval? Is the cross of Jesus enough for you or do you need the approval of someone else? Is the cross of Jesus enough for you or are you more concerned about what earthly blessings you can get from God? If you were homeless, would Jesus be enough for you? If you

had no friends would Jesus be enough for you? If you didn't have your skill set, your position, your status would Jesus be enough for you. If you had no money, would Jesus be enough for you? With all your weaknesses, flaws and sin, is Jesus enough for you?

I bring this all up because Jesus in his wisdom calls us to repent. Because from time to time we want what God can give us more than we want God. From time to time we question God's wisdom. But the good news is the cross of Jesus is, Jesus is still the wisdom and power of God for your salvation by grace through faith!

And so, wisdom is in the cross of Jesus. God made the cross the most powerful instrument for good. God makes the good news of Jesus the greatest truth and gift anyone could receive. The foolishness of the cross is the wisdom of God that declares your debt is paid in full. The wisdom of the cross isn't a set of rules to live by but rather a person who kept the rules for us so that we could have a relationship with God. This is God's good and loving pleasure, to save people by grace through faith, and this rules out all human merit and effort and therefore excludes no one! If salvation were dependent on high IQ, or great learning or noble mind or flawless character, then none could or would be saved. Since the good news of the cross demands nothing from us, the door is open to all. The foolishness of the cross is the power of God to save all who believe.

Jesus' wisdom is not just for a future time. It is for us today too. Jesus didn't seek out a corner office. But he did seek out the outcast and the down-and-out, and those headed down the wrong path. And so we can picture Jesus from the cross of wisdom saying, (Mark 10:43) **whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant**. Instead of getting in a twitter war of words, or secretly holding disdain and judgment for those who treated him with contempt, we can picture Jesus saying from the cross of wisdom, (Matthew 5:44) **Love your enemies**. he loved his enemies. In a world that seemingly always wants more, we can picture Jesus on the cross of wisdom saying, (Acts 20:35) **It is more blessed to give than to receive**.

The wisdom that is Jesus sets you free from sin and free to serve God in love and thankfulness. How are you going to walk in the way of Jesus wisdom this week?