

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

Wisdom

Today is an interesting day for worship. Many people are celebrating Father's Day. Today is also a day designated as National Indigenous People's Sunday, and for the church it is Trinity Sunday. Trinity Sunday is one of the few Sundays in which a teaching of the church, that of the doctrine of Trinity, is upheld as something to be aware of and to learn about. Trinity being the concept of the Father or Creator, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as one.

Living Faith, which is a statement of faith written for the Presbyterian Church in Canada some years ago states,

Therefore, with the one church universal
we believe in one God, eternal Trinity,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
three in one,
one in three,
equal in power and glory.
God is the Father to whom we come,
the Son through whom we come,
the Spirit by whom we come.

Now, I am not going to get into the nitty gritty of this doctrine of Trinity today, other than to say that to try to describe the Trinity is really beyond us as so much of God is a mystery to us. Still, I am going to focus on one aspect of the Trinity, that of the Holy Spirit which in the Old Testament is also referred to as wisdom. And this brings us to this reading from Proverbs 8 which, on Father's Day, is about Woman Wisdom or as Eugene Peterson says in *The Message*, Lady Wisdom or Madame Insight.

With all the images of God that we have that are masculine, these words in Proverbs come as an insight into God that so many are quick to dismiss, that image of God as more than just a male figure. Here Lady or Woman wisdom calls out to everyone, everywhere, those at the busiest intersections of life and everyone out on the streets, to listen!

But to whom are we listening and for what are we listening?

The scripture does not disappoint in giving us an answer to our query. We listen for the one that was created even before creation...Wisdom, the Holy Spirit. Some of the description of Lady Wisdom comes in words we did not hear today from this Proverb,

“I am Lady Wisdom, and I live next to Sanity;
Knowledge and Discretion live just down the street.
The Fear-of-God means hating Evil,
whose ways I hate with a passion—
pride and arrogance and crooked talk.
Good counsel and common sense are my characteristics;
I am both Insight and the Virtue to live it out.”¹

What is heart warming, encouraging, wonderful, and simply down to earth, is that wisdom is found in the ordinary and everyday things of life. Wisdom is inherent, built into creation and, as part of God’s creation, wisdom is found in human beings. Albeit that often it is hard to see wisdom at work in people, but as we are created in and by wisdom, in and by God, we are connected to God’s wisdom and it can be found in us and around us in all that is created.

Sadly, as we look at the ways we disregard creation, the land, air, water, animals and flora as just part of what we can use as resources, we often forget that it was God’s wisdom that created all that is, and we are created in part as stewards of the creation, not to be exploiters of it.

This being National Indigenous People’s Sunday, it is wonderful to also touch on the Seven Grandfather Teachings which tie in wonderfully with the wisdom teachings of scripture. These teachings are referred to as gifts. The first gift being that of wisdom where it is said that “To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom...The teacher of Wisdom is the Beaver. The Beaver has the wisdom of foresight through careful planning and building that protects and sustains the family while honouring and preserving the natural environment.”²

The wisdom of the Indigenous People has been dismissed for decades by colonizers and yet this teaching is totally in line with the words about Woman Wisdom in Proverbs where we are taught that wisdom “arrived on the scene before Ocean, yes, even before Springs and Rivers and Lakes. Before Mountains were sculpted and Hills took shape, wisdom was already there, long before God stretched out Earth’s Horizons, and tended to the minute details of Soil and Weather, and set Sky firmly in place...Wisdom was right there with God, making sure everything fit.

Wisdom exists in all that was, is, and will be created just as God was and is and ever will be. So how do we go about recognizing wisdom in creation around us and in each other?

We do it by paying attention, by listening, by being still, and by learning. I had a professor once who said we should be someone who goes through life with a learner’s heart. When we expect to learn each day from someone or something we will not be

¹ [*The Message* \(MSG\) Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson](#)

² [Seven Grandfather Teachings - Georgian College](#)

disappointed. It may be that we learn more about evil, about power, control, sin, death, and more, but we will also learn about compassion, care, forgiveness, hope, joy, and love. All of these things are part of life. If we can go through life with the intention to learn, to become wiser, it changes our perceptions and our perspectives about all of life.

We might even find that most of the time we can delight in God, creation, in others, and in the wisdom that becomes ours. The reading today closes with the words,

Day after day I [wisdom] was there, with my joyful applause,
always enjoying God's company,
Delighted with the world of things and creatures,
happily celebrating the human family.³

At this time in our history, as in much of human history, there seems to be more to sorrow in that to delight in. Power and control over others and creation takes precedence over lifting up the brokenhearted or making sure that everyone has the basic necessities that are the intrinsic needs of every human being and show that every life has value. Remember that every piece of creation, every human being, and I mean every one is created by God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit...Creator, Jesus, and Wisdom.

When we forget this or conveniently dismiss this teaching, this basic understanding, we displace wisdom...wisdom and more. We displace people, we abuse creation, we lose our own humanity. We also lose out on experiencing fully things that are of God...compassion, grace, love.

On this Father's Day, this National Indigenous People's Sunday, this Trinity Sunday, may we move from a place that lacks wisdom to a place where we celebrate God in the ordinary things and the ordinary moments, as well as the extraordinary. May we move to a place in our hearts, minds, and bodies where we are present with joyful applause of those who demonstrate and live in wisdom, always enjoying God's company, delighted with the world of things, and creatures, while happily celebrating the human family. May we live in and with wisdom this day and always.

I speak to you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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