

**Grace, mercy, and peace are yours in abundance through faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

<sup>1</sup> Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars. <sup>2</sup> She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table. <sup>3</sup> She has sent out her maids, and she calls from the highest point of the city. <sup>4</sup> “Let all who are simple come in here!” she says to those who lack judgment. <sup>5</sup> “Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. <sup>6</sup> Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of understanding.

<sup>10</sup> “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

<sup>13</sup> The woman Folly is loud; she is undisciplined and without knowledge. <sup>14</sup> She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city, <sup>15</sup> calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way. <sup>16</sup> “Let all who are simple come in here!” she says to those who lack judgment. <sup>17</sup> “Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!” <sup>18</sup> But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave.

**This is God’s Word for God’s people.**

**Dear Friends,**

Summer is a time for weddings. A time to gather with family and friends for a special celebration. Sometimes we get more than one invitation for the same date and then we have to decide which event we are going to attend. Sometimes we are happy with the choice we made and sometimes we get to the event and realize we made the wrong choice.

The portion of scripture before us is about invitations – specifically about two invitations. We have “**Wisdom’s invitation**” and we have “**Folly’s invitation.**” Both invitations look the same but as consider both of these invitations this morning we want to look at how we are influenced by each and “**How do we respond to these invitations.**”

**I.** As we consider what Solomon has written, it helps to know that the Book of Proverbs uses a method called, “**teaching by comparison.**” Setting one truth next to another and comparing them. What sets this book apart from other ancient literature of the same type is that Proverbs is part of God’s inspired Word. It was written for believers about living a God pleasing life. Some have even called it, “**The Sermon on the Mount of the Old Testament.**”<sup>1</sup> Today we want to compare wisdom and folly.

Wisdom is personified as a woman who is preparing her house for guests. The house is described as having seven pillars. Seven is quite a few. This is not a small house but a substantial one – a mansion standing on a firm foundation. The number seven is the number for completeness and God’s plan of salvation is complete. There is nothing more that has to be done. Jesus did it all and assured us of that from the cross when he said, “**It is finished.**” As we think of this house it reminds us that the wisdom of salvation rests on a solid foundation – Jesus Christ.

Solomon goes on to tell us wisdom has invited us to a meal. “**She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table.**” This isn’t “take out” from some fast food

<sup>1</sup> Roland Cap Ehlke, Proverbs: The People’s Bible. Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI, 1992. page 3.

place which we eat gathered around the TV. This is an exceptional meal that has been prepared for us and the table has been set. This is a feast!

These words remind us that God's Word is a spiritual feast for us – filling us up with the forgiveness of sins, comfort, hope, joy, peace, and the sure promise of heaven. And this feast isn't for just a few – it's not only for an exclusive few that meet certain requirements.

**“[Wisdom] has sent out her maids, and she calls from the highest point of the city. <sup>4</sup> “Let all who are simple come in here!” she says to those who lack judgment. <sup>5</sup> “Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed.”** This reminds us of Jesus' command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. (Mark 16:15). God's messengers don't wait for the people to come to them, they go out looking for the people. The message is proclaimed from the highest point for all to hear. Wisdom doesn't want anyone to go hungry. The Apostle Paul put it this way, **“This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”** (1 Timothy 2:3-4)

Solomon encourages us, **“Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of understanding.”** Let the wisdom of salvation bring you life. Let the wisdom of salvation guide you along a path of understanding – understanding of what God's will is for your life.

You are wise. You have the wisdom Solomon is talking about. You know Jesus lived a perfect life for you and died on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for your sins. The Holy Spirit has created faith in your hearts to bring you this wisdom of salvation. But there are times when we all ignore wisdom's invitation to come and eat and drink – there are times when we put off being fed spiritually. When we don't accept the invitation to come and hear God's Word. None of us would willingly go a week without food and yet we sometimes go two or three or more weeks without any spiritual food – we willingly starve our souls.

Wisdom's invitation satisfies the starving soul. It renews and refreshes bringing spiritual strength through the comforting words of forgiveness found in God's Word – forgiveness even for the sin of staying away from God's Word at times. Don't ignore wisdom's invitation and starve your soul because then in essence, you will be accepting folly's invitation.

**II.** Folly is also personified as a woman but she is described as being loud, undisciplined and without knowledge. Earlier, in chapter seven, Solomon describes Folly as being an adulteress and coming in a seductive and alluring manner. Folly seems to have the same kind of invitation as wisdom, but she doesn't send anyone out. She doesn't have to. There are many who wander by and hear her invitation.

Folly is a picture of the influences of the world and even our own sinful flesh calling out to us. Just think of all the things in our lives that are “just there” influencing us as we “walk by.” TV, the internet, video games, movies, and a society that is tolerant of just about everything and anything. A lot of times we follow the invitation of folly without even thinking about it. It's like feeding ourselves with so much spiritual “junk food.” It seems good at the time and we think it couldn't possibly hurt us.

You might have heard the story about the father who had some teenage sons that wanted to go and see a movie. As they were trying to convince their dad it was a good movie he asked what it was rated. They hesitated and then replied, "R." But don't worry, there's no sex in it. It's rated "R" because of the violence and some bad language – but there's not too much of the bad language either and it won't hurt us. Their dad said they couldn't go to the movie and so they went in the other room to watch TV and sulk. They just didn't understand why he had said No.

While the boys were watching TV their Dad decided to make them some brownies. When they were done, he brought them in a plate full and offered them to his sons. As the boys reached for the brownies their dad said, "By the way, when I was mixing up these brownies I added just a little dog poop. Not too much and they have been baked so I don't think it will hurt you. You can handle it – it's just a little bit." Needless to say, the boys didn't eat the brownies. They looked good but contained something pretty disgusting that the boys didn't want to have anything to do with.

So often sin looks good to us and we might even say we can walk right alongside something sinful and it won't hurt us, but who are we kidding. Sometimes we think it's just a little sin and it can't hurt us but all sin is disgusting. All sin is deadly – all sin separates us from God.

Notice how Solomon describes temptation, sin and the results, **"Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!"** <sup>18</sup> **But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave"** It's inviting at first but only leads to death – spiritual death. Some temptations are very alluring and appealing but in the end they bring only death.

Thank God that Christ paid for the times when we follow Folly rather than Wisdom. Thank God for the forgiveness that comes to us through faith in Jesus our Lord and Savior. **"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."**

When you hear the question, "Which invitation are you going to take, Wisdom's invitation or Folly's invitation?" the answer seems so simple. We want to be wise but the world encourages us to be foolish.

We have the Lord's feast before us this morning in God's Word. Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing but let us gather and be filled with the Holy Spirit as God's Word renews us and gives us strength to live in this sinful world. Let us be aware that Folly's invitation is always close by but Wisdom's invitation is the one that will bring us lasting peace and happiness. Amen.