

What do you think when you hear the word “wisdom”? Maybe someone who is very old talking about the meaning of life. When you are reminded to “act wisely”, how do you picture yourself acting? Being careful? Not too quick to trust? Protective?

A lot of the Bible deals with the subject of **wisdom**. All of the Proverbs, many of the Psalms, the Book of Ecclesiastes, and other parts of the Bible are called “Wisdom Literature” by Bible scholars. Wisdom Literature is easy to recognize in the Old Testament. It does not recount historical events. There are no stories. Actually, it doesn’t even give much advice – which you would think something called “Wisdom Literature” would do.

Wisdom Literature describes things; it is concerned with recognizing what **is**.

What is the order of things? How has God created the world? Wisdom literature is just observation, really. But observation of how things *really are* has more to it than we might think. What *we* call wisdom – our ability to make sense out of the world – puts the burden of wisdom on *our* shoulders. What the Bible calls wisdom is a matter of recognizing what *God* does and it is not very concerned if we can make sense out of it or not.

Today is Holy Trinity Sunday. The Holy Trinity is how God makes himself known to us. The Trinity is **how things are**.

So, on Holy Trinity Sunday, our first lesson is from the book of Proverbs – Wisdom Literature. Wisdom is speaking in this passage. Wisdom herself is telling us how things are, how God created the world.

8Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her voice?

²On the heights, beside the way,
at the crossroads she takes her stand;

³beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries out:

⁴“To you, O people, I call,
and my cry is to all that live.

²²The LORD created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.

²³Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

²⁴When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.

²⁵Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth—

²⁶when he had not yet made earth and fields,
or the world’s first bits of soil.

²⁷When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,

²⁸when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,

²⁹when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,

when he marked out the foundations of the earth, ³⁰then I was beside him, like a
master worker;

and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,

³¹rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race.

Creation takes place through wisdom. Whatever God created , if you can recognize it,
then you are wise. You know how things *really are*.

Our Gospel lesson from John records the words of Jesus, “When the Spirit comes, who
reveals the *truth* about God, he will lead you into all *truth*.”

Holy Trinity Sunday is a day for truth and wisdom. ... But we have to be careful about
what we call “truth” and what we call “wisdom”.

Truth is not defined as “what makes sense to me” or “a reasonable explanation”.

Wisdom is not “the ability to protect yourself and make the world do what you want”.

For example: Our church says God *is* a Trinity. There is one God, but he is three persons. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All one God. That does not sound like wisdom. That sounds like nonsense. But it is God's truth; so it is true wisdom.

Real truth and real wisdom come to us. We do not make them up or judge them by what makes sense to us...Wisdom is to be **observed** – not explained. It does not have to make sense. We have to see it and know that it is true.

Unfortunately, we try to make wisdom fit **our** understanding. If it **does not** fit our understanding, we might dismiss it as foolishness. But wisdom is to be observed – not explained.

Real truth and real wisdom are from the Spirit. As Jesus says in the Gospel lesson, "When the Spirit comes, he will lead you into the truth." It may not be what we usually call wisdom. **It usually is not.** We often do not understand wisdom – it is from God. We observe it, learn it, and know it. We do not usually understand it.

As a matter of fact, the very things we often designate as being "wise" are contrary to our life as servants of God. Those things we often call "wise" have nothing to do with the way God created his world and his people. And we can be confronted with the uncomfortable sounds of our own voices saying, "Yes, I know the Bible and I've read the Sermon on the Mount...but that sort of behavior isn't very *wise*."

The other side has stolen the word "wisdom" and evil often uses the word to describe things that are not at all part of God's creation or God's truth. Wisdom has come to mean selfishness, protecting one's own interests, ruthlessness, revenge. We may hear someone say a fellow uses *wise* management in his business dealings – when what is meant is the person is greedy. When people say they are raising children *wisely*, they may simply mean they are trying to scare them into acting right. *Wise* use of money means getting more of it. People can be convinced they are wise if they persuade others they are right, without considering the truth.

The word *wisdom* has fallen on hard times. Let's go back to the Bible and get our definition of wisdom from the book of Proverbs. Wisdom does not mean holding on to what you have. Wisdom does not mean clinging to past security. **Wisdom means *creating*** – making things *new* – partners with God in building his creation. Take some risks. Do new things.

How God has created the world does not make sense – not to us. He does things no self-respecting businessman would even contemplate.

For openers, God loves us. There is no profit in that. There is not even much sense in it. We do not do much but disappoint God. It is so contrary to our ideas about wisdom that sometimes it is hard to believe God *does* love us. And it is almost impossible to believe he loves anybody else. But it is God's truth. Not to be understood; just observed.

There are a lot of things about God that offend good sense. God forgives people who do not deserve it. We do not have to force God into forgiving us – it is his idea. God does not force us to obey him. If we live as part of God's creation, it will have to be because we love him.

It is God's doing. We can only observe it.

We must not make our faith dependent upon our ability to explain. Otherwise we would not be celebrating Holy Trinity Sunday. We cannot *explain* the Trinity – and it is not wisdom to try. We *proclaim* the Trinity. This is what God says about himself. We do not know how it works but it is God's creation and so it is true. Let's celebrate it.

Let's not surrender to Satan the noble concept of wisdom. Do not make it a cheap imitation of real wisdom. Wisdom means more than accumulating and holding. That kind of wisdom is stopped dead in its tracks and it is not going anywhere. **Real wisdom, God's wisdom, is creating.**

Wisdom does not hold onto security out of fear, it creates with courage. Wisdom is God taking hold of our lives and giving us strength to do things with them.

Wisdom deals with life. Wisdom deals with the excitement of new possibilities. Wisdom was with God when he created all that exists and wisdom is still with God as he uses his church to create and to make new life in the world.

It can be *our* new life. It can be the life we create as partners with God. As God's church, we have a mission to bring his creating love to the world. Before we go on that mission – let's pause and reflect. Let's arm ourselves with wisdom that recognizes the world as God created it.

When we go into the world, it is a great temptation to change our lives into what the world calls wisdom. Make sense out of things. Adopt the values that you see around you. The world's values tell us if you want to win, you have to be better than someone else. If you want to be wise you have to know how to get what you want. If you want God to love you, you have to do something to earn it.

If the world God tells you about does not make sense to you...do not try to change what God says. Change your mind. Recognize how things *really* are.

Recognize God loves you and forgives you. God's desire to make you new by forgiving you is just as surely a part of his creation as him making the grass grow, and the birds hatch, and the wind blow, and all the other life-giving occurrences of creation that I can not explain. But they are true. They can only be observed.

You are God's creature. He is going to love you. We can not explain that, we can not give him a good reason to do it. **But it is also a part of God's life-giving creation.** And anyone who can not recognize God's love is not very *wise*.

Wisdom is not earning. It is not explaining. It is *observing* the creative power of God.

We can be so much. We are partners with God. He has made us his through Jesus Christ. He continues to come to us through the Holy Spirit. We can *wisely* recognize the true nature of creation and God will continue to create his love in the world through us.

That is wisdom. Do not think of wisdom as a quiet, do-nothing proposition. Wisdom is not a matter of looking out for yourself.

Wisdom is from God. A wisdom of sacrifice, and service, and constantly creating. That is the way things truly are. A wise person can see it. Let us pray that we live our lives blessed with that wisdom.