

Worship Service: WISDOM

Welcome: Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith and community today. My name is _____ and I'll be leading our worship time today. Our theme for today is **wisdom**.

What is your definition of wisdom? The dictionary says wisdom is "the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment," especially as applied to whether an action or decision is a good idea: the wisdom or foolishness of building a house on an unsound foundation, the wisdom or foolishness of listening to certain people, even the wisdom built up in certain traditions over time, like traditional farming wisdom. And the Bible has much to say about how to learn wisdom and listen to wisdom and act wisely.

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

Opening Prayer: Great and loving God, we ask that your Holy Spirit bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and especially forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence joyfully and reverently, and let us depart today with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace which passes understanding. Amen.

Opening Hymn: Doxology

Statement of Faith: Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23 together:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Hymns:

**For the Beauty of the Earth
Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us
Amazing Grace**

First reading: Psalm 8.

You could say *all* the stories and teachings within the Bible are a source of wisdom for us, a way to learn what is right and just. In this reading from Proverbs 8, we hear wisdom speaking like a person. So when you hear “I,” this is Wisdom talking about herself.

¹ Does not wisdom call?

Does not understanding raise her voice?

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

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

⁴ “To you, O men, I call,
and my cry is to the children of man.

⁵ O simple ones, learn prudence;
O fools, learn sense.

⁶ Hear, for I will speak noble things,
and from my lips will come what is right,

⁷ for my mouth will utter truth.

*[[[could delete section in brackets:
wickedness is an abomination to my lips.*

⁸ All the words of my mouth are righteous;
there is nothing twisted or crooked in them.

⁹ They are all straight to him who understands,
and right to those who find knowledge.]]]

¹⁰ Take my instruction instead of silver,
and knowledge rather than choice gold,

¹¹ for wisdom is better than jewels,
and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

Holy, Holy, Holy Jesus Loves Me

Second reading: Matthew 7:24-29

And Jesus said: “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and ... [*pause and ask: What do you think happened?*] it fell, and great was the fall of it.” ²⁸ And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, ²⁹ for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

Softy and Tenderly, p. 7

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms, p. 8

Interactive Homily:

Let’s think a little more about wisdom.

- Where do you/we get wisdom?
 - experience; age; perspective; other people; reading, education; listening to others
- Who do you think of as wise, either in your life or a person in history?
 - Grandmothers, grandfathers; mothers and fathers; good friends we’ve known for a long time.
 - Even our own consciences grow wisdom through God’s spirit – sitting by a lake or in a garden, out in nature, you might think of things that you hadn’t thought of before, that add to your wisdom.
- What are some wise sayings that you grew up with? [let people come up with examples or truths from their own backgrounds; you can also start reciting the first few words of the following, letting the group fill out the end in unison. *After each, ask: What wisdom is that one teaching?*]

- Early to bed and early to rise ... makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.
- A penny saved is ... a penny earned. [*thrift*]
- Pride goes before ... a fall. [*don't be arrogant; humility*]
- The squeaky wheel ... gets the grease. [*persistence, perseverance*]
- A bird in the hand ... is worth two in the bush [*what you already have is better than what you're only dreaming about*]
- Two wrongs don't make ... a right. [*revenge isn't worth it*]
- The early bird ... gets the worm. [*don't procrastinate*]
- Actions speak louder ... than words. [*walk the talk!*]
- Honesty is the best ... policy. [*telling the truth is better all around*]
- You can't judge a book ... by its cover. [*look inside, not just at appearances*]
- Do unto others ... as you would have them do unto you.

That last one, the Golden Rule, is probably the most important! Jesus said that we could sum up everything about God's will with two things: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and Love your neighbor as yourself. Those two things are *solid rock* wisdom.

It's important to take wisdom into our hearts and to use it in our everyday lives, isn't it? And it's our job to pass on our wisdom to help others, too. I wonder if anyone here has a piece of wisdom you'd like to share with the group?

Let's take a moment to silently pray and reflect on the blessing and privilege of wisdom.

(Silent Prayer) ... Lord, thank you Now let us say the Lord's prayer together:

Lord's Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

Hymns:

This is My Father's World

It is Well with My Soul Standing on the Promises

Third Reading: Quotes on Wisdom

By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest. — Confucius

Wonder is the beginning of wisdom. — Socrates

The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom. — Isaac Asimov

Live, then, and be happy, beloved children of my heart, and never forget, that until the day God will deign to reveal the future to man, all human wisdom is contained in these two words, “Wait and Hope.” — Alexandre Dumas

The desire to reach for the stars is ambitious. The desire to reach hearts is wise. — Maya Angelou

Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you would have preferred to talk. —Anonymous

Hymns:

**Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
Shall We Gather at the River**

Fourth Reading: “Growing Good Corn” ¹

There once was a farmer who grew award-winning corn. Each year he entered his corn in the state fair where it won a blue ribbon.

One year a newspaper reporter interviewed him and discovered something interesting: the farmer shared his seed corn with his neighbors.

¹ <http://www.inspirationpeak.com/cgi-bin/stories.cgi?record=142>

The reporter asked the farmer, “Why do you share your best seed corn with your neighbors when they are entering corn in competition with yours each year?”

“Why sir,” said the farmer, “didn’t you know? The wind picks up pollen from the ripening corn and swirls it from field to field. If my neighbors grow inferior corn, cross-pollination will steadily degrade the quality of my corn. If I am to grow good corn, I must help my neighbors grow good corn.”

The wisdom lesson: His corn cannot improve unless his neighbor’s corn also improves. So it is with our lives. Those who choose to live in peace must help their neighbors to live in peace. Those who have joy and happiness must help others to find joy and happiness. The welfare of each is bound up with the welfare of all.

Hymns:

Blest Be the Tie that Binds

I Need Thee Every Hour

Closing Blessing: (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Doxology