

CLIPPINGS FROM PROVERBS

Proverbs 9

3C Sunday School Class

Sunday, December 13, 2015

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INTRODUCTION

QUOTE: Like the last movement of a sonata or symphony, this final chapter of the wisdom speeches recapitulates the major motifs of chapters 1-8. It pits Lady Wisdom ([vv. 1-6](#)) and Dame Folly ([vv. 13-18](#)) against each other in language that is unmistakably parallel (cf. [vv. 4](#) and [16](#)). The issues of choice that have dotted every page and virtually every paragraph are here made starkly clear. They are nothing less than life ([v. 6](#)) or death ([v. 18](#)) matters, just as they have been all along. And the choices are put to the same audience that has been in view throughout Proverbs thus far—the simple (or naive), the one who lacks understanding (lit., "heart"; see [7:7](#)). As the two calls of wisdom and folly are compressed in a handful of verses each, so the two possible responses are condensed in a remarkably brief and powerful section ([vv. 7-12](#)) which both separates and connects the words of the two archenemies. The possibility of a negative response to wisdom's overture had already been faced in [1:22-32](#). The benefit of a positive response was the theme of [1:33](#) and [8:32-36](#). The two calls, then, and the two possible answers capture much of the mood of the wisdom speeches in a highly digested format. *The Preacher's Commentary – Volume 15: Proverbs.*

SUPPORTING IDEA: Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly are both inviting passersby to their homes for a feast. The choice is critical because the path leads to life or death, and only those who fear the Lord will make the right choice. *HOTC*

I. The Simple Called by Wisdom (Proverbs 9:1-6)

A. Her Construction (9:1)

Proverbs 9:1 Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars:

- As a safe shelter for those seeking wisdom, and for those seeking to escape folly, Wisdom has constructed a place of refuge.
- **Seven** is often associated with God and God's work, and speaks of completion or fullness. We are not sure exactly what is meant here, but perhaps this house of wisdom is portrayed as having everything that the simple needs for wisdom and the blessed life.
- It has been asked whether we are to view this scene as a southern back yard barbeque, or a Jewish feast day at the Temple. The seven pillars seem to speak of more than a home, but that may not be the focus here. The truth is, this is a little of both. Wisdom offers down home hospitality, and yet there is also a deeply religious significance to the meal that is here spread.

B. Her Comforts (9:2)

Proverbs 9:2 She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.

- Chapter 9 ... begins and ends with calls to eat, one issued by wisdom, the other by folly.
- This feast prepared by Lady Wisdom for her follower parallels what the Lord, the Shepherd, does for His sheep.

Psalm 23:5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

- Whereas Lady Folly (Proverbs Ch. 7) had an ulterior motive (adultery) in providing her feast, Lady Wisdom offers nothing but pure blessing.

APPLY: Not every course of my feasting with God over the years has been sweet and tender, but much of that was my own fault. Even so, there were times that the Lord set before me food that I did not like. But when I look back, it is the best that I could have consumed. Taken as a whole, God has sent me a wonderful feast as I have served Him.

C. Her Call (9:3-4)

1. Those She Sends (9:3)

Proverbs 9:3 She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city,

- She sends her maidens.
- She herself takes a position at the highest places of the city and cries out to the simple.

QUOTE: Now it is time to gather the guests, so Wisdom sends out her maids to invite people to attend. And she herself goes to **the highest point of the city**, where many can hear her call out an invitation. The scene reminds one of Jesus' parable in [Luke 14:15-24](#). *HOTC*

Luke 14:15-24 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed *is* he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. 16 Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: 17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that

were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. 18 And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. 19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. 20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. 22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. 23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

2. Those She Seeks (9:4)

Proverbs 9:4 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,

QUOTE: This feast is not reserved for the elite. It is intended specifically for the **simple** and for **those who lack judgment** (literally "heart") or sense—the ones who need help most. Her invitation to "**come, eat, and drink,**" refers on the surface to sharing the meal she has prepared. Literally, this is a plea to acquire wisdom and enjoy its benefits. The needy are asked to leave behind their naivete and learn from her to **walk** in the path of **understanding**. By doing so, they will find life.

HOTC

- Both Isaiah and Jesus offer similar invitations, and like that of Lady Wisdom, they are not limited to the mighty, the

rich, the influential, but they are open to “every one.” Jesus said, “If any man.” What a God we serve!

Isaiah 55:1-2 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which is* not bread? and your labour for *that which* satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which is* good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

John 6:51-56 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. 52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

D. Her Concerns (9:5-6)

“she saith to him”

1. Enter the Blessed Life (9:5)

Proverbs 9:5 Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.

Pr. 10:22 Unlike “Lady Folly,” Lady Wisdom offers the blessings of following her, but there is no sorrow with it. The enticements of Lady Folly contain a hook!

Proverbs 10:22 The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

2. Forsake the Foolish (9:6)

- The plural audience is indicated in the plural form of all three imperatives in verse 6.

Proverbs 9:6 Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

- "*Forsake foolishness*" means "abandon your foolish tendencies to heed folly's call to fornication and pagan worship."
- Note that folly is called "simple" ([v. 13](#)), a term from the same root as "foolishness" in [verse 6](#).

Proverbs 9:13 A foolish woman *is* clamorous: *she is* simple, and knoweth nothing.

3. Live! (9:6)

Proverbs 9:6 Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

- "*Live*" means "accept the gift of life," even "the verdict of life" from the Lord, the righteous Judge.
- Note the identification of the hearer as "just" ([v. 9](#)) and the verdict rendered by Yahweh in [Ezekiel 18:9](#), when He pronounces the devoutly obedient person as just and then adds the judicial pronouncement: "He shall surely live!"

Ezekiel 18:9 Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he *is* just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.

4. Follow Understanding (9:6)

Proverbs 9:6 Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

"*Understanding*" (or "insight") may also take on a deeper meaning—"the ability to discern the difference between true worship and false." *The Preacher's Commentary*

QUOTE: If you want to be free to sail the seven seas, you must make yourself a slave to the compass. All of life involves balancing our freedoms and our bondages. We can be free from the toothbrush and a slave to cavities, or we can be a slave to the toothbrush and free from cavities. We cannot be free from the toothbrush and free from cavities. That kind of absolute freedom does not exist. We may wish it did, and we may act for a time as though it does. But it doesn't, and eventually we pay the price for both our freedoms and our bondages. *HOTC*

II. The Scorned Contrasted with the Wise (9:7 - 12)

III. The Simple Invited by Folly (9:13 – 18)

FINAL CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

QUOTE: What this final speech tells us, then, are these things: (1) wisdom and folly vie for our human allegiance; (2) that ultimate choice lies with us and which call we answer, with whom we choose to eat; (3) scoffers can be so hardened in their choice that they do harm to the teacher who challenges them; the wise are so open to wisdom's call that even her rebuke will spark their affection; (4) behind wisdom's invitation stands Yahweh; to say yes to wisdom is to respond in reverent obedience to Him; (5) to heed folly's call is to forsake the land of the living and to join the company of the dead. All these themes we have met before but never so adroitly packaged, never so compellingly stated. Their bold succinctness and vivid personification give them an irrefutable power. *The Preacher's Commentary*