

Proverbs 9:1-6 Share in Wisdom's Banquet! Pentecost 13 Aug. 23, 2015 (Children: W = wise)
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Grace and peace to You from God our Father who gives us true wisdom through our Lord and Savior, Jesus.
We read God's words of wisdom in Proverbs 9:1-6

These are Your Words, heavenly Father. Help us to live in wisdom by Your Word. Your Word is truth!

Dear Christian Friends,

We have seen ads on TV or on the internet. Ads are really just promises by a company that their product will be just what you need for your life. Sometimes the product is helpful and other times useless or not at all what the company promised. God in a sense has given us ads; that is, promises in His Word. When He promise something to be good, it will be good beyond what we can imagine. Solomon pictured God's promised blessings as a woman named "Wisdom" who hosted a banquet. God invites us in His Word to

Share in Wisdom's Banquet!

First, the banquet is prepared. Proverbs describes the banquet hall as a spacious place. *"Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars."*(v.1) The banquet hall is in a large mansion. There is room for many people to enjoy the banquet. Spiritually, I think of Jesus' words to His disciples: *"In my Father's house are many rooms.... I go to prepare a place for you."* (John 14:1-2)

We need Jesus to prepare a place for us since we cannot prepare a place for ourselves. As sinners, we would never be good enough to sit with our holy God at His banquet table. Even on the days when we feel we've done well, without Jesus, our works fall short of God's glorious standard. That is why God sent Jesus to prepare a place for us. He died to make us sinless in God's sight. He took the punishment we deserve so that we can have place in God's heavenly mansion. I marvel at the amazing grace and love of God!

Not only is the banquet hall huge, so is the meal being served. It states, *"She [wisdom] has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table."*(v.2) Solomon as king had huge feasts every day for the 100's of people at his court. But, meat at a meal was not part of everyday Jewish life. It was eaten on special events like weddings or religious feasts or at a king's coronation. This full table pictures what Jesus has done for us. His work to save us is complete. He died to erase our sins. He lived with perfect obedience to make up for all our disobedience. Jesus "filled the table." The Bible promised that Jesus has become for us *"wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption."* (1 Corin. 1:30)

Later in this chapter of Proverbs 9, Solomon contrasts "Wisdom" versus ungodly thinking which he calls "Folly." This Folly also offers a meal. Rather than the best of foods, she offers water and simple food that had to be eaten in secret because she stole it and didn't earn it. This Folly pictures how the sinful world is always trying to replace what God offers with their own version for people. Examples: Satan offered the forbidden fruit instead of the whole paradise. God says, "Seek first His kingdom", but "Folly" says "Put work or pleasure before God." Robert Schuler a TV religious leader who was often patriotic and inspirational was wrong regarding sin. He defined sin as a lack of self-esteem. His answer to people's problems was to have more positive thoughts. For him, Jesus was only an example to follow and not a Savior who gave His blood to pay for sins. Other replacements for God's ways of wisdom are telling people to cope with life by abusing alcohol or drugs instead of depending on Christ to help them with problems; some commit adultery or look at pornography instead of having a healthy relationship in marriage that God ordained. How can people be so taken in by Satan's substitutes? The Bible states that by nature all of us are "simple." Spiritually, we are easily fooled. Without the wisdom of God's Word, none of us would know the dangers of temptation and the consequences of our sins. But by God's Word, Wisdom, has shown us the difference between God's offer and meager substitutes and to seek God's full table of blessings in Christ.

All is prepared for the banquet. **Second, the invitation are sent.** Solomon wrote, “[Wisdom] has sent out her maids, and she calls from the highest point of the city. ‘Let all who are simple come in here!’ she says to those who lack judgment.” (v.3-4) The picture is that Wisdom does not want to see anyone lack what God offers. She does not want them to be misled by sinful things that do not satisfy. People deal with guilt by making excuses for what is wrong. God offers us forgiveness. Jesus took away our guilt at the cross. He offers a life where we don’t need to depend on sinful substitutes. We have His strength to live. God calls on us to admit our sins and to believe His promises. The Bible states, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:8-9) That is the reason that we are here today, so the powerful Gospel invitation keeps our faith focused on Christ alone.

What would keep us from accepting Wisdom’s invitation? The worldly “Folly” tries to stand in our way. “She sits at the door of her house... calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way. ‘Let all who are simple come in here!’ she says to those who lack judgment.” (v.14-16) Godless ways appeal to our sinful nature and feed our sinful pride. We are surrounded by so many bad examples of movie stars, famous singers, or athletes who live without God’s wisdom and they seem to be doing fine. But Jesus warned about following them, “Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.” (Matthew 7:13) Remember Jesus’ story of the Prodigal son? This man took his money, left home, and wasted everything. Then he realized how much he missed having the food at his father’s table. That food called him to repent and return to his father. His father gave him a banquet to celebrate!

Third, wisdom’s banquet truly satisfies. Wisdom states, “Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of understanding.” (v.6) This is contrasted by the way of “Folly” later in the chapter. It says of her, “Little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave.” (v. 18) Folly feeds people spiritual poison that leads to eternal death without God. Wisdom offers Christ who gives eternal life with our loving God. The more we listen to God’s Word, the more the Holy Spirit will give us insight as to what in life is good and what to avoid. We will never be perfect here, but we can at least know through His Word that we are on God’s path to heaven. Paul wrote, “From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 3:15-16) Jesus promised to those who believed in Him, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (John 10:10) We are secure and have a place with Jesus in heaven that will be far beyond anything that we can imagine as being good here.

Every day on TV or online, ads continue to promise to satisfy our needs. Spiritually as Christians, every day we are challenged to hold to the promises in Christ and His banquet of salvation or to turn away to substitutes of little value. God has prepared all that we need in Christ. He has called us through His Word of Wisdom to reject the way that leads to sin and eternal death. God’s Wisdom calls us to take our sins to the cross of Jesus and leave them there. Then we can pray, “Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” (Psalms 90:12) Let us listen to God’s Word, receive it by faith and enjoy the feast of salvation that Jesus has prepared for us! We will never be disappointed in Him. Amen.