

## **Sermon Notes for December 27, 2009: First Sunday after Christmas**

### **I. Wisdom is much to be desired.**

- A. One of God's desires to share wisdom with us.
- B. Wisdom different from knowledge.
  - 1. Knowledge from books, the internet.
  - 2. Wisdom from holy experience.
  - 3. From a considered life.
  - 4. And chiefly from God's revelation to us.
- C. Wisdom enables us to lives well.
  - 1. Individual lives of personal holiness.
  - 2. Corporate lives oriented to the common good, peace, justice.
  - 3. We hope the Spirit shares the gift of wisdom with little Carolyn in baptism today.
  - 4. Baptismal promises to seek God's wisdom in scripture and church.

### **II. God has long sought to share wisdom with his people.**

- A. The Hebrews often imagined Wisdom as a lady, calling people to her ways.

B. Proverbs 2, she calls out, "How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will you scoff at my teaching? Give heed to my reproof and I will pour out my thoughts to you."

C. Also in Proverbs, Wisdom claims to have been present at the foundation of the world, to be one of God's agents in the very act of creation.

D. In many places, Wisdom speaks of humans spurning her, though she woos them.

E. Sirach 24, she recounts long wandering until the Lord instructed her to settle with the descendants of Jacob.

F. So "I took root in an honored people, in the portion of the Lord, his heritage...All this is in the book of the covenant of the Most High God, the law that Moses commanded us as an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob."

G. Sirach's view: that wandering Wisdom became a book, the Law, the first five books of your Bible.

H. A very tidy solution.

### **III. But the inspired Evangelist John thought of wisdom's destiny differently.**

A. Speaking about Wisdom because it lurks behind John 1.

B. Likely adapted a hymn to Wisdom here.

C. But speaks of Logos, rather than Wisdom.

D. Like Wisdom, the Word often not received by the inhabitants of the earth.

E. "He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him."

**IV. Much of the Prologue seems to be about wisdom as godly knowledge, in the same mode as Wisdom of old.**

A. The Word came to **enlighten** everyone, a mental activity.

B. John **testified** to the light, so that everyone would **believe**; on one level a mental activity

C. But the world did not ultimately **know** him, through John's testimony.

**V. So the Word Became Flesh and dwelt among us.**

A. The World did not become a book, to be revealed only to the Hebrews.

B. Nor did the Word remain distant, as Greek philosophers thought he would.

C. The Word-Wisdom took on a human life to be with us, with all of us.

D. So we could **see**; a picture is worth a thousand words.

E. The experience of the living God in flesh trumps all other modes of wisdom.

**VI. Jesus' wisdom peculiar, amazing.**

- A. Close to the Father's heart, he revealed God's wisdom.
- B. Saying "Blessed are the poor; Blessed are those who mourn; Blessed are the reviled.
- C. His wisdom most fully revealed on the Cross.
- D. There Paul reminds us that God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

**VII. Finally, John's gift to us is that Jesus is more than wisdom.**

- A. Took that Platonic-Jewish hybrid idea, emptied it of meaning and filled it up again.
- B. Took a hymn to Wisdom and made it about the Word Becoming Flesh.
- C. Therein, we see that we will not be saved by mental processes.
- D. Or by conforming behavior to right ways of thinking and understanding.
- E. Saved by the grace of Jesus, perfect God and perfect man.
- F. Our brother in the flesh, our Father in the spirit.
- G. In him adopted by God.
- H. And thus no longer ignorant slaves in need of enlightenment, but children, and if children, then heirs of God.

I. His bequest to us, through the death of Jesus, is eternal life.

I have spent much of my life running after wisdom.

How glad I am to know one true thing; that God took on flesh to save me.