

Proverbs 8 1-11 & 32-35.

Good morning, Church. My name is Jason Jesudoss, and I am one of the Elders here at Church in the Square. My wife, Hilary, and I began attending this church in the spring of 2018. Our daughter, Marleigh, was born in June of that same year. Since the church's official launch in September 2018, our family has been deeply enriched to be part of this wonderful community.

This past month of June has been full of reflection and celebration for our family. We celebrated Marleigh's 7th birthday on June 2, remembered the 8-year anniversary of Hilary's sister Margot's passing on June 4, and just two days later, Hil and I marked our 10-year wedding anniversary. Joy and sorrow have a way of walking hand in hand, don't they?

As I've sat with these moments—of life, of loss, and of lasting love—I've been reminded of how much we need wisdom to navigate it all. That brings us to our passage today.

Proverbs 8 invites us into the presence of Lady Wisdom, and in verse 22 we hear her ancient voice say:

**“The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works,
before his deeds of old;
I was formed long ages ago,
at the very beginning, when the world came to be.”**

Wow!! Who was this, Lady Wisdom?! And if she was there from the beginning, why am I just learning about her?

I had the honor and privilege of coming into this world to a lady filled with wisdom whom I called mom, until God called her home in Nov 2020.

My parents were immigrants. My dad was working with the American Red Cross in India when he was sponsored to come to the U.S. as a student, where he studied Theology at Lincoln Christian Seminary. My mom and dad had what you might call a semi-arranged marriage—my dad, empowered by the promise of the American Dream, convinced my grandparents on my mom's side to arrange their marriage so she could join him here.

My mom, Vijaya (VJ) Jesudoss left a legacy which is captured so well in this Bible she gave me back in January 2016 as a birthday gift. Before I received this gift, she went through this Bible literally cover to cover and underlined and circled important versus and sprinkled in little notes of encouragement. It's no accident that I am standing before you, preaching on Proverbs today. My mom always encouraged me to read Proverbs, it was her way of trying to provide discipline/structure to her adult son, especially in the early days of being single and living in the city of

Chicago, my pre-Hilary Era. She wanted nothing more than to know that her son was making “Wise” decisions.

From the time I was born, my parents tried to influence my path in life. They chose the name, Jason because it means healer. Nothing like Indian Parents trying to ensure the kids path of becoming a doctor. For the record, I didn’t become a doctor, but somehow fell into the mortgage industry... And then comes my middle name, Solomon! Oh to have become a wise doctor...

To help us prepare and learn more about Lady Wisdom and her instructions in Proverbs 8, I am going to walk through versus circled by mom in the first chapters leading to our passage.

If you could open up your Bibles or Bible App, meet me in Proverbs Chapter 1.

Proverbs 1: 7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 2: 6-7 For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding. He holds success in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless.

Proverbs 3: 5-12 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over the new wine. My son, do not despise the Lord’s discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. (Can’t you just hear a parent’s voice behind this passage?)

Vs. 27 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act.

This reminds me of a recent article published on our Church’s website on June 12, titled "What Is a Person." It offers valuable insight on how we, as Christians, can respond and act faithfully amidst the challenges highlighted in recent national headlines. It’s worth a quick read.

Vs. 33b He blesses the home of the righteous.

Ch 4:10-12 Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many. I instruct you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble.

Marked with Star*²³ Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Proverbs 6: 23 For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way of life.

Now that mom has helped set the table before we enter Chapter 8, let us pray and ask for God's help to prepare us to receive His instructions.

Prayer

We are in week 5 of our 14-week series, A Summer of Wisdom.

The majority of the book of Proverbs was authored by King Solomon and other Wise Men. Its 31 chapters are often regarded as an early curriculum or handbook designed to train boys to become men. Perhaps the frequent reminders from my mom to consult Proverbs were her way of saying, "Jason, it's time to grow up and leave behind your boyish ways."

It makes sense, (Pause) the book of Proverbs warns us about sexual sin, drunkenness, greed and power-grabbing. There are 112 verses dedicated to men's obsession for women and 69 verses related to money.

Although the initial premise may have been to prepare boys to become men, Proverbs is a book that's celebrated for its instructions on living a life wisely and the consequences of living a life that's unwise or better described as being foolish.

Chapter 8 is so interesting to me, we could have just received God's word on the importance of listening to His instructions, be wise and in return we get to live a blessed life! Instead, we are introduced to Wisdom, Lady Wisdom as someone with great authority, that's been here through time and why it's so critical that we accept her invitation as Wisdom Calls.

So today, we will look at Wisdom's journey through creation, her authority and what it means to live a life that responds to her invitation when Wisdom Calls.

Look with me again at verse 22, The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be.

It gets better . . . vs. 24 When there were no watery depths, **I was given birth**, when there were no springs overflowing with water; before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I **was given birth**, 26 before he made the world or its fields or any of the dust of the earth.

Tim Keller notes some key themes in his book, God's Wisdom for Navigating Life. Wisdom is introduced to us as a person vs. a principle. Seeing Wisdom as something brought to life helps us think of her as a real presence we can connect with and build a relationship with. Tim Keller warns against viewing wisdom as knowledge or moral guidance. Instead, wisdom is a relationship – walking closely with the one who made the world. This means living in alignment with God's design, not simply making "good choices".

Let's look closer at what it meant to walk closely with God during this time, vs. 30. Then I was constantly at his side, I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delight in mankind.

After reading this passage, I couldn't help but have this vision of our awesome God, this presence and the love and care that went into the creation story. And then to think, how God's heart must break seeing where we are as mankind today.

The book of Proverbs, written sometime in 900 BC, but it's so timely in its message for today. Vs. 4 To You, O People, I call out; I raise my voice to all mankind. You who are simple, gain prudence; you who are foolish, set your hearts on it. **Listen, for I have trustworthy things to say**; I open my lips to speak what is right. My mouth speaks what is true, for my lips detest wickedness. All the words of my mouth are just; none of them crooked or perverse.

How great would it be if we as people, leaders of our community and leaders of our great nation, started their statement, **Listen, for I have trustworthy things to say! And it was actually true.**

I am sure some of us have gone through a version of feeling a little imposter syndrome. I had this recent realization. I often hear people that express some sort of fear of not meeting the standards or even feeling like an imposter in their roles. But what I am observing is that these are the same folks that work really hard, are intentional and try to do their best. And the real imposters, they are ones that are loud and proud! They are often the most vocal in meetings. What if we didn't focus on living up to or working towards meeting standards defined by the workplace or our society. We just lived in a way that when we spoke, people listened because **we have trustworthy things to say.**

Let's get back to Proverbs and see how Wisdom commands her presence and authority to be a true subject matter expert! Vs. 12 **I**, wisdom dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. Vs. 14, Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have insight, I have power. Vs. 15 By me kings reign and rulers issue decrees that are just; vs. 16 by me princes govern and nobles – all who rule on earth. Vs. 20, I walk in the way of the righteousness, along the path of justice, bestowing a rich inheritance on those who love me (wisdom) and making their treasures full.

Wisdom leads with prudence, has knowledge and exercises discretion, provides counsel, while using sound judgment. She leverages her insight to execute her power.

Can you imagine what Lady Wisdom's **LinkedIn Profile** could look like today?

Headline: Roamed earth with God during creation.

Summary: Apply wisdom judiciously, possess extensive knowledge, and offer counsel and sound judgment. Helping Kings and Rulers issue decrees that are just!

Recommendations: Endorsement from King Solomon himself!

Through her divine résumé, we see her authority and through her journey through creation, we see that Wisdom not only knows God's design—she lives it. And she invites us to do the same.

As someone of Indian descent, I often encounter assumptions about my background—especially from other immigrants, particularly those from the Middle East. Many guess I have Indian roots, which is accurate. People are often surprised to hear that I am Christian, unless I have already been introduced to them as Jason. I should point out Christianity only makes up 2.3% of the vast population of India. These conversations, especially with those who are Hindu or Muslim, often lead us to reflect on something many in America may not fully grasp: that in many parts of the world, conflicts aren't just about land or power—they're deeply rooted in religion and lifestyle.

Many Christians, particularly in the West, approach Christianity primarily as a belief system or a personal faith. And maybe Wisdom is included as part of the faith package.

For followers of religions such as Hinduism and Islam, faith often shapes key areas of daily life—including dress, diet, and routine. For example, Muslims observe specific practices such as daily prayers five times a day, fasting during Ramadan, and attending mosque on Fridays.

I know we are all in the different walks in our faith and some of us are on fire for the Lord and are trying to absorb anything faith based to enrich their lives. Others of us feel good about maintaining a daily schedule that attempts to incorporate a time for daily devotion and our nightly family prayer routines. (Guilty) And maybe for some, today might be just the beginning of your journey.

There is really no right answer here, but just the encouragement that Jesus surrounded himself with people from all walks of life that went on to carry out the Great Commission of His discipleship.

The invitation to be in relationship with Wisdom is so that we can align with God's design for us and ultimately carry out our mission for discipleship. So when we go to share the gospel with a non-believer or someone new to Christ, our actions will reflect our words, when we say "Listen, my friend, for I have trustworthy things to say."

So what does it mean to respond to her invitation when Wisdom calls?

Interestingly, modern research gives us a window into how people respond to invitations in general. A 2023 *Psychology Today* summary of research in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* found that 77% of people have accepted invitations they didn't actually want—driven largely by a fear of disappointing or upsetting the inviter.

Now, contrast that with the invitation Wisdom gives us. In verse 33, she calls: "Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not disregard it." And in verse 35, we're told: "For those who find me find life and receive favor from the Lord."

So the question becomes: if 77% of people accept invitations out of fear, would we respond to Wisdom's invitation out of obligation—or out of a desire to truly find life and favor with God?

It's not like we are Ethan Hunt, staring into a Mission Impossible Invitation, where the invitation goes up in flames if we don't accept!

For those that like to do Pros and Cons List or even a version of a Cost- Benefit Analysis, let's look at the invitation through the divine words of wisdom:

Vs. 10 Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.

Vs. 17 I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. Vs.18 With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity.

It almost feels like it's too good to be true?! So why do we hesitate or even miss the invitation completely.

Well, good news. I am here to tell you that this invitation is not just a one time offer.

So what does it really mean to live a life that responds to Wisdom's invitation when she calls?

I think it's fair to say that we all want to live wisely, we like what wisdom offers and might even know what wisdom expects of us. But we **struggle** to embody wisdom like Lady Wisdom, who isn't just an idea of wisdom but is the person of wisdom.

Turn with me to the new testament to Colossians Chapter 2:2-3, in Paul's letter he states "My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they have may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. "

Paul's letter came about 960 years after it's believed that the book of Proverbs was authored and yet there is this beautiful connection between Lady Wisdom and Jesus Christ. For our

earthly struggle to embody wisdom, we have Jesus Christ to bridge the gap. Jesus is the solution, He is the fulfillment to Lady Wisdom because while she shows us what wisdom looks like, Jesus heals us when we fall short of wisdom and makes us new people who can embody wisdom. Let's flip to 1 Corinthians 1:30: It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

So let's lead a life that's reflective of God's design through the wisdom and grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Let us pray.