

TEXT: Proverbs 9:1-6

THEME: WISDOM'S WHOOP!

1. God Is No Overbearing Ogre
2. Calling All Sinners

Dear Christian Friends:

Whoop! Go ahead. Say that out loud: Whoop! Come on, louder than that. Wake everybody up! Whoop!!! Do we have everyone's attention yet? Today we're going to be listening to WISDOM'S WHOOP. In our reading from Proverbs chapter 9, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, King Solomon personifies God's wisdom as a woman who has built a house, has prepared a banquet, and calls out loudly for everyone to come enjoy her cooking. What's she serving? Nothing less than eternal life.

As we unpack these verses from Proverbs chapter 9, we'll see how they dissolve that common caricature of God that he is always on the take: *demanding* devotion, time, and money from his followers. The true GOD IS NO OVERBEARING OGRE. He calls for our attention so that he may *bless* us.

Jesus illustrated that truth in the Gospel lessons read over the last few weeks. After John the Baptist's beheading, Jesus withdrew from the crowds to be alone with his disciples. However, when they landed in a remote spot, they found that the crowds had followed them there. I don't especially enjoy it when people interrupt my quiet time, but Jesus had compassion on these people. That doesn't mean he just pitied them. He *did* something for them. He not only healed their sick, he taught them. Wisdom called out, "Come and eat the Bread of Life and enjoy eternal life!"

But Jesus did not understand what Jesus meant. They just wanted more free food, like the bread and fish Jesus had miraculously provided the five thousand men, plus women and children. Isn't that what we often demand from Jesus? "Take my migraine away!" "Make my kids better behaved!" It's not wrong to ask for these things, but we are wise when we remember that the best blessing that Jesus gives us is himself—for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. I pray that Wisdom's Whoop gives you a better understanding of this blessing.

We just don't always appreciate this blessing the way we should, do we? If someone were handing out free \$100 gift cards to Lucky's Steakhouse, don't you think a line would quickly form to pocket one of those cards? I've seen people stand in line to get a free T-shirt worth a lot less than a meal at a good restaurant! So, why is it that many are not eager to receive that Wisdom is offering us in Proverbs chapter 9—a free banquet that will bestow eternal life to all who eat it?

CALLING ALL SINNERS

The reason many aren't eager for Wisdom's offer is because she says that her banquet is for all who are **"naïve...who lack sense."** Ouch! Someone forgot to tell Wisdom that you won't attract any business if you insult your customers. But this gets to the very heart of the Bible's message, doesn't it? Heaven will not be populated with those who think that God is pretty lucky to count them as his friends and followers. Heaven is the home of the spiritually humble.

Does that describe you? Do you readily confess that you do not have the spiritual strength many think you do? Do you admit that you need Jesus' forgiveness as desperately as a drowning person needs a lifeguard? Or, have you glossed over your pet sins so often that your internal audio track is starting to sound like the Pharisee who said, **"God, I thank you that I am not like other [sinners]" (Luke 18:11)?**

If so, then WISDOM'S WHOOP is one you dare not ignore. The banquet she has prepared is only for those who know they're lacking something: true righteousness. It's not for those who think they have their lives all straightened out. Jesus put that truth like this: **"I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:17).**

So, when you speak the Confession of Sins in the liturgy, don't rush or daydream. Think of how you specifically earned God's wrath by your words and actions the previous week. Confess that you lack good judgment. Only then will you truly rejoice when the pastor pronounces forgiveness. Only then are you ready to savor Wisdom's banquet.

Yes, Jesus paid for all our sins. But that's no excuse to run headlong back into sin. That would be like enjoying the wonderful food at Wisdom's house and then popping over to Folly's place for dessert!

Intentionally eating at Folly's place is to declare, "God, I enjoy sinning!" That isn't the way a should Christian talk. Instead, Wisdom teaches us to hate sin. Why? Because sin destroys our relationships with one another and with our Savior God.

Friends, stop listening to Satan. His way leads to destruction. Instead, give ear to WISDOM'S WHOOP. She calls loudly for us because she wants to bless us. And don't just listen to her words; live them. Taste and see that the Lord is good. Amen.

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Dear Jesus, thank you for the banquet of your Word. Help us to taste and see your goodness and to trust more firmly in your promises. Forgive us for the times we have treated your Wisdom as cheap. Work true repentance in our hearts that we may genuinely delight in your forgiveness. Make our sinful hearts hunger for your banquet of forgiveness. Lord, help us drown out Folly's voice with WISDOM'S WHOOP. Help us boldly speak your Word, that many more may enjoy the blessings of eternal life. Amen.