

## Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2024

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God is love, let us adore God by sharing God's love.

God is ever present, around us and within us, we worship together in God.

Readings Proverbs 8:1-5, 22-33 ([CEV](#))

Psalm 139 (Psalms for a quantum world) –

I am part of all creation,  
my words, my actions, my thoughts,  
my hopes and dreams  
are shared with all that is.  
This knowledge is beyond my imagination, for now,  
but I am called to share its knowing,  
to be a conscious part of all that is.

There is no hiding in the knowing  
for we are all one.  
There is no escaping,  
except through denial and rejection -  
the creation of my own reality apart from oneness.

Creation has formed me.  
The atoms that give me form are a part of all that is,  
all that has been and all that will be.  
I share them with everything and everyone  
within this world and beyond.  
I am wonderfully and fearfully made  
as is everyone and everything  
in the sphere of creative energy.  
We are what has always been  
the source of all being  
the past, present and future,  
a reality beyond our humble imagination  
yet we are called into this other reality,  
into the knowing.

The knowing calls everyone  
but some are afraid,  
fearing that which they see as unknown,  
when there is nothing unknown in oneness.  
This fear opposes the love that is oneness,  
this fear creates divisions and hurt and anger,  
but love can drive out fear  
and in the oneness, the knowing,  
there is only love.

A different way of living,  
a different way of seeing,  
a different way of being,  
we are known,  
and we are called into oneness.  
To be is to be one.

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## Reflection

What is wisdom?

Wisdom – being wise, soundness of judgment

Wise – having or showing a soundness in judgement

I am sure most of you remember singing the chorus 'The wise man builds his house upon the rock'. I suspect we all want to be wise and yet often we find ourselves making foolish judgements, building towers on poor foundations. Today's beautiful reading from Proverbs 8, is part of the wisdom tradition. Many of the verses in Proverbs are the source of traditional wisdom sayings passed down through the centuries. They are sayings that were the bedrock of relationships for my grandmother's generation – A stitch in time, too many cooks, don't count your chickens, every cloud has a silver lining, and the list goes on.

Our reading raises another question 'who is wisdom?'. Proverbs 8 gives the clearest indication of Wisdom as a facet of God, and reading John 1 – in the beginning was the word and the word was with God, we see a clear link in the author's mind between Wisdom and the Christ. However later in John's Gospel we have Jesus saying that it will be the work of the Spirit to lead the followers in all truth, which can be another way of saying wisdom, and so we find a link between the Spirit and Wisdom, and interestingly both are now commonly referred to as female.

Through the centuries many have pondered and spoken about the Spirit and Wisdom, Bill Gothard is quoted as saying 'Wisdom is seeing life from God's point of view, and Vance Hauner said, 'if I could stand for five minutes at God's vantage point and see the entire scheme of things as God sees it how absurd would be my dreads, how ridiculous my fears.'

Wisdom is definitely being in tune with God, and Jesus urged his followers to become one and consciously connect, as he had, with that which is God. One of my favourite sayings comes from Elizabeth Barrett Browning-

'Earths crammed with heaven,  
and every common bush afire with God,  
but only he who sees, takes of his shoes,  
the rest sit around it and pluck blackberries.'

This reminds us that we have to be aware of God's presence with us and see life through the lens of that presence. Being in tune with God also means being in tune with creation, especially if, as the passage implies, wisdom is rooted in creation.

It is creations that has brought us so much knowledge, and the study of creation which inspires us to go beyond the obvious and seek the truth in the depths. Think of the discoveries made through the study of creation, penicillin, vaccines, nuclear energy. However, knowledge is not wisdom. Wisdom is having knowledge and knowing how to use it. Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit, but wisdom is not putting tomatoes in your fruit salad. Think of the film Jurassic Park, a story about knowledge used without wisdom and how it all went wrong.

So, what can we learn about wisdom from this passage? Wisdom is about choices, wisdom stands wherever choices are there to be made, at the crossroads, which way do we turn, at the gateway, do we go through or turn back? Wisdom calls to all people and that made this passage quite scandalous in its day with the reference to crossroads and gateways which were where women of a certain reputation gathered. In the Judeo Christian world the female reference in this passage was subdued and this action led in part to the rise in masculine domination in the early church. In modern times feminist theology has reinstated such passages and in recent years there have been many novels centred around the

conspiracy to subdue the feminine presence in religion, Dan Brown's *The Davinci Code* perhaps being the most famous.

Wisdom, like Jesus, was found in the most unlikely places. Perhaps taking this passage from Proverbs as inspiration, Jesus was to be found at the crossroads and gateways, mixing with the outcast and the forgotten, reaching out to anyone who would listen. However, lets go back to creation for a moment, the passage highlights the role of wisdom in creation but since the first agricultural revolution of 5000 BCE humanity in seeking to farm and subdue the earth has separated itself from creation, at least much of what is known as the developed world has, whilst native peoples have followed a more traditional path and continued to relate with creation seeing humanity as one with creation. It is interesting that all the know religions developed after the agricultural revolution and mostly stress the separation side of things. As we read this passage we are challenged to see ourselves as one with creation through our oneness with God. Seeing ourselves as separate has perhaps made it easier for us to abuse creation. We are also challenged to use our senses more, to see, hear, feel, taste and smell God in creation.

So where is today's church in this, do we have wisdom in our living, do we stand at look life through the viewpoint of the creator and do we inhabit the crossroads and gateways of today's world? Do we stand where the choices are struggled with and offer an alternative view? Do we delight in the human race as we read wisdom does, or are we too busy judging others to remember that wisdom loves?

However you understand God there are three facets to our relationship, reaching up, reaching in and reaching out. This passage reminds us that God is a part of creation and not beyond at some distant level, when we talk of reaching up we are reminding ourselves to seek a higher choice in our lives. When we talk of reaching we are reminding ourselves that God is within us as God is within all creation, and when we talk of reaching out we are reminding ourselves that God and Wisdom and Jesus call us out of our comfort zone and into the growing places.

As church we do all that together, at a local level and as a people of faith amidst the world. We reach up through prayers, mission and outreach, exploring new ways of connecting with others. Reaching in we recognise the particular time and place we have been given to bring the kingdom closer, we don not live in the past and we should not live for the future but work to make a difference in the hear and now. Reaching out we are encourage to forget the walls and see our influence field as where we live, work and play, talking to those we work with, live with and share leisure time with. Wisdom leads us beyond the walls into the world, beyond our comfort zone and into discoveries and evolution, Wisdom leads us to be people of conscious connection and using our imagination to dream big dreams and build new a different way, the way of God.