

The Danger of Dissing Lady Wisdom

by C.J. Mahaney

The Book of Proverbs teaches us about the importance of Lady Wisdom, who represents God Himself, and warns us about the dangers of being simple and foolish, and the consequences of sin.

Duration: 52:56

Topics: "Wisdom"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a study conducted in an academic context where students were given a prearranged signal to transition from a passive posture to an attentive one. The teacher, unaware of this signal, gradually responded by becoming more energetic and engaging. The preacher uses this example to highlight the difference attention makes in public speaking. He then introduces the concept of Lady Wisdom and Lady Foolishness from Proverbs, explaining that Lady Wisdom represents God himself and passionately seeks to persuade her audience. The sermon emphasizes the need for a savior and the power of the Holy Spirit in transforming lives.

Transcript

The Book of Proverbs is a unique gift to youth, a unique gift to you who are in this season of life. Time doesn't permit a detailed study of this book, but it is clear from the outset of this book that this book is intended to train those who are young. Actually, the book appears from the perspective of the editor, Solomon, to be a book written to identify and train future leaders emerging in Israel.

In effect, to counsel and instruction from a father to a son as to how to lead effectively and serve effectively in a future generation. This book is a unique gift to all who are walking through their teenage years at this particular time. Song of Songs is a unique gift from the editor to married couples.

The Book of Proverbs is a unique gift to all youth present here this morning. And a gift to all parents as well. And I want to encourage all parents to take advantage of this unique gift, this unique book, and to train your children from this book to enjoy an extended study of this book.

I would recommend not only your study of this book, but I would recommend that you allow a scholar to hold your hand as you walk through this book and discover the wealth of grace and wisdom that is present in this book. There are two books in particular I want to recommend to parents. One is a brief commentary, but filled with insight, by Derek Kidner, K-I-D-N-E-R, simply titled Proverbs, that I believe is available in the Covenant Life bookstore.

Proverbs, a commentary by Derek Kidner. And then a second book, Hear, My Son. Hear, My Son.

Teaching and Learning from Proverbs chapters 1 through 9 by Daniel Estes. I believe that also is in the bookstore. And I commend both those books to parents for your own soul and for the training of your children.

In chapter 1, verse 20, wisdom cries aloud in the street. Lady Wisdom makes her first appearance in Proverbs. Here it appears we are introduced to the most important character in the book of Proverbs.

Two voices dominate the first nine chapters of Proverbs. The voice of the father pleading with his son, teaching his son, instructing his son, imploring his son, challenging his son, encouraging his son. The father's voice is dominant in chapters 1 through 9 and the voice of Lady Wisdom.

Actually, all of the father's teaching is derived from the voice of Lady Wisdom. He is transferring her wisdom, the wisdom personified in Lady Wisdom, to his son and to his children. Lady Wisdom is the personification of Yahweh's wisdom and thus Lady Wisdom represents God Himself.

And in chapter 9, which is really the summation of the first nine chapters, we will encounter, we would encounter, I don't think time permits us to find our way to chapter 9, but just for your information, when the editor of Proverbs, Solomon, comes to chapter 9 and fashions his summation of all that has taken place previously, he reminds us, or in effect, reintroduces us to both Lady Wisdom and Lady Foolishness. Lady Wisdom is the personification of the wisdom of God. Lady Wisdom represents God Himself.

Notice that she cries aloud. Notice that she raises her voice. She cries aloud and she raises her voice in the street and at the entrance of the city gates.

She initiates interaction. She is pursuing her audience in the context of the public square and she seeks to obtain the attention of her audience by crying aloud and raising her voice. She is passionate and she is intent on persuading.

She is crying aloud. She is raising her voice. This is no academic lecture taking place in the context of Proverbs 1. Her voice is raised.

She is crying out. One commentator writes of Lady Wisdom that she is no gentle persuader. She shouts, pleads, scolds, reasons, threatens, warns, and even laughs.

Most important for us this morning, she represents God Himself. She reveals God Himself. This passage describes the heart of God toward us and the activity of God during this retreat.

Lady Wisdom, whether you are aware of it or not, has been present at this retreat from the outset of this retreat. This passage, in effect, describes what has been taking place from the outset of this retreat. Lady Wisdom has been raising her voice.

Lady Wisdom has been raising her voice through the excellent message we received through Dave last night. Dave, I don't think there was a finer way for you to begin this retreat than with the message you presented to us last night. What outstanding leadership on your part.

What courage and care. Thank you. But if you were listening carefully, beyond Dave's voice, there was another voice.

It was the voice of Lady Wisdom. Her voice is raised and she was crying aloud. If you perceived accurately last night or if you were perceptive last evening, we also heard her voice through Courtney's testimony.

And then we heard her voice again through Devin's testimony. And this morning we heard her voice again through Rachel's testimony. And then finally through Chris Loftus' testimony.

Lady Wisdom is present and active and she's raising her voice. And her voice isn't merely raised or simply raised or solely raised in the context of meetings. Oh no.

No, her voice was raised last night when Kenneth so wisely and effectively led us in a time together where parent and child could apply teaching and where a child could be the recipient of the parent's wisdom. In those few moments together last night, there was a voice raised. It was the voice of Lady Wisdom.

She was crying out. So throughout this time, and really throughout church life, all that takes place in the context of church life is a means for Lady Wisdom to shout aloud, to cry aloud, to raise her voice. She raises her voice every Sunday as we have the privilege to hear God's Word preached.

And she raises her voice throughout the week as we gather in small group context. She raises her voice every time a parent seeks to transfer wisdom to a child. She raises her voice every time we hear a testimony.

She is constantly and ceaselessly raising her voice. And her raised voice is an expression of God's mercy. An expression of God's mercy toward us all.

The mercy of God as revealed in being addressed by God Himself. Recently, I came across the following study. A study was conducted in an academic context.

Students were provided a prearranged signal during class that the professor was unaware of. And the prearranged signal during the class informed the class to transition. To transition from a slouched, passive, no eye contact posture to leaning forward and looking attentively at the teacher.

The teacher, unaware of this prearranged signal and practice, who had been mumbling from his notes in a colorless monotone, gradually responded by beginning to gesture, look at the students, and speak at a faster and more energetic rate. At another signal, the student switched back to the old style and the teacher, after some painful seeking for continued reinforcement, reverted to his old monotone. Now, anyone familiar with public speaking is familiar with the difference attention makes.

I'm very familiar with the difference attention makes. In fact, I'm very grateful that you are such an attentive, responsive congregation. Thank you.

I'm honored to preach here. And I'm humbled by your attentiveness and your responsiveness. And when I ponder your attentiveness and contemplate being humbled that you would pay attention to me as I have this privilege to speak to you, I can't help but think about one of the great mysteries of mercy.

I think one of the great mysteries of mercy is that God would pay attention to me. That God would devote attention to me. That God would devote His personal, passionate attention to me.

For apart from grace, I lived a God-ignoring, God-defying life. And yet, as an expression of His mercy, He gave me His attention. And this morning, He is freshly giving us His attention.

His attention. His presence. His speaking.

Lady Wisdom is here. And she is no gentle persuader. She represents God.

She reveals God. And for very good reasons, her voice is raised aloud. Her raised voice is an expression of the mercy of God.

That God would give attention to a room full of sinners so richly deserving His wrath is an expression, one sweet, amazing expression of the mercy of God. Lady Wisdom is present. She is raising her voice.

And it would be wise for us to pay very careful attention to her voice. It would be wise for us to listen up. Now, who is she addressing? Who is Lady Wisdom? Who is God crying out to? Who is He raising His voice to address? Well, it's clear who this passage is addressing.

The passage is addressing those who appear in verse 22. How long? Here are those Lady Wisdom is addressing this morning. How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge? At the outset of this chapter, all three are being addressed.

Now, please understand this about Proverbs. Proverbs divides humanity into two categories. We could talk endlessly about the differences that exist in this room, the diversity that exists in this room, the distinctives that exist in this room.

And it is fascinating to contemplate those differences and the diversity present in this room for often they are really an evidence of God's grace. But when you come to the book of Proverbs, the book of Proverbs is not preoccupied with distinctions or differences or diversity. No, the book of Proverbs actually divides all of humanity into two categories.

Count them, boys and girls, two categories, the wise and the foolish. Those are the only two categories you will encounter and those are the two most important categories one encounters in the book of Proverbs. The wise and the foolish.

The wise of heart who are righteous in their behavior and the foolish of heart who are wicked in their behavior. And there is no additional category available for anyone present in this room. There is no other option before us.

Two categories. The wise and the foolish. And in verse 22, Lady Wisdom is addressing three classes of fools in particular.

Now, if you're taking notes and I can tell many of you are taking notes and I commend you for taking notes, I'm not going to be able to make as many references to passages and we're not going to be moving our way through these passages, but I want to commend these categories to you. I would encourage you to write these down and then begin your own journey through Proverbs to discover the wealth of wisdom in relation to these categories and the difference this wisdom can make in your life. She is addressing three classes of fools.

First, she addresses the simple. The simple. The simple.

This individual is naive, gullible, easily led, drifting even now into temptation, drawn toward foolishness. Foolishness is bound up in his heart at birth and without a commitment to lady wisdom, the simple can be

easily misled and the simple should be aware that lady foolishness is also actively present seeking to seduce the simple. The simple.

Well, this guy isn't paying attention. He's not paying attention. You can look on your own in a verse like Proverbs 14, verse 15.

The guy isn't paying attention. Here's what he or she fails to discern. They fail to discern the existence of God.

They fail to discern the sovereignty of God. They fail to discern the wisdom of God. They fail to discern that there is a created order that has been established by God.

A created order has been established by God. And that created order, having been established by God, is sustained by God. And that created order, established by God and sustained by God, involves an inseparable relationship between character and conduct and consequences.

Character, conduct, and consequences have an inseparable relationship. Now, we can distinguish between the three, but we cannot separate the three. Character, conduct, and consequences have an inseparable relationship.

It has been established by God Himself. This is part of the created order of God. And the simple doesn't perceive this creative order.

The simple doesn't discern this created order. The simple doesn't acknowledge this created. By not acknowledging this created order, this relationship between character, conduct, and consequences, the simple is vulnerable to foolishness.

Assuming that there is no relationship between character, conduct, and consequences, the simple, they are easily deceived by sin. Easily deceived. Because sin, by its very nature, lies.

Listen, the DNA of sin is deception. Sin lies. Sin deceives.

Sin seeks to convince you on a number of levels. Sin seeks to convince you that there is pleasure. There is pleasure in sin.

Sin seeks to convince you that there is pleasure in sin. There are no consequences related to sin. And if you sin, no one will find out about your sin.

Sin lies to us and assaults us on many levels. And the simple, without discernment, is particularly vulnerable to sin. So the simple walks into a context or engages in a conversation with sin.

There's foolishness in his heart. He lacks discernment about creation. He lacks discernment about the Creator, creation, and the created order.

And so the simple is vulnerable to sin and temptation. And assumes then that there is a unique pleasure in sin without consequences attendant to it. So the simple is easily led into sin and then misled by sin.

For yes, they will experience some pleasure, but that pleasure will be temporary. That pleasure is superficial. And along with that pleasure are consequences that weren't originally advertised by sin and will never be advertised by sin.

And not only are there consequences, others will inevitably find out because, listen, there is a created order established by a sovereign and wise God for our good. And when we dismiss this created order, when we in effect dislady wisdom, we are in effect mocking God. It is an expression of arrogance.

It is a way in which we mock God. And Scripture is clear that God is not mocked. And that what you sow you will reap.

And actually Scripture is clear that if you sow the wind, you'll reap even more. You'll reap the whirlwind. All of this critical information that lady wisdom wants to provide, the simple individual is desperately in need of.

And boys and girls, this is where we all begin. This is where we all begin. We all begin simple.

Simple. But, if we refuse to accept discipline in the school of wisdom, then our hearts harden and we transition to a much more serious condition of soul. If you ignore lady wisdom, you will gradually, eventually, most definitely become a fool.

And the fool, quite obviously, has dissed lady wisdom. He has dissed lady wisdom and dismissed, in effect, the wise counsel of his parents as an expression of God's care for his soul. Let me give you some characteristics of the fool.

Again, when you read Proverbs, please understand, Proverbs, it's like a slide show, in effect. One verse after another, forming one slide after another, and as each slide appears, what we must do is seek to discern where our face appears or whether our face appears in the slide. So, this would be a succession of slides describing the fool.

And as I give you a number of characteristics of the fool, why don't you look carefully? Why don't you look carefully? Look carefully to see, are you in this photo? The fool does not fear God. He does not fear God. He denies the sovereignty of God.

He's not merely ignorant of the sovereignty of God, the created order of God, the moral order of God. No, the fool denies the sovereignty of God, the created order of God, the moral order of God that has been ordained by God. He denies the relationship between character and conduct and consequences that has been established by God.

He is wise in his own eyes. He is wise in his own eyes, and all his ways are right in his own eyes. He is self-sufficient.

He is self-reliant. The only voice he desires to hear is his own voice. He, the fool, despises his parents, and we are commanded in Proverbs, here's what lady wisdom would say to us in relation to a fool.

Do not be a fool, and do not be a companion of a fool, because if you are a companion of a fool, you will suffer harm. You will not be the exception to the moral order that has been established by God. If you are a companion of a fool, you will be conformed to the heart of a fool.

You will experience the influence and effect of the fool upon your soul. And that fool can be in the form of a person, and it can be in the form of technology, it can be in the form of television, it can be in the form of music. Fools come in, it seems, countless forms.

But if you are a companion of a fool, oh, you will suffer. That's what lady wisdom wants you to know. And lady wisdom would be raising her voice aloud on all these points.

Lady wisdom wouldn't be speaking quietly to you. No, lady wisdom would be raising her voice and saying, if you are a companion of a fool, you will suffer harm. I am here as an expression of the mercy of God to protect you.

See, these warnings are an expression of God's mercy. They are an expression of God's kindness so that we might be protected from the consequences of sin that are inevitable and set in motion when we sin. Finally, we are commanded in Scripture not to honor someone who is a fool.

We read in Proverbs 26, verse 1, like snow in summer or rain in harvest, so honor is not fitting for a fool. Fools are not to be honored. We live in a culture that celebrates fools.

We live in a culture that daily honors fools. Oh, they don't identify them as fools. They are identified as cool.

But according to lady wisdom, they are not cool. They are fools. And fools are not to be honored.

It doesn't serve them to be honored. And it misleads the simple if they are honored. Therefore, do not honor a fool.

Not fitting for the fool. And it doesn't serve those who are simple in soul. I am so grateful, and I know this resonates in your heart.

I am so grateful that in this church fools are not honored. I am so grateful that is an expression of God's mercy to all of us in this church. Fools are not honored here.

And since we are such a large congregation, I think I can assume that fools are present here. And if you are a fool, if you recognize yourself in that succession of slides, lady wisdom would like to have a word with you. I would like to have a word with you as well.

It might appear to you that I'm very familiar with the fool. I am. I am.

I was one. I was one. I was a fool.

So, if you are a fool, let me assure you, you aren't fooling anyone here. Over the years I've seen a number of sadly fool wannabes come through the church. You're not fooling anyone here.

One of the reasons you're not fooling anyone here is because there are so many former fools that make up this church. And so when we look upon you, we feel sorry for you. We ask God to have mercy on you.

For we recognize our former life in you. So if you are a fool, you're not fooling anybody here. And you're not impressing anybody here either.

Oh, you might be impressing some of the simple in the church. But you're not impressing anyone who is wise. You're not impressing anyone who is discerning.

And you certainly aren't fooling or impressing God Himself. Lady Wisdom is raising her voice aloud to you. Crying to you.

God Himself is directing His attention toward you. He wants to have a few words with you. I would like to have just a few words with you.

For to hear Devin and Chris, for me, is to be reminded in some ways, certain ways, of my former existence. My sinfulness prior to conversion. Except that I did not grow up in the context of this local church.

Which I had grown up in the context of this local church. I wish my testimony was similar to those who did grow up in this church. And listened as Lady Wisdom raised her voice.

So that by God's grace they would be spared the consequences and effects of sin. I didn't grow up in this church. I grew up.

Oh yes, I was born into this world with foolishness bound up in my heart. And from an early age, no restraints were placed upon my heart in that expression of foolishness. So I quickly transitioned from one who is simple to one who is a fool.

And all of this, as I think about it and reflect upon it, is all to my shame. I derive no enjoyment from sharing this information with you. And wish, as I look back upon my past, it all could have been different.

My heart hardened at an early age. An early age. I didn't casually participate in sin.

I was introduced at a young age to the drug culture by friends who are older than me. They ultimately aren't responsible for that. I'm responsible for that.

What they introduced me to, my sin within, was immediately drawn to. But when I was introduced to the world of drugs, I was not casual about my involvement. No, I began to passionately pursue all manner of sin.

All manner of sin. And I did so passionately. I did so personally and passionately.

And I also sought to influence anyone else in my relational world. And sought to transfer my love of sin to their soul. And to some degree, I have a certain degree of guilt to this day for my influence on their life.

Although I am so grateful that many I influence have also been overtaken by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and transformed by the grace of God. That is amazing grace. And it is a particular gift to me.

Dennis Jansen, Mr. Jansen, who is here, if you're looking for stories to confirm what I am saying, he will give you stories because we went to high school together. Well, I mean, we went to high school together. Mr. Jansen was a Christian in high school.

I obviously was not. I obviously was a fool. And so much of what took place in high school and college for me remains vivid in my mind and memory.

And I can still vividly remember multiple instances. One instance in particular where Mr. Jansen walked in integrity. He demonstrated his fear of God.

As a member of the varsity football team, there was a rule, it was a wise rule, that there was to be no drinking by any member of the team. And Mr. Jansen found himself in a party context where other players on the team were drinking. And because he feared God more than man, he informed the coach of this.

And those players were summarily dismissed from the team. And I can still vividly remember when that information began to move through the halls of Springbrook High School. And when that information arrived in my hearing, I can remember my immediate response was arrogance, anger, criticism.

And I'm sure Mr. Jansen, as he walked the halls that day, felt that from fools like me throughout the school. I was a fool. I love sin.

I was passionate about sin. I had dissed Lady Wisdom if she had made any overtures toward me. I certainly hadn't perceived them, and had I perceived them, I immediately dismissed them.

But, by God's grace, she was not to be deterred. And so, eventually, a friend of mine who had relocated to Florida and had been captured by the gospel there, returned to Maryland with one purpose and one purpose alone, to share the gospel with former fools. And by God's grace, I was one of those fools.

And that evening, as he shared the gospel with me, as Lady Wisdom raised her voice aloud, not only convincing me of the fool I was in the eyes of God, but proclaiming to me the gospel of Jesus Christ who is ultimately the wisdom of God, I experienced the miracle of the new birth. I turned from my sins. I trusted in the Savior for the forgiveness of my sins.

And I transitioned from a simple one, from a fool, to, in my new birth infancy, wise. Not wise in and of myself, but wise with the wisdom God had granted me through acknowledging the wisdom of God as revealed in the person and finished work of Jesus Christ. And Lady Wisdom is present, Lady Wisdom is present this moment, addressing any and all fellow fools with the same message.

Lady Wisdom is saying to the simple ones, How long? How long will you love being simple? She is saying to the fools, How long will you hate knowledge? Finally, she is saying to the scoffers, How long will you delight in your scoffing? Because apart from divine intervention and apart from repentance, the fool eventually inevitably becomes a scoffer. And this individual would be the most hardened individual and the most hostile toward God and toward Lady Wisdom. And time doesn't permit for us to explore the scoffer in detail, but this verse, verse 22, clearly reveals to us that the need of the gospel is present and evident in not only identifying the simple and the fool and the scoffer, but in describing what is the root issue.

Because the root issue is the heart. So please look back at verse 22. Here is the root issue.

The root issue is that the simple love being simple, that fools hate knowledge, and that the scoffer delights in scoffing. Love, delight, hate. One commentator writes, We love what ought to frighten us, we delight in what should repulse us, and we hate what should be most cherished.

This passage reveals our sin. This passage reveals our need for a Savior. This passage reveals the need for an inside job that can only be accomplished through the proclamation of the gospel and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

So, that's who is being addressed in this passage. And Dave, it's noon, and I'm not even halfway through, and I've been hurrying, in case you haven't been able to tell, and eliminating and editing stuff, so, because you have a wonderful plan and schedule, no, that's not, no, please understand, Dave is in the most difficult position, because what else are you going to say? Even if you're thinking this, you're not going to say, Hey, shut it down! That's enough, thank you. Enough shouting.

Enough correction and confrontation. Okay? Okay. Lord, give me the gift of abbreviation.

What is, it's not a gift I've experienced to date, but we can at least pray. Alright, so that's who this passage addresses. Lady Wisdom wants to have a word with the simple, the fool, the scoffer.

What's the purpose of this passage? Well, the purpose of this passage is twofold. This passage contains a merciful warning and a gracious promise. This passage provides all of us with a merciful warning about eventual judgment.

Judgment is described and detailed for us in verses 24 through 32. And the most striking aspect of these verses is the frightening, terrible fate that awaits those who reject Lady Wisdom. This is wisdom's most threatening speech in the book of Proverbs.

And I, listen, I can't soften the severity of these words. I can't do it. I can't soften them.

If while we were reading these words you were thinking, Mr. Mahaney's going to help me understand why these words don't mean exactly what they say. I'm sorry, I can't do that. They do mean exactly what they say.

My role and responsibility is simply to inform you they do mean exactly what they say. Lady Wisdom says in anticipation of future and final judgment, I called and you didn't listen. I called and you didn't listen, so on that day you will call and I won't listen.

And Lady Wisdom will return the scornful laughter of those who were simple and fools and scoffers and mocked and scorned. Lady Wisdom and ultimately God himself. And the laughter that is revealed here is not the laughter of indifference.

No. One of the reasons, at least one of the reasons, if not the primary reason we find it so uncomfortable in these words, so difficult to comprehend these words is because we truly don't understand the holiness and justice of God. We don't understand the holiness and justice of God because we are so familiar with sin.

We are familiar with sin. We are comfortable with sin. We are unfamiliar with holiness and justice.

We are unfamiliar with the one whose eyes are too pure to even look upon evil. We are unfamiliar with the one who says of himself, I dwell in unapproachable light. This passage actually is celebrating the triumph of justice.

That triumph is celebrated in Psalm 2 as well as God mocks the arrogant nations who have scorned him. He laughs at them. It's the laugh of perfect justice.

Hell is an expression of the pure and perfect justice of God. This laughter portrayed here in this passage is an appropriate expression of the justice of God. And folks, it just doesn't get any more frightening than this passage because this passage informs us there is a day when grace is passed for someone who has persistently and stubbornly and arrogantly throughout their life pissed Lady Wisdom.

And this passage provides us with an eternal perspective. Dave brilliantly pastored us last night by bringing to our attention an eternal perspective. That is the role of a pastor.

The pastor provides you with an eternal perspective because so often we ignore that perspective or find ourselves forgetting that perspective. But all we want to do works back from an awareness of the eternal perspective. Aware of the eternal perspective, we want to then live this day in light of that day.

If you absent the eternal perspective, we live this day in light of this day. But when the eternal perspective intrudes upon our thinking, well, then everything changes. And Lady Wisdom is providing us here with an eternal perspective.

So this isn't the laughter of a calloused and indifferent one. No, this is the laughter of justice. God laughs, listen, God laughs at those who think they are wiser than He, stronger than He.

Those who stubbornly, persistently, persist in self-deception as simple fool or scoffer, God ultimately will laugh at them. And His laughter is appropriate. Everyone, Chris just quoted a band I'm unfamiliar with.

Was the title of the band Disturb? Was the line, How long will you wait for your modern Messiah? A form of mocking? Now listen, here's what I think as I hear that. I am affected. I was a fool like the members of those bands are presently fools.

Doesn't in any way provoke self-righteousness in my soul. Now, I immediately ask God to have mercy on them. Have mercy on them, for I at one point was a fool just like them.

And I fear for them, because Lady Wisdom is crying out to them. And if they diss Lady Wisdom, and if they mock Lady Wisdom, oh, they will one day be visited by the sound of a laugh from Lady Wisdom. And it will be an eternal sentence upon their arrogant souls.

And in that moment, they will call upon me, but I will not answer. They will seek me diligent, but they will not find me, because they hated knowledge, and they did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would have none of my counsel.

They despised all my reproof. Therefore, they shall eat the fruit of their way and have their fill of their own devices. For the simple are killed by their turning away, and the complacencies of fools destroys them.

Lady Wisdom didn't initiate this judgment. Lady Wisdom has been crying aloud and pursuing. This judgment is justly deserved for those who dissed her.

Which is why in this passage we read this plea from Lady Wisdom. How long? How long? Lady Wisdom wants to introduce a further note of urgency in the context of this passage. Don't postpone committing yourself to Lady Wisdom.

Don't be complacent. There are consequences if you are complacent. If you diss Lady Wisdom, if you dismiss Lady Wisdom, then there is incrementally a gradual hardening upon your soul and your conscience.

If you hear her cry, don't delay. Repent now! This moment, in His mercy, is warning you through Lady Wisdom. If you are convicted of your sin, that is a gift from God.

Conviction of sin is a gift from God. I have individuals come to me regularly as a pastor and they are discouraged because they are convicted of their sin. There can be many reasons why they are discouraged and I must explore the many reasons why they are explored.

But my starting point is to say to them, listen, that conviction of sin is an expression of God's love for you. God loves you so much, He is convicting you of the sin He has already forgiven you of. The people I am most concerned about would be anybody in this room who is not convicted right now.

I am frightened for you. Scared for you. Anyone in here who would be mocking Lady Wisdom right now.

You don't have to answer to me, but you will one day answer to her. You will one day answer to Him. Fear is a gift.

Fear of God is a gift. Fear of judgment is a gift. Fear of hell is a gift.

Rightly understood and rightly responded to, these are gifts. And I pray that God is bestowing these gifts even this moment. Now, there's not only a merciful warning, there's a gracious promise.

There's a gracious promise because whoever listens to me will dwell secure. Verse 33, and will be at ease without the dread of disaster. Oh, ha! Right now, that is what Lady Wisdom is crying out in this sermon.

Whoever listens to me will dwell secure and will be at ease without the dread of disaster. Verse 23, If you turn to my reproof, behold, I will pour out My Spirit to you. I will make My words known to you.

Oh, what a sweet cry from Lady Wisdom. Having been informed of our sin, having been informed of impending judgment, we are now informed by Lady Wisdom of this gracious promise. Now, in the midst of this sin, listen, in light of God's holiness, in light of our sinfulness, how is this promise and announcement possible? Well, this promise, this announcement anticipates one to come.

The promised Messiah. This, listen, this promise is only possible because one day the Savior would cry while suspended from a tree, receiving in His body the fullness of wrath for our sins, one day that Savior would utter this cry, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. This promise is with that cry in view.

You see, here's the good news. One greater than Solomon has come. One greater than Solomon has come.

And this is only possible because that one suffered as a substitute for sinners like us, receiving the punishment we deserve so that we might receive the grace we clearly do not deserve. And the New Testament reveals that individual as Christ and Him crucified, ultimately the wisdom of God. And as one responds to the Gospel, well, then the effect of the Gospel is felt in one's heart and life, where one receives by grace new desires, new delights, new treasure.

You love what you once hated and transformed lives, as Dave described last night, because the Gospel ultimately is evidenced in the creation of the wise. So here's how we appropriately conclude. Lady Wisdom is raising her voice.

She is an expression of God's mercy. She says to the simple, the fool, and the scoffer, How long? Don't postpone. Turn to my reproof.

Repent. I will pour my Spirit out on you. I will reveal my words to you.

You will then dwell secure. And you will not fear future disaster or judgment, as described in this passage, because one has come to receive upon himself the judgment revealed for the simple, the fool, and the scoffer in this passage, so that all those who turn to that one will dwell secure and be free from fear of future wrath. Don't diss Lady Wisdom.

Instead, respond to her gracious offer.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/22/SID22306.mp3>
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