

# *The Call of Wisdom*

*Proverbs 1:20*

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*<sup>20</sup> Wisdom calls aloud outside;  
She raises her voice in the open squares.*

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One of the very interesting things is the Book of Proverbs is how Solomon takes the concept of wisdom and personifies it as a human being, either male or female depending on the particular concept involved. Here, the “human” wisdom is said to be “calling aloud” and that calling is said to “outside”. Obviously, this is something that people do, not some mental capacity. In order to help us understand what is being said, Solomon, as he does often, uses a picture of a human being to clarify his point. Here, the non-human capacity or quality of wisdom is portrayed as a “She”. Actually, the word that is portrayed here, “wisdom” is not a common form of this word. This one occurs but five times and is translated as it is here 4 of those times and as “every wise” the other single time. It seems that implication of this particular word is the knowing all that is needed to be known. It is saying that the one in consideration is one who knows everything. Rather it speaks to the fact that, due to the pursuit of God and of Godly knowledge, the one in view knows all that is necessary to know in order to be what God desires one to be.

There is also the implication this wisdom makes “herself” and her availability easily known and available to all. We should make it clear that this is not to demean women by calling them easy or available in any fashion. It is simply using a device that is used often in the Book of Proverbs to suggest the way in which wisdom can be apprehended.

It is also noticeable that what is implied here is just that wisdom is not only approachable but that the way to “her” is readily noticeable. “Calls aloud” is a Hebrew word; “*tārōnā*” (tay row nah), meaning “to shout”. So, we are not just talking about one who speaks out loud. We are speaking of one who shouts, perhaps at the top of their voice. Solomon is speaking of a concept that seeks to grab our attention and is easily noticed for one who is willing to hear. In fact, the idea is that, to “miss” such a calling, one would almost have to do so purposely!

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There are two other things here that, kind of, speak to what we are exposed to in this matter:

1. Wisdom is available and is often “shouting” at us to be heard.
2. “She” is not right next to us, but is “outside” and we must take some step or steps to approach “her” and hear what it is exactly “she” is saying.

3. There are times when we must leave our comfort zone and head out into the “open squares” in order to hear “her” message.
4. There are often times and occasions when “she” raises her voice in ways that grasp and demand attention and can only be cast aside deliberately.

We should note also, just to fully understand what Solomon is saying here, that this message is not only for us alone. This message of wisdom is in the “open square”, that is, it is public and can be discerned by all who dwell in open places. Surely, men can, and often do, ignore the message of Christ that they clearly and even repeatedly hear, but that does not mean that was not heard with correctly or rightly.

Solomon’s clear indication here is that those who hear “her” message ought to promptly and rightly take it in and respond as it asks. Starting with this verse and receding through about verse 33 Solomon personifies “Wisdom” as a prophetess and teacher. She shows the folly of those who reject moral instruction and discipline.

I think we can also see the call of wisdom, as put forth here and one which prefigures the call of the gospel, which contains the wisdom of God

In 1 Corinthians 1:18–25 Paul draws a very similar picture for his readers speaking of Christ, the Power and Wisdom of God:

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*<sup>18</sup> For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> For it is written:*

*“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,*

*And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”*

*<sup>20</sup> Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? <sup>21</sup> For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

*<sup>25</sup> Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

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And then, in 2:6–10 he speaks of Spiritual Wisdom

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*<sup>6</sup> However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. <sup>7</sup> But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, <sup>8</sup> which*

*none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

*<sup>9</sup> But as it is written:*

*“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,*

*Nor have entered into the heart of man*

*The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”*

*<sup>10</sup> But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*

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It seems quite clear that we can consider the Gospel of Jesus Christ the greatest and fullest example of “wisdom” given to men. It has been shouted loudly in the “Public Square” and we must continue to be used by God and empowered by His Spirit loudly and boldly proclaim the saving Grace of God so that all men can hear and submit themselves to it!

Just to rethink our interpretation - “Wisdom” (personified in Christ and His agencies) “*crieth without*” - in the open air as well as within doors. “Her” voice, clear and piercing, rises above the tumult of public places. “She” makes “herself” heard by the young and the busy. Some are addressed as “simple ones,” misled and reclaimable; some as “scorners,” self-sufficient, arrogant sceptics; some as “fools,” who, through persistent self-indulgence, have become imbruted, coarse, impenetrable. Yet all are treated as within the pale of hope, and as capable of exerting a will; all are offered the Spirit, if they will but “turn” to receive it.

As always there are a number of Illustrations for us to consider.

- Jesus, when upon earth, exactly answered to this description of Wisdom.
- In the most frequented parts of Jerusalem, by the well of Sychar, yea, from the pulpit of the cross, He appealed to men of all sorts and classes.
- And still, by the fact of His incarnation, and by the ministry of His Word, He invites sinners. Some who are “simple” are quickly reclaimed, as was the Magdalene. “Scorners,” too, like the thief on the cross, have been known to yield to His exhortation. Even “fools,” the least hopeful of all, such as Sadducees for the most part were, He deigned to reason with and to warn.

We should also consider the matter of application.

- It is not possible for any, except of course, for those who have never hear the witness of the Gospel, to avoid the wisdom involved in the hearing the “wisdom in the Gospel message.
- It is uttered “without”—not in secluded places, but in public; not in the Church only, but to the world.
- Above the tumult of pleasure and the hum of business, that Voice rises loud and clear. Hast thou not heard it, O my soul; and, hearing, hast thou obeyed?

Perhaps thou art among the “simple ones.” Thou hast gone astray, the dupe of others, the victim of delusion and inexperience. The flowery path is soft beneath thy feet; the syren voice sounds pleasant in thine ears. But Wisdom cries to thee, “How long wilt thou love simplicity?” And, oh, thou art offered something so much better than the world offers. “Behold” (if thou wilt but heed), Jesus says, “I will pour out My Spirit unto you; I will make known My words unto you.” Jesus will slake thine appetite from “rivers of living water.” He will make known to thee “the words of eternal life.”

Take heed you fall not into the condition of the scoffer or the fool. Scoffs are parrying strokes to keep conviction away. Conviction constantly resisted, the heart becomes fleshy and hard; the condition of a fool is arrived at. It is not asserted that either condition is *hopeless*, but it is full of peril. Therefore—

*God give me to heed Wisdom’s cry betimes, that, being “satisfied early” with His mercy, I may be glad and rejoice all my days!*

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