

Pentecost 11, 2009
Good Hope Lutheran Church
Proverbs 9

From today's Old Testament lesson, the book of Proverbs chapter 9. I read the first *and last* verses, from a slightly varied translation. It says, Wisdom has built her house, wisdom has carved out seven pillars. "Listen," says wisdom. "Lay aside immaturity, and live! Come walk in the way of truth."

The word of God. And we pray:
Heavenly Father, in the beginning you created us and all living things, and in these last days you have saved us by sending your Son. Give us minds that recognize the truth of your word, give us hearts that receive it. Then take control of heart and mind, body and spirit, and make us your very own. Father forgive, renew, restore, and lead us now, and forevermore; in the name of Jesus Christ we pray, AMEN.

It seems like every year at about this time—and by “about this time,” I mean of course the week school starts again; sorry kids—but every year at about this time, we get an Old Testament lesson on the subject of wisdom. What is wisdom, how is it different from knowledge, or even common sense; and what does “having wisdom” mean, for us as Christians today. So this morning, knowledge, common sense, and wisdom, and how to tell the difference, here we go.

It takes knowledge, and a great deal of it, to understand how the economy works. What is a gross national product anyway, and is it really gross or is it merely distasteful. That's meant to be a joke by the way—never mind, the economy, what are annuities anyhow. How does compounding interest

work? What's a trade deficit, and how do decisions made each day at the Board of Trade in Chicago affect coffee bean farmers in Costa Rica? And so on—to gain the knowledge necessary to understand the economy, you could spend 8 years in college get a Ph. D. and still have stuff to learn.

A lot knowledge to understand the economy, but even those with that knowledge don't always have the common sense to realize, you can't spend more than you have. People in government, people in business, ordinary folks who max out one credit card after another—you may know about interest, and you may know about marketing and economics and you may know about budgets. You just don't have the common sense to realize You know? This applies to me too, and I'm in deep here.

So knowledge, economics. Common sense, living within my means. And wisdom. Wisdom, trusting God enough not to be consumed by worry. Trusting God enough, to be generous, even in these times, trusting God enough to be generous! Counting blessings, not problems; giving from abundance, giving from what God has given you, rejoicing in generosity! Giving cheerfully from abundance, not giving grudgingly just to meet a budget somewhere. Wisdom, faith.

Knowledge. New Orleans is a city in Louisiana, a key port on the mouth of the Mississippi, and the site of a hurricane a few years back. That's

knowledge. Common sense. Well, flood insurance for one, maybe not personally building in a basin, I don't know. There are lessons we can learn, choices we can make here, ok. Fine. But wisdom. Laying all that other stuff aside, and for the sake of Jesus Christ crossing the country. For the sake of Jesus Christ crossing the street! Helping, rolling up your shirt sleeves, overcoming your bias and overcoming your embarrassment and not being ashamed of the Gospel or of the fact that you believe the Gospel. Wisdom is picking up your cross and loving others the way Christ first loved you, and just not worrying about how you look. Or how long it's going to take. Or how inconvenient it is or how long till I get back to Sponge Bob on TV. Knowledge, I can find New Orleans on a map. Common sense, precautions in life one should take. Wisdom, following Jesus out of this building, across the country and across the street, and loving others the way Christ, has first loved you.

Knowledge—smoking and drinking are bad. Proper diet and exercise are good! Addictions of any kind are bad. Common sense. This means me too, and it means you—not just the guy three pews back and across the aisle; you too. Just as an aside here, I got a flyer in the mail this week, advertising some sort of workshop somewhere. I get flyers like this all the time, this one was about sexual addiction. Sexual addiction, and the flyer claimed that 60%

of Christian men in this country are addicted to pornography. Now where on earth they get a stat like that, I can't begin to tell you, but whatever. That's what it said. 60% of *Christian men* in this country, addicted to porn.

Knowledge means, you understand the definition of addiction. Common sense means, admitting when you yourself have a problem. Wisdom—turning it all over to Jesus Christ. Whatever your personal hang up is, and I hope common sense tells you, you've got one. Whatever your hang up is, it's stronger than you are. You want out? You need Jesus, and you need Him now.

I could go on for a while. Many people know about Jesus, the Son of God who died and rose again for us, for the forgiveness of our sins, many people know about Jesus. Two words. Big. Deal. James 2: 19, "The demons also know about God—and tremble with fear!" So you know about Jesus, good for you but I'm not impressed and neither is He! So common sense, common sense would say this story might just be true. Jesus might in fact be God's Son, maybe He did die *and rise again* so maybe not a bad idea to show up in church once in a while and buy a little fire insurance, if you know what I mean. Wisdom. This is what life is, this is what life is about. It's not a part time hobby, it's who we are and what we do. We are the people of God through Jesus Christ who died and rose again, and nothing else matters like

faith matters. I repeat, nothing matters like faith in Jesus Christ matters. You know that. You do, you have that knowledge. On this day we pray for that wisdom from above, that takes this Jesus, and lets Him become the Lord and Savior of your entire life. And it is in the name of that Jesus Christ that we pray, AMEN.