

## Is Wisdom crying out in the streets of Letcher County?

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A few years ago I preached on Proverbs 1:20-33. It begins with these words: "Wisdom calls aloud outside; she raises her voice in the open squares. She cries out in the chief concourses, at the openings of the gates of the city she speaks her words."

At first, I wondered how Wisdom was crying out in the streets of Letcher County. I assumed it must have something to do with street preaching. Since there wasn't much of that going on, it didn't quite make sense.

Then it struck me. I was wrong to assume that preaching was the only way Wisdom could cry out. I failed to notice at least one other obvious way. She cries out everywhere in the ruined lives of those around us.

For example, when we see a man on drugs staggering down the street, she says, "Stop, look at this life! Think about what you are doing." When we hear about the teenage girl killed in a drunk driving accident, Wisdom says, "Don't be a fool! Sin is dangerous." When we see adultery break up a family, she says, "Sin is serious! Mark it well."

When we read the front page of the paper about a young man who killed another human being for drug money, Wisdom says, "Sin is cruel and destructive." When we see a person with severe health problems because of lifestyle choices, she says, "Sin has consequences."

When we pass by the funeral home and see the names of the deceased, she says, "Life is short! Your name will be there soon. Number your days." When we see small children left to themselves without correction or instruction, she says, "Pay attention parents! Neglect is deadly."

When you look at it this way, you realize she's not only crying out in Letcher County, she's SCREAMING! She's screaming through broken lives. She's saying, "there are consequences for ignoring God."

Why are so few listening? One reason is that she competes with another kind of wisdom. "This wisdom does not descend from above," James says, "but is earthly, sensual, demonic" (3:15).

This wisdom says, "don't worry, it won't happen to you." This wisdom says, "experimenting with sin is normal" and "don't deprive yourself of anything you desire."

Do you know what the Bible calls those who listen to this wisdom? Simple (or gullible) ones. Do you know what God's Wisdom says to such people? "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity?" (Prov. 1:22). How long will you be gullible and refuse to see where your sin is leading you?

She's not afraid to rebuke teenagers either. She says, "Turn at my rebuke" (1:23). She's not afraid her sharp words will make the simple rebel because she knows they're already living in rebellion.

And she promises good things for those who will listen to her. "Surely I will pour out my spirit on you. I will make my words known to you. . . whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil." (1:23, 33)

But she also has serious warnings for those who ignore her. "Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, because you disdained all my counsel, and would have none of my rebuke, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes" (1:24-26).

She says the day will come when the simple will call her, "they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me" (1:28). Why? "Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord" (1:29).

And she says this every time you see a life wrecked by sin.

But this doesn't mean she can't cry out through a preacher. There's no reason why she can't use this preacher right now to plead with you to stop and think about the direction of your life, listen to God's offer of forgiveness, and turn from your sin.

She's crying out all right. Fear God! Believe the gospel! The question is, are you listening?

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