



Come and See!

Week of June 15, 2025, 11 OT

The Word...

Thus says the wisdom of God:

"The LORD possessed me, the beginning of his ways....,
before the mountains were settled into place,
before the hills, I was brought forth;
while as yet the earth and fields were not made,
nor the first clods of the world.

"When the Lord established the heavens, I was there...

I was his delight day by day, playing before him all the while,
playing on the surface of his earth; and I found delight in the human race"
(*Prv 8:22-31*).

Pondering the Word...

I remember when I first read this passage. I was indeed delighted by the idea of God delighting in Lady Wisdom and Lady Wisdom delighting in the world. I can't resist the humor in this translation: Wisdom preceded "the first clods of the world." (The Hebrew word is "aphar" which means loose earth or soil.) Wisdom outpaces the "clods of the world" even still, and these days, boy, do we have a lot of clods!

The author of Proverbs presents Wisdom in a fresh, wonderful way. We might think of someone described as "wise" as being older, learned, perhaps a bit stodgy; gentle, but calm and reserved. Wisdom—the Spirit of God—is portrayed as a vibrant woman, with God before time, giving birth with God to the heavens and the earth. She is creative and unencumbered; loving and playful. She recognizes the fullness of creation and delights in the wonder of earth and its inhabitants. Unlike the way women are portrayed in other parts of Scripture (and unfortunately by clods among us), Wisdom is the breath and feminine freeing Spirit of God.

And God knows...we need her today—now—more than ever.

Living the Word...

I've started and ended the week with reflections to make us smile. I've been feeling low, so this reading comes at a great time. Let's consider lessons we can take from Lady Wisdom: When was the last time you "played?" I'm talking about real play—not competitive sports, not "playing along" with the kids or grands, but really letting go and putting yourself and your imagination wholeheartedly into the game.

Do you allow yourself time EVERY day to just gaze out into nature, green where I live or perhaps white with snow where you are? To delight in the bird's song, in the squirrels scampering. In the words of Mary Oliver, *"Oh do you have time to linger for just a little while out of your busy and very important day for the goldfinches that have gathered in a field of thistles for a musical battle, to see who can sing the highest note, or the lowest...not for the sake of winning but for sheer delight and gratitude...just to be alive on this fresh morning in the broken world... It could mean something. It could mean everything. It could be what Rilke meant, when he wrote: You must change your life"* (abridged from "Invitation," *A Thousand Mornings*, Penguin Books, 2013).

Personal Reflections and Ideas ... _____

Mon, Jun 9: *"In everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, through much endurance, in afflictions, hardships, constraints, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, vigils, fasts"* (2 Cor 6:1-10). Paul and his crew have been through a lot. We know he was beaten and stoned, imprisoned, etc., and that there are Christians today who suffer abuse and even death (recently in Nigeria and DRC). I'd guess most people reading this have not experienced abuse for their faith. We think we can never be ministers of God like the early disciples and martyrs were. But think again: God recognizes when we hold onto faith despite being beaten down by illness or the imprisonment of addiction; despite the hardship of job loss and the resulting constraints that brings; despite our fervent vigils and fasts, prayers that seemingly go unanswered. We too can commend ourselves as ministers of God. **Provision: Where are you called to minister?** I'm so impressed when I hear of people who take their pain, and when healed enough themselves, use it to reach out in compassion to others experiencing that pain. Henri Nouwen calls such people "wounded healers." Are there trials you have endured through faith? Consider how God is calling you to be a minister in God's name.

Tue, Jun 10: *"The LORD protects strangers"* (Ps 146). *"So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect"* (Mt 5:43-48). So, this begs the question, "What would our perfect heavenly Father do for innocent immigrants and refugees today? **Provision: Protect strangers.** Oh, I love it when the rubber of faith meets the hard and dirty road of reality. Have you seen articles about small communities banding together to oppose the deportation of cherished neighbors? What would you do if your friend, spouse, or relative was threatened? Does being a stranger mean someone is "illegal?" Do we think Jesus would describe anyone that way?"

Wed, Jun 11: *"When you pray, go to your inner room, close the door"* (Mt 6:1-6, 16-18). I've never noticed the second half of Jesus' instruction: close the door. How often I try to go into prayer, only to have my phone "bing-bong," distracting me with some marketing message! Delving deeper, I can remove distractions like the phone and close a physical door behind me, but how about "closing the door" on other distractions: my anxieties, my petitions, my infernal "to do" list. **Provision: Close the door when you pray.** Contemplative prayer is difficult for many people. Finding time to pray in silence is hard enough. Here's a suggestion: Take *a few minutes* in the morning to write down a list of everything about which you wish to pray, the big things and the little things. You don't need to list all the people and situations and all your worries and other distractions—God knows what is in your heart. Then say, "Here, God, are all the things on my mind and heart. Hold them for me for a while so that I may rest in your embrace and listen to your Spirit." Even if you don't have time to sit down in prayer, just this little practice can help you pray as you go about your busy day!

Thu, Jun 12: *"In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words"* (Mt 6:7-15). **Provision: Say a few words. Then listen.** An apt follow-up to yesterday's reflection. Start all prayer experiences (and that includes the prayer experience of your day) with gratitude for God's mercy and love. "Close the door" by writing down a brief list of intentions and concerns. Say the Our Father (or Our Mother, Our Creator, or whatever name you have for the Divine). Pay attention to the words. Personalize them if you can. Then sit still. Be quiet. Listen to the rhythm of your breath and breathe in peace. That's it.

Fri, Jun 13: *"There is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches."* (2 Cor 11:18, 21-30). I contrast Paul's anxiety with a favorite Pope John XXIII quip: "God, I've done everything I can for your church today. But it's your church, so I'm going to bed!" **Provision: Let the Spirit do the work.** Maybe since Paul didn't walk with Jesus as he ministered, leaving people to decide on their own, he thinks he has to be anxious all the time. Maybe Paul isn't so much worried that he had done a good job as he is for the souls of the people to whom he ministered. It doesn't matter. We do our best, using the Spirit to guide us, then leave it up to her!

Sat, Jun 14: *"That I might not become too elated, a thorn in the flesh was given to me"* (2 Cor 12:1-10). *"Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself"* (Mt 6:24-34). That last verse is for Paul...and for all of us! **Provision: "Don't worry. Be happy!"** Something that might worry you are those pesky thorns that keep stabbing you despite your best intentions. Each time you feel a poke, say a quick prayer. If you think you will be challenged by a thorn or two tomorrow, pray for strength. (And if you need a good laugh, check out Bobby McFerrin's crazy music video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-diB65scQU>).