

Psalm 14; Rom. 10:5-13; Wisdom's Confession I. The Fool's Words II. The Wise Profession

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we continue our series on the wisdom of Proverbs we note that wisdom is known by her words and her ways. As Prov. 12:17 says, whoever speaks truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit. Although our text is not found in Proverbs as such, Psalm 14 and Rom. 10 do reveal the way and words of the wise man- and how that man will be blessed. Today as we assemble as a community of faith- we are confessing something- giving witness to something. There is a connection between our words and worship- what we believe and what we say. And as Andrew and Ginger are sitting up here because they desire to take their stand and make their profession in the presence of God and His people. But not everyone delights in professing the truth. As the co-hosts of the Emmys scoffed at- white actors do not thank Jesus unless they are Republican. Or as the name of the new Netflix series- *Godless* illustrates. It is commonplace in our world to scoff at the truth- to make little of God and His word. Into the context of this scorn and derision we see that Jesus reveals the blessings of Wisdom's Confession.

I. The Fool's Words

We start by considering the fool's words- as we read from Psalm 14:1. The fool says that there is no God. The word- fool- here should be familiar to us. It is the word- "Nabal" as in the same name as Abigail's husband- Nabal. Nabal was a fool- as his name says. A fool is one who laughs at the truth- makes fun of God and His Word. The foolish reject wisdom and the way of truth- they have no sense. They are stupid and wicked concerning spiritual things. This fool says – there is no God. He denies it with all his being- proclaiming that there is no sovereign who made all things. Nor is there a standard bearer who will judge his actions. He is his own maker- his desires his own standard. I determine what is right for me- since I am my own master. This is what we call a "practical atheist." In order to justify their own actions, they deny the existence of God. Or the agnostic- who confess that they do not know if there is a god- but are also convinced that if there is a god he would not be concerned about me and my life. Like the rebellious man of Psalm 94- God does see- the LORD does not perceive me and my works. Where does everything come from? Who made everything? Even though creation displays its makers praise- this world reveals God and His works as Rom. 1:18 says- this rebel suppresses the truth in unrighteousness. Even though his

own heart and conscience testify against him- although the evidence is overwhelming- he denies the truth and alters the facts. So says the wicked man. Psalm 14 continues- this fool says this nonsense in his heart. In his heart he begins to believe this- so his mouth pours forth. From the heart proceeds all sorts of wickedness- as we will see. But the first act of a rebellious heart is to say that God is not. And even if this fool would only utter these words in his heart- God sees and hears it! Yet the proud fool proclaims it for all to hear! There is no God- God is dead! There is no truth! Do what is right in your own eyes- what is true for you may not be true for me! So says the fool! But foolish thinking leads to foolish actions. He continues in v. 1 by becoming corrupt in all their ways- doing abdominal deeds. All their actions are polluted- they do nothing that God calls good. As Paul explains in Rom. 1:22- those who claim to wise are made fools- by suppressing the truth they have exchanged that truth for foolishness- the way that is right and good is exchanged for the path of iniquity and destruction. So God gives them over to their own way- He hands them over to their own desires. They become like an ostrich who shoves its head into the sand- trying to bury the evidence by shutting their eyes. God says here - the consequences of a foolish mind is a corrupt and wicked life! This leads them to lust after strange things- having desires contrary to the flesh. Rom. 1 fleshes this progression out. They have dishonorable passions as Rom. 1:26 says- even worshipping creatures instead of the creator! They continue- as Rom.1:29 says by being filled with all manner of wicked deeds and rebellious actions. The point is clear, foolish thoughts lead to foolish actions. Denying God leads to a godless life. Or a Rom. 1:24 says, God gives them over to their desires- He gives them what they want- He removes the restraint. But added to this, they not only practice wickedness- they give approval to those who share in their wicked deeds- Rom. 1:32. As we witness with the sexual revolution- those who deny God are not content to gain access to all manner of sins- they punish those who speak against their works. It becomes a capital offence to call a sin a sin. Being plunged into wickedness, they seek to quiet their conscience by drowning it in filth. As Prov. 12:15 says, the fool does what is right in their own eyes. As you can see, there is a progression into wickedness- a descent into the pit of rebellion. As person becomes foolish in their profession so they become godless in their living. Or as Prov. 21:28 says, the false witness will perish, but the one who listens to the truth will speak forever! As a present-day proverb says- truth sounds like hatred to those who hate the truth! If you suppress the truth, you learn to

reject plain and clear evidence in order to justify your actions. But the fact is- closing your eyes does not stop the sun from shining! The truth remains true- even when you deny it! And the end result of foolish belief and wicked actions is a final destruction. For those who refuse the way of wisdom, their path leads to death! So we pray- O Lord, save me from myself and my own self-delusions! Lead me- teach me the way of life!

II. The Wise Profession

But praise God- not all remain foolish. Because of Christ's continued work by His Spirit, some come to know and even confess the truth. Although by nature all men would be fools- some come to see and embrace wisdom. And this wisdom is made evident in what we say. Our second reading focusses on Rom. 10:9. If the fool is one that denies God's existence, what does the wise one do? Well- the wise man is one who believes! Wisdom's ways are the ways of those who acknowledge that God is and that He is to be trusted- that there is a creator who has made and sustains all things who is to be worshiped. Belief is a confidence and dependence on Christ- and by this you are justified. His Word becomes your will! It is His law and standard that is to be submitted to. Specifically our text says that we must believe that Jesus is Lord and that God has raised Him from the dead. We believe in Jesus who is both the living and supreme King who reigns over all! Both the wise man and the foolish man believe something in their heart- but instead of denying the wise man embraces the truth. Added to this belief- as Rom. 10 continues- the wise man confesses. He believes and makes this belief known and proclaim it- declaring it! The Word of faith is found in two places- in the heart and the mouth! As the BC begins- We believe with the heart and confess with the mouth! There are times when we need to stand up and make a simple declaration- like when I got married I said publicly- I do! Well, today we have the opportunity to hear Andrew and Ginger state that they do believe! Here we find a public profession of faith! The way of wisdom is one that trusts in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins- and declares to the world that their life is found in Him! If we deny Him, He will deny us as II Tim. 2 says. But if we acknowledge Him before men, He will acknowledge us before His Father! Like the robin's day-long song- heard from morning till night- our song is one of continual trust and praise! And this wisdom of belief and confession is followed with blessings! As we have seen, when someone commits themselves to the wise way, they find riches.

Well- the riches in our text are the riches of life and deliverance! If you believe and confess- you will be saved! Or as Heb. 11:6 says- whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him. Just as the foolish man discovers- there are consequences to what you believe! The wise man believes in God- and trust that He will reward and blesses those who seek His face! By faith we are united to Christ- set free from sin and death! It is wise to believe and profess- because you will be saved from the coming destruction! Or as Prov. 22:19 says, incline your heart to wisdom, so that your trust may be in the Lord! Truly wisdom leads to blessings and life! Jesus Christ by His Spirit opens our hearts and minds to believe- so we in turn open our mouth to profess and boldly declare! I am not my own, I have been purchased by the precious blood of Christ! This is necessary for us all! Not just these two sitting here! We are all called to believe and confess! We believe because it is true- and we confess because we want everyone to know it! And this truth will direct our steps. Just as the fool is made evident by a wicked life of rebellion and iniquity, the wise who belief and confess are made known by their life of holiness and purity! The form we will read asks in the 3rd question- do you declare that you love the Lord, that it is your heartfelt desire to serve Him, to forsake the world- to put your sins to death and to lead a godly life? The life of obedience to God's Word- loving God above all and loving your neighbor as yourself- is to be the visible mark which is the proof to our belief and confession. Growth in holiness- a process called sanctification. That we are kind and compassionate- patient with others. Not legalistic and harsh- but truly seeking to be a blessing to others and to honor God above all. That is the life we are all called to live!

To conclude, today we have followed the foolish man and the wise man. We saw what each believed and what they professed. We followed them down the path of their life- seeing the consequences of their belief made evident in how they live- and evident in their final end! The path of wisdom is a tree of life! As Prov. 10:14 says- the wise store up knowledge, but the mouth of the fool brings ruin near! Jesus reveals the blessings of Wisdom's Confession. So what do you believe- have you professed it? Does your life match what you confess to be true? The wise believe in God and trust in His Son for forgiveness- they profess their faith and live a holy life because He who has called them is Holy! May our lives reflect wisdom's way!