

**Eighth Sunday After Trinity
Sunday, July 26, 2015**

Sermon by Ed Pacht (sermons4layreaders.org)
presented by Andrew Staley, Lay Reader

Where does wisdom come from?

What is wisdom?

What result does it have?

The first lesson, from Ecclesiasticus discusses just these questions, and Jesus, as reported by John applies it to Himself, and thus to us, His chosen people.

Does wisdom come from our native ability?

Does it come from studying a lot?

Is it something that comes with age?

Well, all of those things help.

All of those things are things to be wise about.

They provide the tools for making wise decisions, but none of them are wisdom, as Ecclesiasticus says,

Does that mean to be afraid of Him?

Well, not really, but ...

Well, maybe you remember the Narnia series.

The children had just found out that the great Aslan, whom they were going to meet, was a lion.

"Is he safe?" they asked.

"Who said anything about safe?"

answered Mr. Beaver, "He's a lion, I tell you.

He's not safe at all, but he's good"

The fear of the Lord starts with awe, the realization of His greatness and majesty, and shortly passes to an uncomfortable realization that we are not worthy to meet Him, and our knees should shake.

But He is good and we can trust Him, and He demands that of us.

The fear of the Lord is a big concept and includes all that.

And that is where wisdom starts.

Let's continue:

If we understand what it is to be in His presence,

we're going to want to please him,

both because it's dangerous not to,

and (more importantly)

because we want to, because He is good.

Please, be careful of "righteous indignation".
When anger takes over, even for a good reason,
self-centeredness is the result,
and the walls we build against others
are also walls against God.
And, if righteous anger is so dangerous,
well, what of wrongful anger?
[weep]

Patient endurance of a wrong
sometimes has a favorable result,
but even if it doesn't,
there is the joy of knowing the approval of God.
"

Which brings us to the Gospel reading:
wisdom, as demonstrated by Our Lord,
is not found in our own abilities,
nor in all the things we have learned,
but in God:

*"For the fear of the Lord
is wisdom and instruction:
and faith and meekness are his delight.
"Now about the midst of the feast
Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.
And the Jews marvelled, saying,
How knoweth this man letters,
having never learned?
Jesus answered them, and said,
My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.
If any man will do his will,
he shall know of the doctrine,
whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.
He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory:
but he that seeketh his glory that sent him,
the same is true,
and no unrighteousness is in him."*

Which brings us back to where we started.
There's a verse in Proverbs that says,
"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."
Moreover, the objective of wisdom
is the presence of God and union with Him.
There is really no other goal that matters.