

Wisdom Service Conclusion

Matthew 7:24-29

Today's service has been about choices. We make decisions all the time, many easy, many hard. In the morning, or afternoon in some cases, we get up and have to decide what to wear. This isn't difficult, so we don't need much help. Well, some people do. Can anyone think who this famous person is? [*take of shirt with back to congregation and spin around with Superman T-shirt on, waving some red pants, to pull over trousers*]. This famous person needs help. He puts his pants on last instead of first!

Much more difficult is the difference between right and wrong. You might think this is easy, for instance we all know that killing people and stealing from them is wrong, but how do we all know this? Most people will say, "I just know." Your parents may have you, but how did they find out? If we decide for ourselves then there would be lots of different rights and wrongs. I might think it's okay to take Trevor's lovely jumper if I'm cold, but he wouldn't think that. I'm sure he'd be pretty cross, in fact. So how do we find out what's really right and wrong?

There are many ways to discover this, such as prayer and reading the Bible. Often prayer is needed for us to be clear about God's truth, and there are many examples of people in the Bible sometimes doing wrong things and sometimes doing the right things. This helps us to get a general sense of what God means by right and wrong, through the writings of the many wise people whose sayings are brought together in some of the books of the Bible.

Today we have been looking the book of Proverbs, part of the Wisdom section of the Bible. The writers of the Proverbs include King Solomon, and their sayings were used as a way of teaching people how to live their lives. This is usually done by saying what the wise man does and then

what the foolish man would do, to encourage people to be wise, “A wise son heeds his father’s instruction, but a fool does not listen to rebuke.” Jesus did the same thing. In today’s reading, Jesus talks about choosing whether or not to believe what he’s saying. This is by far the most important decision any of us will ever have to make. Yet the decision to follow Jesus is not a one off choice, it must be made over and over again. Every time we do something, we must decide if it’s what Jesus would do, and do that. In this way we constantly decide to follow Jesus.

An extreme example of this is Judas Iscariot. At first, he made the right decision to follow Jesus, but later on he changed his mind and decided that Jesus was not what he thought the Messiah would be. He stopped choosing to follow Jesus and instead chose to betray him. The other disciples also stopped following him while he was being tried and crucified, but afterwards they went back. We don’t need to worry if we do something bad, because as long as we say sorry and come back to God, we’ll be okay. He will forgive whatever we have done as long as we admit it was wrong and say sorry.

The problem is; how do we know what Jesus would do? We don’t have a record of what Jesus would do in every single situation we might ever come across, but we can find out. The answer lies in prayer, Bible study, and asking more experienced people than ourselves. As we pray, read and think about the Bible, the Holy Spirit teaches us, showing us what is right and what is wrong, pointing us in the right direction. The challenge is to accept the Holy Spirit and through it talk to God. He will help us with these difficult decisions as long as we ask. Once we know what to do by listening to his answer, we must try as hard as we can to do it. Amen.