

CITYWEST CHURCH

WISDOM PART 3 - WISDOM IN YOUR SHOES.

30.08.2026 - 10 AM

“Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves. ¹⁷ But beware! For you will be handed over to the courts and will be flogged with whips in the synagogues. ¹⁸ You will stand trial before governors and kings because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to tell the rulers and other unbelievers about me.^[a] ¹⁹ When you are arrested, don't worry about how to respond or what to say. God will give you the right words at the right time. ²⁰ For it is not you who will be speaking—it will be the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Matthew 10:16-20 (NLT)

Over the last two weeks, we've been talking about wisdom.

*Week one: **THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM***

We discovered that wisdom begins with God.

Wisdom isn't simply knowing more. It's learning to see life God's way.

*Then last week: **WISDOM IN THE NOISE***

We talked about discernment.

Because we live in a world of information, opinions, algorithms, headlines and competing voices.

Not every voice deserves our attention. Not every opinion deserves our agreement.

Not everything that sounds wise is wisdom.

But today I want to bring wisdom down to street level.

Because eventually, wisdom has to leave the sermon.

It has to walk into Monday morning. It has to walk into your marriage. It has to walk into your workplace. It has to walk into your family. It has to walk into your

friendships. It has to walk into the difficult conversation. It has to walk into the decision you don't know how to make.

*Because it's easy to say: "**I want to be wise.**"*

*It's much harder to know: "**What does wisdom look like right here?**"*

What do I do when someone has betrayed me?

What do I do when I'm angry?

What do I do when I don't trust someone?

What do I do when I have two good options?

What do I do when saying yes will cost me something?

What do I do when I know the truth but saying it could make things worse?

That's where biblical wisdom becomes incredibly powerful.

1. WISE ENOUGH TO SEE.

“Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves.

Matthew 10:16 (NLT)

Jesus gives his disciples an extraordinary instruction.

Jesus is saying : PAY ATTENTION.

You're going into a complicated world. There will be people who don't have good intentions.

There will be situations you don't understand. There will be people who try to manipulate you. There will be moments when you need discernment.

So: **Be shrewd.**

But then Jesus says: **Be harmless.**

And that tension is incredibly important.

Because there are two wrong ways to live in a complicated world.

Naivety: "I trust everybody."

Cynicism: "I trust nobody."

Jesus gives us another way: **Discernment.**

"I don't assume everyone is trustworthy, but I don't assume everyone is dangerous either."

That's wisdom.

THE SERPENT AND THE DOVE

*The serpent represents **shrewdness**.*

It sees. It notices. It doesn't rush. It recognises danger.

*The dove represents **innocence**.*

Purity. Peace. Harmlessness.

Jesus says: *Don't lose your dove while developing your serpent.*

Because sometimes Christians become wise about the world but lose their innocence.

We've been hurt, so we become suspicious.

We've experienced betrayal, so we stop trusting.

We've seen manipulation, so we assume everyone's manipulating us.

We've been disappointed, so we build walls.

We become so determined not to be foolish that we stop being vulnerable.

But that's not biblical wisdom.

Wisdom doesn't mean becoming harder.

It means becoming more discerning while remaining soft-hearted.

This is one of the most practical expressions of wisdom.

You can love someone and still have boundaries.

You can forgive someone and still not give them the same level of access.

You can believe the best about someone and still check the facts.

You can be generous without being gullible.

You can be gracious without being naïve.

"The wise are cautious and avoid danger; fools plunge ahead with reckless confidence."

Proverbs 14:8 — NLT

2. WISE ENOUGH TO PAUSE.

One of the greatest expressions of wisdom is knowing that not every reaction deserves to become a response.

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. ²⁰ Human anger^[a] does not produce the righteousness^[b] God desires. ²¹ So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.

James 1:19-21 (NLT)

Quick to listen - Slow to speak - slow to anger.

That's wisdom

Wisdom creates space between what happens to you and what you do about it. The bigger the gap the more wisdom

Always respond, never react.

Someone says something.

You immediately know what you want to say. You could send the text.

Fire back. Post the comment. Make your point.

And maybe you're completely right.

*But wisdom asks: **"Is this the right moment?"***

Because you can say a true thing in a destructive way.

You can say the right thing at the wrong time.

You can say something accurate with the wrong spirit.

You can win the argument and lose the relationship.

So before you respond, create some space.

Pray. Take a walk. Sleep on it. Talk to someone wise. Then respond.

Not because your emotions don't matter.

*But: **Your feelings are information, not always instruction.***

THE QUESTION ISN'T JUST "IS IT TRUE?"

Ask: "Is it helpful?" "Is it loving?"

"Is it necessary?" "Is now the right time?"

"Will this bring life?"

That's wisdom.

Paul says in Colossians:

"Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone."

Colossians 4:6 (NLT)

*The goal isn't simply to **say true things**. The goal is to become someone whose truth **sounds like Jesus**.*

3. WISE ENOUGH TO WALK

Eventually, wisdom has to become a decision.

Information

Knowledge

Wisdom - the above two in action.

So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. ¹⁶ Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. ¹⁷ Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. ¹⁸ Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, ¹⁹ singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. ²⁰ And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:15-20 (NLT)

Be Careful how you live.

The Greek imagery is the idea of walking, your daily manner.

Wisdom recognizes that opportunities are limited.

Take the opportunity, make good use of your time, it won't be here forever.

Your children won't be this age again.

You may not be able to have that conversation later.

Remember, time has two meanings

Chronos - minute by minute, nonstop, always moving.

Kairos - the God-appointed time, the opportune time.

What time is it? Information and knowledge

*What does this time ask of me? **WISDOM***

What does God want me to do?

Wisdom asks what is faithful .

Paul then does something unexpected

*He flips to saying let the Holy Spirit control your life, **be filled with the Holy Spirit.***

*Biblical wisdom isn't simply **THINK HARDER.***

But: BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT.

Proverbs says Fear of the Lor dis the beginning of wisdom

James says if you need wisdom, ask God.

Paul says be filled with the Spirit.

True wisdom flows when God, by his Spirit, transforms the way we live.

Walk carefully.

Recognise the moment.

Understand God's will.

Be filled with the Spirit.

Worship.

Give thanks.

That's what wisdom looks like when it gets into your shoes.

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Where do you find yourself more tempted toward naivety (“I trust everyone”) or cynicism (“I trust no one”)? What would it look like to practice Jesus’ wisdom of being both discerning and soft-hearted in that situation?
2. How can we create space to allow God's wisdom in the heated moments of life? Discuss some practical ways to create space before responding.