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Pentecost 13

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church  
Vienna, VA

## Jesu Juva

“True Wisdom! Let Us Attend”

Text: Proverbs 9:1-6; John 6:51-58; Ephesians 5:15-20

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

You do not need to be a fool to live foolishly.  
You do not need to be wise, to live wisely.

Foolish people sometimes do wise things, and wise people sometimes do foolish things.

This week and next week present two significant anniversaries to us. This past week was the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, and the devastation it caused. Next week will be the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In both cases, there were people who acted wisely, and people who acted foolishly. Sometimes significant events such as these bring out the best in us, sometimes they bring out the worst in us.

Today we are being called to wisdom. By the One who is Himself wisdom. Wherever you are in life, whatever situation you find yourself in, whatever crises or joys, you are being called to wisdom by Wisdom. To live wisely.

The Old Testament reading from Proverbs painted a picture of this for us. Wisdom has prepared a rich banquet, and calls to all who are simple, or foolish, to come and eat and drink. This is a banquet not just for the wise, for those who have attained a certain standard. No, this banquet is for all. For even the foolish to act wisely. And those who refuse, even though they may be wise, are acting foolishly.

In the Epistle, St. Paul exhorts the Ephesians – and all who hear his words – to consider how we are walking; or how we are acting and living in this life. Is it wisely or foolishly? Because it matters. *The days are evil*, Paul says. Satan is working. And not just 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week! So *make the best use of the time*, Paul says, *for the time is short*. The question is: are we? Are you?

Do you assume you have plenty of time? *Is that wise or foolish?*

Do you think that evil will not come upon you? *Is that wise or foolish?*

Do you presume that you have the will and the power within yourself to be the person God wants you to be? *Is that wise or foolish?*

Yet who among us does not act foolishly? Because who among us is not sinful? Sin-full. Filled with sin. Sin that says the foolishness of this world is wisdom, and the wisdom of God is foolishness. Sin that says my will is wise, and God's will is foolish. Sin that calls evil good and good evil. Sin, which is the ultimate foolishness.

Do not be deceived. That sin lives in you. Curving you in on yourself. Always tempting you to rely on *yourself*, and not on God. To follow *your own* thoughts and desires instead of His. To do what seems best *to you*, instead of what your Lord has told you *is* best. And not only is that foolish, it is idolatrous. And we have all bowed the knee to that idol named me.

But today we are being called to wisdom. The call goes out for us foolish, sinful ones to act wisely. To come sit, and eat well and drink deeply of the true wisdom – the wisdom of God and His Word. And for this reason you have entered Wisdom's house, the Church. For here is the Spirit of God, with His seven-fold gifts of grace. And here, Wisdom Himself, the very Son of God, feeds you. He has set His Table before you, a banquet of Word and Sacrament. To root out the foolishness, the sin; and to bestow upon you forgiveness.

But this is no fast food restaurant. There is no drive-thru here! This is a banquet of many courses, for us to enjoy *here* for a lifetime, and in Heaven for eternity. ***Singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.*** (Eph 5:19) Washing in the water of salvation. Drinking deeply from the fountain of forgiveness. Reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting the Word. And then eating and drinking the body and blood of the crucified one. The flesh and blood given for the life of the world (John 6:51) on the cross, now served for the life of the world in His Supper.

Come, He says. Eat and drink, tarry a while, linger and learn, question. Then leave and take this wisdom out into the world, in all of your vocations and walks of life, everywhere you go. But return. Always return. To be refreshed. To be forgiven. For to do so is to live wisely. To *not* do so is to live foolishly.

And that's the heart of it, right there . . . of what it means to live wisely. It doesn't mean to be smarter than others. It doesn't mean to be perfect. It doesn't mean others will think you wise. It means that whatever your IQ or SAT score, whatever mistakes you make, whatever struggles and challenges you are facing, whatever your past or the prospects for

your future – **to live wisely means to live in your Saviour**, with the life that only He can give. The life that begins now and lasts for eternity.

For who else can do for you what Jesus has done for you? Who else even *wants* to?

But He has come to give you everything. To give you Himself.  *Holding back nothing*. To take all that is yours – your sin, your rebellion, your uncleanness, your death – and make it all His. And then to take all this is His – His forgiveness, His Sonship, His resurrection, His kingdom, His life – and make it all yours. The world calls that foolishness; *utter* foolishness; the most stupidest thing they’ve ever heard of! For who would make such an exchange? No, such things must be earned, deserved, given to only the most worthy.

But our Lord calls this wisdom; the wisdom of the cross. The high serves the low. The one who is life dies, that we who are death may live. That we who are foolish in sin repent, and live foolishly no more.

And so Wisdom calls to us: “*Whoever is simple* [foolish], *let him turn in here!* . . . *Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed.*” (Prov 9:4-5)

It is Jesus calling to us: “*I am the living bread that came down from heaven. . . . My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. . . . Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.*” (John 6:51-58)

If there is one thing that Katrina and 9/11 have taught us once again, it is that the things of this world do not abide. Even majestic, impressive buildings. Even cities. And when those things are destroyed, so too whatever confidence and security we may have had. But there is one thing that abides forever. And that One not only created our world, but Himself came into it, that He might give that abiding life to us. That no matter *what* may happen in this world, and no matter *when*, and no matter *how* – that we have nothing to fear. For our life is not in the things of this world, which perish in wind and fire and clouds of dust; no, our life is in Him who abides forever. And His life is in us. And therefore, as He abides, we abide. As He lives, we live. *Just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity* (Small Catechism, explanation to the Second Article), **so will we.**

Is that foolishness? Or wisdom?

You do not need to be a fool to live foolishly.

You do not need to be wise, to live wisely.

Come, ***“leave your foolish ways, and live.”*** (Prov 9:6)

Come and eat. For all is ready. Forgiveness, life, salvation. All here for you.

In the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Now the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.