Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

June 16, 2019 Father’s Day

Old Testament Reading Proverbs 8: 1-4, 22-31

Responsive Reading; Psalm 8

Epistle Reading; Romans 5: 1-5

Gospel Reading; John 16: 12-15

Sermon Title**: THE ACORN DOESN’T FALL FAR FROM THE TREE**

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary: The acorn doesn’t fall far from the tree, but will it take root and grow?

To start off, happy Father’s Day.

The Bible makes plenty of references to God as the father but we find that the heavenly father, like the earthly fathers gets a lot of help. God has: Wisdom, Jesus [the son], and the Holy Spirit. We earthly fathers have wives, uncles, aunts and role model friends.

Our Old Testament Lesson depicts Wisdom as a woman but it is strangely similar to another description. Let me hit you with the two descriptions side by side.

Does not wisdom cry out, And understanding lift up her voice? She takes her stand on top of the high hill, Beside the way, where the paths meet. She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city, At the entrance of the doors: “To you, O men, I call, And my voice is to the sons of men.”

The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old. I have been established from everlasting, From the beginning, before there was ever an earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, When there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills, I was brought forth While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, Or the primal dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep, When He established the clouds above, When He strengthened the fountains of the deep, When He assigned to the sea its limit, So that the waters would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth, Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing in His inhabited world, And my delight was with the sons of men.

Now John 1: 1-14:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, And His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Before Jesus was born the writers of the Proverbs knew that Wisdom was with God. God was before the beginning and God was not alone. We have trouble comprehending anything that does not have a beginning and an end. It seems that the closest that we can come to understanding the concept is in the wedding ceremony where we describe the wedding ring as having no beginning and no end.

God has always been around and Proverbs says that He had a “Master Craftsman” with Him and John says that Jesus was always with God and all things were made through Jesus. God has always been around and Jesus and Wisdom have always been with God.

That Wisdom was and is God’s wisdom not the wisdom of man. Solomon was the wisest man in history but his wisdom was the wisdom of man. Solomon could get Gold and wives and power, i.e. 1400 chariots and 12,000 horses, but that represented the wealth of man and not the wealth of God.

Christ says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The wealth that Wisdom offers is that which is laid up in heaven and not the wealth like that of Solomon.

In the Proverbs lesson the author says that wisdom is everywhere, in the streets, on the walls in the gates to the city and so on. God and Jesus are everywhere and always being a good father. “Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint because of the love of God.”

A good father builds us up to be strong in the face of all the problems we will face in life, and a good father learns that from God.

In our gospel lesson Jesus says, “I still have many things to say but you can not bear them now.” God is not going to overwhelm with so much knowledge all at once that we buckle under the weight. He will give us the Holy Spirit to teach us at our pace.

I once knew a young man whose father wanted to teach him everything he knew and he wanted to do it now. He would not let his son go out for sports or school activities so he could spend the time teaching carpentry, electricity, plumbing and everything else that the young man would ever need in his future. The young man could not handle it and gave in under the pressure. He became an alcoholic, a druggie, and an unreasonable risk taker. With God’s help he cleaned up and did not end up in jail or dead.

Our heavenly father will never do that to us. Father God will always have patience with us. He will let us proceed at our own pace. God has more faith in us then most of us have in him.

Our responsive reading said, “What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels and You have crowned him with glory and honor.”

God has created us to be his heirs. God believes in us and is trusting us to protect and promote his kingdom on earth and his kingdom to come. With great privilege comes great responsibility. God believes in us.

Let us follow his example and continue to be good fathers and good grandfathers and good women of wisdom. This is such an honor to be trusted by God and God believes in us. Let us also believe in God and in our God-filled selves.

Let us go out and reflect God and Jesus in our lives so that our reflected light of God the Father, Son, Holy Ghost and Mother Wisdom will so shine that others may see our good works and glorify our loving Father Brother and Holy Spirit that dwell in heaven and also in us.

Hallelujah and Amen!