

---

## *Sermon by Ford McClure*

[Click here for the podcast](#)

**Chastain Horse Park  
Atlanta, Georgia  
Youth Family Social**

Nothing I say tonight will help us spiritually. We may all go home tonight feeling all warm and fuzzy. We did go to church twice today. Well, at least some of us did, anyways. Take my word, though—that feeling will fade. Rather, a sermon should change our routine; inspire us to investigate our own spirituality, instead of just taking the words of the preacher for their base value.

In today's Gospel, Jesus asks the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter was the only one who answered "the Messiah!" However, after Peter announced this, Jesus told his disciples to not let anyone know that he was the son of God. He realized that if people heard he was Son of Man, they would turn to him and ask for miracles—taking someone else's word for it. Jesus wanted the crowd to investigate; to pray that God might bring them to enlightenment. Just as Jesus' miracles were more to show God's power than to heal, I hope that my sermon will encourage you to be open to enlightenment as you leave this place, not just make you feel fuzzy inside.

This, however, raises a few questions. Why are we content with the warm fuzzies? Why aren't we intentional about seeking enlightenment? Why do we not always seek wisdom?

King Solomon puts the question in these terms in his Proverbs: "How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?" Given the clear and theoretical choice, we would all choose to seek rather than hide. But, when applied to our lives, we often choose to ignore the investigation out of contentment. Let us wonder how we will feel leaving this room. Are you going to remember the message and spirit of the night—the actual words upon which we speak? Or, will you merely remember your own child's part in the liturgy? This is not to say that their part shouldn't be interesting to you. But having pride in your child and understanding the calling of the night are not mutually exclusive.

I believe we avoid wisdom for the same reason that water flows down and around obstacles: it is the path of least resistance. Naturally, we want to maximize efficiency and minimize effort. It's all we seem to have time for in this hectic society. Our lives will continue tomorrow with the busyness that fills up the hours, the days, and the weeks. This approach isn't necessarily bad in all cases. For instance, the most efficient route when we're out driving is most always the best one. The straighter path is most always the quickest. The problem is that in order to learn, we have to endure difficulties. Sometimes, we are even called to enter the valley and stay for a while. It is through these struggles that we gain wisdom.

When Jesus told his disciples that "The Son of Man must undergo great suffering," Peter chose to avoid wisdom and cling to ignorance. Peter actually pulled Jesus aside and rebuked him, for Peter thought that Jesus was telling his disciples too much. He feared that they would not be able to handle such a stark truth. In this way, however, Peter was more worried about how they felt than the lessons they were to learn through this revelation. Jesus catches on, and immediately rebukes Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." Wow. Could Jesus be telling us these same words tonight? "How long, O simple ones, will you love to be simple?"

We must not run from wisdom. But how might we do that? It varies from person to person, but some of the classic ways are to immerse ourselves in God's Word; to meditate; to pray. With this jump start, it makes it easier to lay down our routines, to put down our crosses, and follow the Spirit of God.

Finally, once we attain some wisdom, what do we do with it? Do we continue to build upon that wisdom, continue to seek enlightenment? Should we be content to know that wisdom from God is still out there, yet remain still? No—we should always be seeking revelation from God. Yet, simply acquiring wisdom is not sufficient. God calls us to pass this wisdom on to others, so that we may help them, as we have been helped. We can spread this wisdom a number of ways. I've found the most effective way is to set the example; to continue to seek enlightenment ourselves. As many of your children's English teachers have inevitably taught them, we must show, not tell. Nothing is more rewarding than helping our peers, as I have discovered recently.

2009 has been a rough year for my family. In the span of three months, we lost two family members; one to kidney failure, the other to ovarian cancer. During their last few months, I got to know them both a whole lot better than I did. I got to spend more time with them than ever before. I felt for the first time like I was part of the whole process of life. I seemed to matter, as they both fought their respective illness. I wasn't content with being simple. I wanted to be in the valley with them. That was not easy.

In some ways, the months leading up to their deaths were harder than the deaths themselves. It was a shock to know that I chose to seek wisdom through. I'm glad that I did, as it has given me the insight to walk my friend through a similar process. Her 17-year-old cousin fights cancer as well. Thankfully, he seems to be doing much better now, and appears hopeful in his recovery. Nonetheless, the whole process is difficult, as I'm sure many of us here know. I'm glad that I was able to talk to her about her cousin and relate to her feelings. I'm now convinced that reaching out to others, spreading our wisdom, sincerely helps.

Wisdom is elusive. It's so easy to ignore in our lives. And, wisdom is hard to seek; to retreat from our own world to connect with the divine. But, it is just that important. We must do all that we can.

King Solomon reminds us that "wisdom cries out in the street; in the squares she raises her voice!" Let us depart this evening, ready to investigate. For, God is crying out to us. May we listen?