

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31  
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“Lady Wisdom: Talking about God”

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A famous ice hockey player had never had his father see him play professional hockey. It was his one regret. One day he was thrilled when he found out his father was going to be able to visit him and watch him play. In honor of the Occasion, a good friend on the team arranged a special banquet at a local, renowned restaurant, with a gourmet dinner prepared by a famous chef.

He invited his teammates, staff, and other local dignitaries. While it was odd the team's goalie offered to pick up the entire tab for the meal. The local newspaper reported it was certainly a dinner worthy of the Father, the Son, and the Goalie Host.

So today is Trinity Sunday, this may mean something to those who have spent decades in congregations whose weekly worship follows the Revised Common lectionary. But I have come to realize the Doctrine of the Trinity, Understanding God as Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit; 3 in 1 yet 1 in 3... is not really a significant question in the mind of many modern Christians.

See, what the Doctrine of the Trinity did nearly 1600 years ago was provide the church with language to talk about THE unspeakable mystery of God. Through imperfect, inadequate language, one could attempt to describe the indescribable character and work of God. So, this morning I want to talk about another biblical way we can continue to expand our language for God, the unspeakable mystery.

In college I took a Women's Studies class, I was probably in the class for all the wrong reasons, but it was fun being the only guy in the class. Our final project was to write an essay and I chose my topic, “Should we rewrite the bible to make the language for God and Humankind more inclusive?” I argued that while I do believe women are equal to men, tradition led me to believe we should not rewrite the bible.

In seminary, during biblical studies classes, I discovered the Bible contains a number of wonderful feminine images of God. In Genesis we hear how both women and men are created in God's image. In Hosea God is described as being like a Mother bear. In Deuteronomy God is described as one who gives birth. In Isaiah God is described as being like a comforting mother, a nursing Mother, a woman in labor. You can find feminine imagery in some psalms. In Matthew's Gospel God is compared to a Mother hen. In Luke God is described as a woman looking for her lost coin. There are other feminine images for God hidden in the translation of the Hebrew word *Hesed*; God's steadfast love and faithfulness.

And for nearly 500 years the church has been testing and debating if, and how, we might expand our descriptions of God to include Feminine terms, because Language has power to form human perceptions. If the only gender we ever hear in the pronouns we use for God are masculine, even though God is not male or female, we begin to picture God as a grandfather

with a long beard. IF you don't believe me, loo at the dominant images of God in centuries of religious art and written word.

In Seminary I came to understand that using a balance of Feminine and masculine imagery for God is important, along with using many images that are not gender based. Because the bible itself has feminine images that are being ignored and forgotten.

Today we have just such a situation. Did you know about Lady Wisdom written about in the book of Proverbs? The feminine companion of the Father who was there before the foundations of the world were laid? Lady wisdom watching over each step of creation, taking equal delight as each lifeform was named into being.

It is not too surprising that Lady Wisdom doesn't show up in worship very often. The author of proverbs seems to expect Lady Wisdom to hang out downtown at Water Street and Wisconsin Ave, in the heart of life. She is out where people are, out where the action is.

Lady wisdom is a watcher of Humanity and a lover of people. She takes delight in us! She seems to think we are funny and likable and curious, and... lacking, at least in her particular form of sacred wisdom. So there she is, people watching, waiting for the next receptive person to open their hearts to her and listen deeply, and act on her wisdom.

To each of us Madame Insight is crying out, "learn from me and gain wisdom," and in response most of us would quickly respond, "Sign me up!" But we may not be admitting the fear behind opening our self to God's wisdom. God's ways are not always our ways. It is not easy to admit "we don't know." We fear being seen as ignorant, weak, or unprepared, when admitting we don't know – Can actually open up new paths to growth, truth, love and relationship.

Wisdom and life nourish each other. With Wisdom we nourish the Spirit filled life... first in ourselves, then in community, and then the world.

In this way Wisdom becomes the daily and hourly practice of giving, honoring, and respecting life in all its forms.

Amen