

The Holy Trinity

WORKING DAYS

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

The Holy Trinity

Analysis by Paige G. Evers

*Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her voice?
20 On the heights, beside the way,
at the crossroads she takes her stand;
3 beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries out:
4 "To you, O people, I call,
and my cry is to all that live. 22 The Lord created me at the
beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.
23 Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
24 When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.
25 Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth—
26 when he had not yet made earth and fields,
or the world's first bits of soil.
27 When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
28 when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,
29 when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,*

*30then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
31rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race.*

DIAGNOSIS: Burnout

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : Overworked

Wisdom has a story to tell. “To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live” (v. 4). It’s a story about work, about God’s creative work. In our time, work is a loaded topic. You may be miserable at work but in this volatile economic climate when jobs are scarce, you just keep your head down, and try not to mess up. In Proverbs, wisdom describes how she was present at the moment of God’s creation (v. 22) and how she was “rejoicing before [the Lord] always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race” (vv. 30-31). That doesn’t sound like the work we experience. Each day, we go through the motions and look forward to quitting time. In many cases, we’re doing the work of two or more people. We’re exhausted. There is no creativity in our employment. There is no wisdom in our work. There is no rejoicing in our daily lives.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : Unwise

Underneath the exhaustion and feeling of being overworked lies a deeper problem. Fear. Everything depends on what I do for a living, on my output, on my work. Inside, I’m focused on my daily production of objects or ideas. I’m afraid that one of these days I won’t measure up. Unlike wisdom, I don’t have a story to tell in which I see God shaping the mountains (v. 25), establishing the heavens (v. 27), or making firm the skies above (v. 28). I think it’s up to me to keep the world humming through

my work. When I focus solely on my own creativity or lack of it, I fail to see God at work. In my fear, there is no room for faith.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : *Exposed*

When we fail to recognize and trust in the true Creator of the universe, we won't last long, no matter what our job title is. When our heart trusts in our own work, eventually we'll burn out. When our own abilities are exhausted, we'll be left to face God's judgment. Standing before God with our sins exposed, we'll quickly learn what true burnout feels like.

PROGNOSIS: Joy

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : *The Living Word*

Wisdom calls, raises her voice, and cries out to us in this passage from Proverbs. Wisdom tells her story of being part of God's creative act at the beginning of time. In the same way, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit-God the Holy Trinity-speaks to rescue us from burnout. God rescues us from our trust in our work to save us. God speaks to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He is the One who "was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being" (see John 1:1-4). Jesus, the living Word, was present with God at creation. By taking on our sins and dying on the cross for us, Jesus makes possible our new creation. His death gives us new life as forgiven and redeemed children of God. Jesus makes us "daily [the Lord's] delight" (v. 30).

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) : *A New Creation*

Now there is room for faith. Instead of trusting in your work, you can trust in the power and love of the God who created the earth, the fields, the world's first bits of soil (v. 26), and you. You can believe Jesus when he says in John's Gospel lesson for today, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you

into all the truth...he will declare to you the things that are to come" (John 15:13). Wisdom calls you to tell you about creation. The Spirit speaks the joy-filled promise that you are God's new creation.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) : *A Worker for God*

Now your work, whatever it is, doesn't need to be drudgery. Through the Spirit, God calls you to be "beside him, like a master worker" (v. 30). Your faith in Jesus, the crucified and risen one, is the foundation for all of your work. God's creativity flows through you and blesses the world around you. At work or anywhere, people can see how you are constantly "rejoicing in [the Lord's] inhabited world and delighting in the human race" (v. 31). When you trust that God has made you into a new creation through Jesus, when you trust that the Spirit is guiding you into the truth, your work and your life will be filled with joy. No matter what your job is, this kind of joy is contagious. It will lead others to ask how they can become master workers as well. This kind of joy will point them to a relationship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This kind of joy will help them find life.