



Wise or Windy Words? Offering Comfort in Times of Tragedy

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As I write this essay, the world is undergoing a health crisis for which few, if any, were prepared. The spread of COVID-19 has resulted in the loss of countless lives, compromised health conditions for others, overburdened health care systems, caused economic instability, and disrupted normal relationships, altering the way work, education, religious gatherings, travel, and other forms of public and private life are carried out. In addition, violence against persons based on race has exposed the deep prejudices that persist in our country and the injustices that result with respect to health care and economic opportunities for Blacks and other minorities. We have lived through a political era where rhetoric has been used to divide and destroy and where distortions of truth have been so pervasive that individuals have patterned their entire lives around false realities, sometimes resulting in unthinkable acts of violence and hatred.

With a sense of urgency this era has witnessed the power of words—from the widespread distortion of truth in the public sphere to times when a wise word has cut through the chaos of the current crises, bringing a moment of light and healing into the darkness. In such times of uncertainty, leaders in faith communities face a daunting task. How can we provide words of wisdom to those who are seeking answers? What can we possibly say to those who look to us for comfort and clarity?

We often seek to give words of wisdom or consolation to others in the face of difficult times, but often they sound only like “windy words.” Such words can be wise instead if they are rooted in embodied realities, in words that have stood the test of time, and in genuine relationality.

I imagine there are many worthy answers to such questions. In this essay, I turn to the book of Job, one of the wisdom books of the Hebrew Bible, to explore the question of what constitutes “wise counsel” or “wise words” in times of suffering and uncertainty. In this essay, I assess the exchanges between Job and his friends in order to determine what these speakers’ expectations of wise counsel are. I argue that the book of Job reveals three characteristics to be true of wise words: (1) Wise words are “weighty”; they are “embodied realities.” (2) Wise words “stand firm” over the course of time. (3) Wise words are spoken from a context of genuine relationality.

The issues with which the book of Job deals transcend time and place, rendering it meaningful for any era: Why do the innocent suffer? What role does God play in human behavior and its consequences? Where can comfort be found in times of suffering? Portions of Job’s story may resonate with many struggling today: Job has lost his economic security, his children are dead, and he is afflicted with a terrible disease (Job 1:1, 13–19; 2:7–8). He is isolated from his community and treated as a stranger (19:13–22). According to the opening chapters of the book, Job’s sorrows are through no fault of his own; instead, they are due to a wager between God and the *satan* of which Job is unaware whereby God allows the *satan* to afflict Job “for no reason” (2:3; cf. 1:1, 22; 2:10). Like many today who face the devastating losses of economic security, loved ones, or health, such experiences may leave persons in search of comfort and wisdom.

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When Job’s friends learn of his troubles, they visit him with the express purpose to comfort and console him (2:11). They offer many words of advice, but their efforts are unsuccessful. Although they initially seek to comfort Job, their counsel only leads to more suffering for him. They have become, as Job pointedly states in 16:2, “comforters of trouble” (cf. 3:10).¹

While it may be natural for readers to side with the sufferer Job, it is worth asking why the friends’ words of comfort fail. In fact, their words of “wisdom” often align with teachings of the Bible elsewhere: they extol God’s marvelous design for creation (5:9–11; 11:7–10); they remind Job that God is just and that the wicked will not go unpunished (4:8–9; 18:5–21; 20:4–29); and they encourage Job that he will be restored if he submits to God’s discipline (5:8, 17–19; 8:5–6, 20–21; 11:13–17; 22:23–27).² Do we not often offer similar counsel to those seeking answers to questions about God’s justice today?

¹ Translations my own unless otherwise noted.

² See also Pss 19; 33; 37; 112; Prov 1:22–23; 2:12; 6:23.

To be sure, many readers judge the friends to be a bit callous in their inability to comfort Job. They cannot accept Job's assertion that he has done no wrong, and they refuse to hear his protests against creation's "disorders." But the friends, after all, are defending the Creator of the universe, and Job's accusations against God's justice are rather harsh (see, e.g., 9:2–24; 10:2–3; 12:12–25; 19:6–21). If we were honest, I imagine many of us would find Job's outcries against God offensive if we found ourselves in the friends' shoes.

And yet, Job repeatedly condemns the friends for their lack of wisdom. After Zophar advises Job to direct his heart toward God and remove any iniquity within him, Job responds with these words: "Indeed you are the people, and wisdom will die with you. . . . My eye has seen all this; my ear has heard and understood it. . . . But you whitewash with lies; all of you are worthless physicians. Would that you would keep silent, this would be your wisdom!" (12:2–3; 13:1–5). In response to Bildad's warning that disaster befalls the wicked, Job's accusation of his friends is harsher: "How long will you torment me and break me in pieces with words? These ten times you have cast reproach upon me. Are you not ashamed to wrong me?" (19:2–3; cf. 19:21–22, 28–29).

A number of Joban scholars argue that the book of Job serves as a "countervoice" to traditional wisdom. Job reveals a different perspective on the world and God's relationship to it than what one finds in books such as Proverbs, where goodness and wickedness are, more or less, linked to satisfactions and misfortune.³ The book of Job serves as a crucial reminder that the world is not always as ordered and perspicuous as humans might wish it to be. Job is a man of integrity *and yet* he experiences devastating misfortune (1:1, 22; 2:3, 10). The book of Job underscores that humans cannot measure others' integrity or piety based on their lot in life.

But there is more to Job's condemnation of his friends' "wisdom" than simply a matter of clashing worldviews, I believe. Job's exchanges with his friends suggest that he seeks more than intellectual assent from them. For Job, true wisdom extends beyond theoretical correctness.

1. WISE WORDS ARE "WEIGHTY"; THEY ARE "EMBODIED REALITIES."

In spite of their differences, both Job and his friends make similar assertions about the nature of "wise" and "foolish" words. Both share the expectation that wise words ought to have *substance*, while foolish words, or those that "fail," have *no weight*.

This assumption is evident in their critiques of one another's speeches, in which they describe each other's words as "windy" or lacking substance. After Eliphaz's council that "those who plow evil and sow mischief reap them" (4:8) and

³ See, e.g., Samuel E. Balentine, *Wisdom Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2018), 31, 44–47; William P. Brown, *Wisdom's Wonder: Character, Creation, and Crisis in the Bible's Wisdom Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 82–87; Edward L. Greenstein, *Job: A New Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), xxii, xxiv; Patricia Vesely, *Friendship and Virtue Ethics in the Book of Job* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 107–114.

his warning for Job to tone down his impassioned speech (5:2), Job responds with continued cries of anguish over the “terrors of God” that assault him (6:1–4; cf. 7:11–16). Bildad then assesses Job’s outcries as nothing but hot air: “How long will you speak these things? The words of your mouth are a mighty wind!” (8:2).

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Later, Job responds to Zophar’s advice that he must remove the iniquity within himself with the critique, “Your replies are proverbs of ashes; your responses are defenses of dust!” (13:12).

Eliphaz, in turn, warns Job in 15:2–3, “Should the wise answer with windy knowledge and fill themselves with the east wind? Should they argue in speech that is of no use or words that can do no good?” Job then responds, “I have heard many such things; comforters of trouble are you all. Have windy words no limit? What provokes you that you keep on talking?” (16:2–3).

Job’s assessment of his friends’ “counsel” as nothing but wind is reiterated in his final response to Zophar: “Why do you comfort me with empty breath (*hebel*)? Of your replies, only treachery remains!” (21:34). Job concludes that the friends’ efforts to comfort him amount to nothing but *hebel*. This Hebrew term is used to refer to something transitory or ethereal—a vapor or breath. It is the repeated refrain of Qohelet used to describe the fleeting and futile quality of life (cf. Eccl. 1:2, 14; 2:1). For Job, the friends’ counsel is *weightless*.

According to both Job and his friends, then, the quality of words is measured in terms of whether they are “weighty” or “windy.” Foolish words are “windy,” like a vapor that evaporates into thin air. Wise words are those that have substance. To be sure, there is an element of metaphorical language in such assessments. We use similar language in English to describe words that we judge as lacking value or as foolish (e.g., “His words are nothing but hot air”). But there is more to Job and his friends’ rendering of foolish words as “windy” than the use of metaphor.

In the Hebrew Bible, words often are depicted as physical entities. They can fill a space, enter our bodies, and reside in our hearts. Words can heal, purify, and strengthen persons or diminish, corrupt, and weaken them in very concrete ways (see, e.g., Ps 119:11, 105; Prov 4:4, 20–24; 10:11, 21; 11:9; 12:6; 18:8, 20; Job 32:18).⁴ The “physicality” of a word is evident in the Hebrew term itself, “*dābār*,” whose

⁴ See also Gregory Schmidt Goering, “Textured Speech: The Materiality of Words in Proverbs” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, San Diego, November 25, 2019); Yoram Hazony, *The Philosophy of the Hebrew Scriptures: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 25, 202–218.

meaning includes the concepts of “word,” “thing,” “event,” or “matter.”⁵ As Yoram Hazony argues, in the Hebrew Bible, a “*dābār*” is an “entity”:

The biblical *davar* is not really comparable to what in English is called a *word* at all. For when we speak of a word, we tend to think of something that is to a large extent defined by its vocalization: When one stops speaking, the word seems to come to an end. The Hebrew *davar*, on the other hand, is an understanding of things, of which the external vocalization that accompanies it is no more than a sign. And the understanding can endure long after the external sign is gone.⁶

In the Hebrew Bible, words affect the world in significant ways. They have a kind of power that we, in the modern world, might attribute only to otherwise tangible substances. This is most clearly expressed in Genesis 1: our inhabitable world comes into being not through scientific experiments or a grand cosmic battle but through God’s speech. The *words* of God have the power to turn chaos into creation, to bring life and light out of disarray and darkness. While the Hebrew Bible describes a few instances where God reveals Godself through tangible objects (such as a burning bush or a whirlwind), primarily God’s presence is made known through words, particularly those recorded in the Torah and spoken through the prophets.

For the biblical writers, the power of words may be used to effect both good and evil. The concepts of cursing and blessing rest on the assumption that words carry real weight and can transform the lives of persons in concrete ways (e.g., Gen 27:24–40; Num 22:6; Job 1:5; 3:8). While we may not hold the same assumptions today with respect to the power of curses and blessings, we know all too well that words have the power to generate distorted realities that can incite persons to enact real harm to individuals, communities, and nations.

In the Hebrew Bible, then, words are depicted as “entities” whose worth or value depends on their power to effect a transformation in others and the world around them. Wise words have substance, and they bring about a change that aligns with the purposes of wisdom. Words of wisdom have the power to generate life and flourishing for the cosmos and its inhabitants.

2. WISE WORDS “STAND FIRM” OVER THE COURSE OF TIME.

Contemporary readers often assess Job’s and the friends’ speeches based on their content, whether or not their words correctly correspond to some external “truth.” Job claims that God has a hand in his suffering without cause; the friends argue that God has every good cause. Job claims that he is innocent; the friends argue that he is guilty. The truth or value of their speeches is assessed on how accurately

⁵ Ludwig Köhler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 211.

⁶ Hazony, *Philosophy of the Hebrew Scriptures*, 214.

it represents a reality “out there.” Such an approach aligns with a “correspondence theory of truth” in which truth is thought to reside in the mind of the speaker. According to this view, a word is simply a tool that describes a mental image. The mental image is what is judged as true or false based on whether it accurately mirrors the world “out there,” but the words themselves carry no such weight.⁷

The concept of “truth” in the Hebrew Bible reflects a somewhat different perspective, however. The Hebrew terms often used for “truth,” *’emet* and *’ēmûnâ*, indicate something that is firm, permanent, or reliable.⁸ As Hazony explains, for something to be judged “true” in the Hebrew Bible, it must be proven trustworthy. A true word does not primarily refer to a certain mental image; rather, it is a word that holds up *over time*. “The truth or falsity of a *davar* is determined by whether it can be relied upon to be what it ought in the face of time and circumstance. . . . [A] reliable *davar* is true, and an unreliable *davar* is false.”⁹ Unlike false words, which must be adjusted to accommodate each changing circumstance, true words have the power to withstand the test of time.

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God’s critique of Job’s friends in the epilogue serves as a validation, at least in part, of Job’s words. God’s response to Eliphaz in 42:7, sometimes translated, “You have not spoken the truth about me,” or “You have not spoken truthfully about me,” uses the Hebrew root *kûn* to refer to the friends’ remarks. Similar to *’emet* or *’ēmûnâ*, the verb *kûn* indicates something that is lasting; it is variously defined as “to be steadfast,” “to stand firm,” or “to be established.”¹⁰ God’s remarks underscore the notion that wise words are those that are both “weighty” and lasting. It is as if God is saying to the friends, “You have not spoken words with substance, words that stand firm, as my servant Job has.”

The friends’ responses may sound right or even pious to readers, but as they are offered to Job, they do not bring about any positive changes in him. They do not achieve what Job’s friends set out to accomplish: Job’s repentance, restoration, and eventual comfort. Job judges his friends’ words as “windy” because they do not transform his relationship with God or his community. Their words, in fact, have the effect of a transient wind or a vapor that dissolves into nothing (21:34). Of course, the friends also make the same critique with respect to Job’s words: his outcries thus far have not brought him an audience with God, they have not

⁷ See, e.g., A. N. Prior, “Correspondence Theory of Truth,” in Paul Edwards, ed., *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 223–232; Hazony, *Philosophy of the Hebrew Scriptures*, 195.

⁸ Köhler and Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 62–64, 68–69.

⁹ Hazony, *Philosophy of the Hebrew Bible*, 213.

¹⁰ Köhler and Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 464–465.

demonstrated his innocence, and they have not led to his restoration. And yet, eventually, Job's outcries do accomplish these things. God answers Job through a powerful storm-theophany, and Job is eventually restored to his community (38:1–41:34 [Heb 41:26]; 42:7–17).¹¹

3. WISE WORDS ARE SPOKEN FROM A CONTEXT OF GENUINE RELATIONALITY.

The dialogue between Job and his friends, however, presses even further the question of what constitutes wise words. Not only are wise words those with substance, having the power to bring about a transformation that aligns with wisdom's purposes, and those that stand firm over the course of time; they are also generated through a specific *posture* with respect to the world and others. In the Hebrew Bible, words and wisdom are embodied entities. They must be lived out in genuine relationships with oneself, others, and God.

In Job's first response to his friends, after Eliphaz warns him that "vexation kills the fool" and "passion slays the simpleton" (5:2), Job continues to lament his situation: "If my anguish were weighed, my full calamity laid on the scales, it would be heavier than the sand of the sea . . . for the arrows of the Almighty are in me" (6:2–4). In the midst of his suffering, Job beseeches his friends to show him compassionate loyalty (*hesed*): "A friend owes *hesed* to one who fails, though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty" (6:14). He then complains that his friends are like a fickle wadi: they promise comfort as water promises relief for weary travelers in a desert, but like a riverbed that has run dry, their efforts come to nothing. Their words do not provide the water of relief that he seeks; instead, they leave him further languishing in thirst (6:15–21).

In Job 6:28, Job then pleads that his friends "turn and face me," continuing, "for I will not lie to your faces." The play on words with the verb "to face," *pānāh*, and the noun "face," *pānīm*, is evident in this verse and underscores Job's desire for the physical encounter involved in the friends' turning toward, or facing, him. Job's request that his friends "turn and face" him communicates his desire that his friends draw near to him—that they look him in the eyes, apprehend him through the senses, and allow his corporeal being to affect their perceptions of him. Words of wisdom and truth demand this kind of entering into the space of another. As Job underscores, if the friends would face him, the truth of the matter would be made clear (6:28; cf. 21:5).

Job's friends, unfortunately, keep their distance. In 6:21, Job condemns them for their fear, accusing them of "seeing a horror" and "taking fright." The "horror"

¹¹ It is worth noting that God's theophany is replete with words—the longest speech of God in the Hebrew Bible, leading biblical scholar William P. Brown to describe Job 38–41 not as a "theophany" but a "logophany." Brown, "Job and the Comforting Chaos," in *Seeking Wisdom's Depths and Torah's Heights: Essays in Honor of Samuel E. Balentine*, ed. Barry R. Huff and Patricia Vesely (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2020), 251. In this encounter, God's words are proven to be powerful, bringing about a drastic transformation in Job.

that Job is referring to is none other than himself. Rather than approaching him, the friends respond with fear, a movement of avoidance (cf. Job 19:13–19).¹² It may be that the friends fear that the truth of Job’s situation would disrupt their ordered understandings of the world, or perhaps they are too busy constructing careful arguments in response to Job’s vexing and impious behavior to draw close enough to apprehend his situation fully.

Job’s friends have put up a barrier around themselves on the other side of which sits Job in his suffering. They cannot apprehend his embodied truth—that he is someone who suffers needlessly. Such a reality would shatter the comfort they take in the notion that God would not allow such things. Their words thus come from a place of safety and distance. No wonder they cannot effect the changes that Job needs.

It is noteworthy that Job does not say in his initial response to his friends, “Admit that you are wrong and that I am right” or “that I am innocent.” He says, in effect, “Turn and look at me; come into my space.” Instead of being placed in one category or another of humanity in the friends’ ordered understanding of the world, Job asks to be treated like a person, rather than a proposition.¹³

A return to God’s response to Job’s friends in the epilogue may further elucidate the importance of this kind of posture of “facing” as essential to wisdom. As noted earlier, God’s response in 42:7 is sometimes translated, “I am angry with you and your two friends because you have not spoken truthfully *about* me as did my servant Job,” which would align with a correspondence theory of truth: the friends did not speak words that accurately describe some external reality. But the preposition “about” (*al*) is not used in this text; rather, the directional preposition “to” (*’el*) is used. The effect of God’s judgment on the friends thus might more accurately be rendered, “You have not spoken words that have substance *to* me; you have not entered into a genuine relation with me, as has my servant Job.” The friends may have been too busy constructing right dogma to face God also, as they neglected to do with Job. And, as pained and as angry as Job’s words are, he does address God directly, and he seeks an encounter with God throughout his speeches (see, e.g., 7:11–21; 10:1–22; 13:17–28; 14:1–22).

Job’s exchange with his friends and God’s response to the friends underscore the notion that wisdom is something that must be lived out through concrete experiences and genuine relationships with others. Drawing upon the ethics of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Emmanuel Levinas, I suggest that what Job is asking for is a basic stance whereby we are “incarnationally present” to another. Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas writes of an “ethics of the face,” arguing that our most fundamental moral obligation to another exists in a face-to-face encounter with that person. This basic stance undercuts all theory, doctrine, and philosophy. A relation of facing shatters all of our previously held conceptions about another,

¹² Cf. Vesely, *Friendship and Virtue Ethics*, 119–121.

¹³ Vesely, *Friendship and Virtue Ethics*, 125–130.

the world, ourselves, and God and makes us morally accountable to that Other.¹⁴ For Levinas, the presence of God in another brings us to this level of concrete relationality—it is the face of God in another that enables us to break free from our tendencies to “totalize” another and to reduce them to theories or dogma.¹⁵

According to Bonhoeffer, the historical, incarnate Christ enables us to encounter others in true community. Christ’s presence in us and others allows us to enter into the world in an immediate and concrete way, enabling us to overcome our fears and our tendency to live in abstractions. As he writes, being incarnationally present enables us to acknowledge the full humanity of another and, in fact, makes *us* more fully human.¹⁶

As Bonhoeffer underscores, Jesus Christ, the embodied *Word* and *Wisdom* of God, has entered into our lives in a concrete way. The power of this Word and Wisdom is transformational, accomplishing the purposes it set out to achieve. The incarnation is the true power of God’s Word, fulfilling God’s purposes for the restoration of the world.

Like Job’s seemingly impious outcries, Jesus’s words often angered the religious leaders of his day. He was criticized for stepping outside the boundaries of proper piety and was branded an imposter for claiming an intimate relationship with God. Yet Jesus’s words were “weighty” and powerful: they brought about transformation for those who were willing to draw near to him. For many, the words of Jesus were rivers of healing and life. This embodied Word demonstrated that persons take priority over positions, propositions, and even proper piety.

This incarnate Word may provide a model for those of us who wish to live in such a way whereby we are “incarnationally present” to others. In his own life, Jesus drew near to those who were suffering. He walked with, ate with, conversed with, and allowed himself to be affected by others. He did not let the suffering of others prevent him from entering into their places of pain. Rather, he suffered with and for us.¹⁷

Job’s exchanges with his friends and the model provided by Jesus Christ demonstrate that words of wisdom are those that have substance; they bring about the effects that they purport to achieve; they stand firm, proving the test of time. Words of wisdom are spoken from the context of a life that is lived in genuine relationality with others. They are offered by those who are incarnationally present in

¹⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 194–201, 293–294, 304–305. Cf. Richard Cohen, ed., *Face to Face with Levinas* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 23.

¹⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 194–201, 293–294, 304–305; Cohen, *Face to Face with Levinas*.

¹⁶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, trans. Neville Horton Smith (New York: Touchstone, 1955), 72; *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church*, ed. Clifford J. Green, trans. Reinhard Krauss and Nancy Lukens (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 134–136, 157–158, 178–184; Clifford J. Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 53, 63–64, 182–183, 273.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans. R. H. Fuller (New York: Touchstone, 2018), 237–270, 298–304. For an insightful comparison of Levinas’s and Bonhoeffer’s ethics, see Andrew Root, “Practical Theology as Social Ethical Action in Christian Ministry: Implications from Emmanuel Levinas and Dietrich Bonhoeffer,” *International Journal of Practical Theology* 10, no. 1 (2006): 53–75.

and to the world, by those who are not afraid to step into the spaces of others' suffering and to "face" them, even if that means setting aside previously held conceptions about the world and God. This does not imply that the content of one's words is unimportant but that words of true wisdom cannot be separated from a life that is lived *in* wisdom and *in relation to* Wisdom.

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The question of what this means in today's context, where face-to-face encounters and sharing in the lives of one another are restricted, remains a difficult one. I imagine that the range of possible answers cannot be captured on paper—what is proven to be valuable must stand the test of real experiences and relationships. I offer a few thoughts here simply to initiate the conversation.

Job's exchanges with his friends suggest that we may not be called to give an "answer" to the problem of suffering. We often (or usually) do not have the answers to why persons are experiencing difficulties in life. I am not arguing that what we say is irrelevant but that our words cannot be separated from our person—who we are. Being "incarnationally present" involves an openness to those around us, and it takes a measure of vulnerability—a willingness to face another for whom we might not have answers. This may require us to overcome our own fears and expectations with respect to others, ourselves, or the world around us.

Job's pleas to his friends also suggest that entering into the space of another begins with listening and learning from others, particularly those who suffer. Our ability to comfort others with wisdom involves hearing their stories and giving them a place to speak and lament. Our responses must be formed in true dialogue. And sometimes the best response is silence—not a distanced silence, but an engaged silence.

As the Hebrew Bible underscores, wisdom is an embodied reality. It is something that must be lived out day to day. In a world where "truth" seems up for grabs, the book of Job encourages us to put our trust in words that stand firm over the course of time and that are spoken by those who reflect a life lived in wisdom. Wisdom is not something that we can look up in a reference book and apply to a certain situation. Our ability both to respond in wisdom and to receive wisdom involves the discipline of cultivating wisdom over the course of our entire lives. For Christians, this means patterning our lives after the embodied Wisdom of God, Jesus Christ. The cultivation of wisdom involves entering into genuine relationship with others as Christ did and being willing to be affected by others' experiences. To be "incarnationally present" may mean mourning with those who have

lost family and friends, jobs and economic stability, or health and mobility. It may mean mourning with and for those who suffer the injustices that this pandemic more clearly unmasks with respect to race and class. By engaging in the lives of health care workers, first responders, grocery clerks, and laborers; individuals who have lost parents, siblings, children, or friends; those who have been denied health care or who are struggling to put food on the table; and others, we may begin to pattern our lives after Christ. It is out of those experiences that wisdom speaks.

In this time of uncertainty, may we be encouraged that the Wisdom from God is here beside us, walking with us into unknown and unfamiliar terrain, and entering with us into our deep places of pain. This Wisdom of God is powerful and transformative; it will accomplish the purposes it sets out to achieve; and it calls us to grow in wisdom as we courageously enter into the lives of others in order to participate in God's purposes of healing for this world. ☩

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