



SERMON RECAP

JUNE 7, 2026

Second Sunday after Pentecost

The Fear of the LORD

Proverbs 3:1-12, Ecc. 11:4-10



"Where the Wild Things Are" was my favorite book growing up, and it was one of my favorite books to read to my own children. I considered not including it in this series because I've talked about it before. In fact, I preached on Maurice Sendak's classic book a little over two years ago - on May 26, 2024 during a series on Wesleyan Theology. I used it as my prime example of grace. It is a story about a young child who gets in trouble for misbehaving. After being sent to his room without supper, he sulks. Then his imagination lights up.

Max goes on a wild adventure. He goes to the place where his angry mother cannot reach him. He goes to where the wild things are, and finds himself to be the most wild thing of all. It is all that he dreamed of. When he put that wolf suit on and made mischief of one kind, and another, he couldn't have imagined that he would end up as the King of the wild things.

There was one problem however, he was lonely. He was hungry. And suddenly, he could smell good things to eat. The wisdom of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes this week offers an interesting contrast. In Proverbs, one of the most important parts of wisdom is humility and teachability. A sure sign of a wise person is the desire to learn. Proverbs 3:5-7 tells us **"Trust in the LORD with all your heart; don't rely on your own intelligence. Know him in all your paths, and he will keep our ways straight. Don't consider yourself wise. Fear the LORD and turn away from evil."**

These feel like important words for Max to hear. He has chosen his own path. He chose a path of mischief. He chose to be in opposition to his Mother. He chose to get in a boat and sail away for over a year. And then when he found the wild things, he became their king. He trusted in his own heart. He ignored God on his path. He was considered the greatest and was made king.

And he was empty. This is a story that holds up the Proverbial wisdom. When Max sat there smelling good things to eat he longed for something more fulfilling than being king of the wild things. Wisdom was calling him.

When Max decided to go home, we find a real truth

in the wild things' reactions as well. I've learned from many people in recovery that the hardest part of getting clean is not the getting. It is the staying. It is common for someone to get clean, only to be pulled back down destructive paths from people from their past. Co-dependent relationships scream "Oh please don't go, we'll eat you up, we love you so." But Max said "No." Not everyone is able to.

Of course, the amazing grace of the story is that when he reaches home he finds that his supper is waiting for him. There is another piece to this worth exploring. Ecclesiastes 11:9 challenges the Proverbial wisdom: **"Rejoice young person, while you are young! Your heart should make you happy in your prime! Follow your heart's inclinations."**

Herein lies the complicated and messy reality of life and wisdom. Here is the challenge that we still need to name. The wild rumpus isn't always evil. Where the wild things are the place where life often happens. The adventures in our life are worth having.

The wisdom of Max is not to hang up your wolf suit forever. The wisdom is finding the joy of living, the excitement of adventure, and the wonder of imagination, while not abandoning wisdom altogether. The good news is that while we wander and explore, our supper will still be waiting.

This is not a free pass to do whatever we want only to come back with no consequences. Max was punished. He did feel remorse, but he was welcomed back when he came home. The wisdom of life is finding the place where the wild things may be kept in control. Young people rejoice in your adventure, but just don't stray so far that you can't still smell good things to eat.

Fearing the LORD does not mean that we have to be paralyzed from fear so much that we never try anything or experience anything new. The wisdom of fear is that it keeps us grounded. Feeling a little fear is a good thing - it reminds us that we are living. And God's grace keeps the aroma of good things always beckoning is home. And it is still hot.

NEXT WEEK:

The Wisdom of Companionship, "Corduroy", by Don Freeman