

1 Corinthians 1:18-25 3L Sermon 2024

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. 19In fact, it is written:

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;
the intelligence of the intelligent I will bring to nothing.

20Where is the wise man? Where is the expert in the Jewish law? Where is the probing thinker of the present age? Has God not shown that the wisdom of this world is foolish? 21Indeed, since the world through its wisdom did not know God, God in his wisdom decided to save those who believe, through the foolishness of the preached message. 22Yes, Jews ask for signs, Greeks desire wisdom, 23but we preach Christ crucified—which is offensive to Jews and foolishness to Greeks, 24but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25We preach Christ crucified, because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

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**The Church is:
Not people for a place
But a place for people**

How smart are we? Normally 2/3rds of a population should score between what on an I.Q? (low 85 – high 115). Jesus knows more, he knows the most. 1 Corinthians talks about wisdom and intelligence. (ok, I'm done) -just kidding.

Jesus knows us better than we know ourselves. Jesus is God.

God says in proverbs, **“the fool says in his heart there is no God.”**

This sinful world says, “you are fools to believe in Jesus.”

They can call me a fool – God calls me loved. The foolishness of God. The wisdom of man. Martin Luther understood how much faith struggles to understand: so he gave an example of a cow.

Martin Luther's example inspired me to share this, not to insult your intelligence because Luther does.

Old McDonald had a farm. And on that farm he had a cow.

One day Old McDonald built a new gate for his cow pen.

Old McDonald's cow stared at the new gate.

Dare we compare the foolishness of a farmer to the wisdom of his cow? Is the wisdom of the cow greater than the foolishness of his farmer?

Luther compares a sinful human to a holy God in honest terms. Today's reading says, **“we preach Christ crucified.... offensive to Jews and foolishness to Greeks.”** Luther says that when people try to look at all the works of God is like a cow staring at a new gate. The cow doesn't get it... neither do we.

“In fact it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will bring to nothing.” The cow doesn't “get” the gate – I don't “get” the mind of God. Neither should be surprising.

God's Word is our Great Heritage but that doesn't mean that we “get it” we believe. God's Word is the foundation of his church on earth. Who God is, what God does, and why; may never be understood as many think of Jesus as foolish and weak. Yet, God's Word is the foundation of his church on earth and today we take another look at the worth of worship. Faith doesn't ‘get it’ – faith believes.

The Church is Christ Jesus.

The Church is a place of worship.

Part of the purpose of worship is to preach Christ crucified. Souls who are sinners need the message of the cross. Jesus shows how important church needs to be in the Gospel by clearing the clutter out. People are not for the church in a way to make money, or get something, manipulation or otherwise. The church is for people. We [the church] preach the cross so people believe in the saving work and teaching of Jesus. Through the foolishness of preaching God causes faith to be given.

God in his wisdom chose to reveal his will, his purpose, his saving us in the message of the cross on which Christ Jesus was crucified. God cares so much about his people that he chose you to be here at this place, at this time, at this very moment listening to this very sermon. The worth of worship is meant to serve God's people who are made by him, called by him, elected by him. The worth of worship carries out God's will when we who listen to preaching Christ crucified we are saved by the power of God, the wisdom of God. What God has chosen looks so weak to this world that considers itself smarter. The worth of worship carries out God's command to preach the Gospel.

Words on paper, wine in a cup, bread in a hand and water poured. These things are called “the weakness of God” because this world does not understand God nor can it. Christ Jesus is not just called the power of God and the wisdom of God – he is all of those things all at once. Jesus is the power of God hidden in his humble ministry. Jesus is the wisdom of God who lovingly came to teach and preach. Jesus is God.

God commands that we preach Christ crucified. The cross may seem foolish to those who do not believe – **yet**. Preaching and teaching the word of God is the main duty of the church. The church is for the people, not people for the church. How can that be? People are souls for whom God has already paid the ultimate price. People are souls for whom God in his wisdom has chosen what the world considers ‘foolish’ to their shame and blame. Jesus proves in John 2: that the temple/church is for people, not people for the temple/church.

The power of God is Christ. Christ Jesus came to teach and save by his words and through his cross. God teaches that we should fear, love and trust in him. Realizing that we don’t do that = we need to be saved by Christ through his cross. God chose the foolish things of this world to shame the wise. God chose water, bread, wine and words to bring his saving gift of faith when we preach Christ crucified. God chose human believers to share his everlasting truth that saves them and as we preach Christ crucified reaches out God’s saving message to more.

The wisdom of God is Christ. He is the only way to our heavenly Father. God in his wisdom teaches that we should fear, love and trust in him. Because we don’t we need to be saved by Christ through his cross. God’s wisdom chose preaching and teaching to be the ways that his truth is shared.

God says all who believe are going to heaven because of Christ crucified and risen. But they say, “Going to heaven is too easy.” They say, “Trusting in Jesus is too easy.” They say, “Forgiveness is too easy so that permission is given to continue to sin.” What God says matters most. God says that Christ Jesus is the power of God and the wisdom of God. God has given worship as a blessing through which we preach Christ crucified.

The smartest of the smart cannot compete with God. The brightest of the bright cannot hold a candle to God’s glory. The strongest of the strong is still weak compared to the weakness of God. God is so much more than any of us that he chose to place faith into our hearts through His Word and Sacraments.

When it comes to the worth of worship we can think of it in spiritual values. What is so expensive that it cost God? What is so loved that God had to do it all himself? Why did Jesus seem to fly off the handle in his zeal in John 2? Our forgiveness cost God so much that he gave himself, he took matters into his own hands, he gives worship to believers as a blessing not so that people can be for the church but so that the church can be for people. The Holy Christian Church is souls who gather over an open Bible publicly and privately. The Communion of saints are souls who care about each other enough to regularly meet with them to encourage and be encouraged.

The church is given by God to be a blessing – not to him ... but to you. God doesn’t need our voices, our standing, our speaking in unison, our time – we need his! The Holy Spirit works through God’s Word and Sacraments to give faith and strengthen faith. So the less we gather over an open bible the less our faith can be. The more we gather over an open bible the more our faith can be.

This place is for people. That’s the **worth of worship** as God has done what we need, we are thankful with our needs fulfilled by him. We are loving because first God is loving. We are patient with each other because first God is patient with us. We are generous because God was first generous in his gift of eternal life. We gather together to be encouraged, to learn again about **the worth of worship** and to be in a place for all people.

[of worship] [of worship]

The church is not people for a place but church is a place for people.

One more thing about the power of God and wisdom of God.

A believer once asked me, ‘why does the Athanasian Creed say, rational soul’ when referring to Jesus. [30] Rational means reasonable or thinking. God took on human flesh with everything attached to it. So Jesus had a soul when before he was more than that as God. Jesus doing what he did and coming down to save people how he did can seem like foolishness to people who are perishing (18). Only faith can begin to understand **that God loves us not how God loves us**. The cross of Jesus Christ is where his rational soul with his human flesh suffered for the sins of the whole world. I can’t understand how or why – I can only understand that He already did everything to save you and me. We have been saved by God’s power not yours or mine, God’s wisdom, not yours or mine.

Faith trusts without measure. Faith trusts without experience. Faith trusts without fully knowing, understanding and grasping something we can’t fully grasp this side of the grave. Faith is given by God’s foolishness in preaching Christ crucified. Faith is strengthened with a group of believers who learn together that God’s foolishness and weakness is still a universe far above and beyond anything a mere mortal human can do or think. Faith trusts our God who says that believers are saved **“through the foolishness of the preached message.”** (21)

Faith trusts something we don’t understand: Christ crucified. Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God as God himself. Faith trusts that God in his wisdom sent his only-begotten Son to die for us. God in his wisdom raised that Son back to life on Easter. God in his wisdom causes death in sin people to come back to his body – this church – and be reminded that Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. We don’t “get” Jesus... we believe.

Believers also trust that God has even turned the curse of death, by the death of his Son, into a blessing by which believers are taken into heaven. We preach Christ crucified – through which God works to call souls to faith.

We souls are saved by the cross of Jesus Christ which we preach. We souls are the church.

Church is not people for a place but a place for people – for souls whom God loves dearly and cares eternally. Believers don’t need to “get it” believers -believe. **Faith is God’s gift given: We preach Christ crucified.**

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Children’s : wooden book holder cross

Jesus said in the Gospel; “tear down this temple”

- his body
- on the cross
- torn down into death
- raise up 3 days to life.

God is Jesus who saved us by his cross. Preaching the cross of Christ crucified – God gives and strengthens faith.