

SERMON: THE CROSS-WISE FOLLY

1ST Corinthians 1:18

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolish; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

1ST Corinthians 2:2

For I am determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

Introduction

Ancient monuments, erected to commemorate a historic event or the virtues of a person who had departed this life, frequently began with the Latin words, "*Sto viator.*" The English equivalent for the phrase is "Stop, O visitor!" It was an appeal addressed to a traveler to halt and consider what it was or who it was the monument commemorated. We are traveling through life during these difficult and uncertain times. We all watch the news and the events can easily saturate our thinking and our emotions. As we celebrate communion today, let us stop at the cross of Calvary and ponder, just for a little while, the significance of the saving work of Christ.

Throughout his writings, Paul made it clear that he was not the best speaker, but he had the best message. It was the gospel, the story of the earthly sojourn of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Paul made it clear the gospel message sounded totally irrational or foolish to pious Jews and to cultured Greeks. To the saved, it makes perfect sense. Some theologians like to use an oxymoron and call it "wise folly." Others turn it around and call it "foolish wisdom." Let's proceed with our outline.

Exposition

1. The Two Kinds Of Crosses

A. The Cross of Salvation

**Jesus Bore This Cross-Once And For All.
(That's How Much He Loves Us.)**

B. The Cross of Service

**We Must Bear This Cross Daily.
(That's How Much We Must Love Others.)**

2. Why It Seems Foolish to the Lost

A. Seems Too Simple - Just Believe.

(Simple Is Not Always Easy.)

B. It Implies Innocent Suffering.

(It Makes Sense for The Guilty To Suffer.)

(It Doesn't Make Sense For The Innocent To Suffer.)

C. A Crucified King Seems Irrational.

(Earthly Kings Crucify Others - They Don't Get Crucified.)

(A King Who Voluntarily Limits His Power is Questionable.)

3. Why It Is Wise to the Saved

A. It Demonstrates the Magnificent Love of God.

B. It is the Only Means of Salvation.

C. It Gives Us Power to Live An Abundant, Joyful Life.

Closing Statements

God's power, as revealed in the provision which He made for sinners in the death and the resurrection of His Son, is the uttermost power, and His salvation is the uttermost salvation. Remember the cross is the preliminary to the empty tomb. The two events are inseparable. The uttermost power of God manifested in both of these events is available to everyone who will accept it. Once a person experiences the power of the cross he will not only know the cross is not foolish, but will not be ashamed of it. He will be proud of it (Romans 1:16). Give God glory! Give God all the glory!

Related Scriptures

1st Corinthians 1:1-31; 1st Corinthians 2:1-16

End Note

1. I am almost hesitant to bring this up in fear I will trivialize the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior. I must admit, I do think about this little tidbit of history when I read this Scripture. When the Europeans first came to Australia, they noticed something very peculiar about many of the native species. Many times the animal, when it came near its nest or cave, would turn around and back into its home. Sometimes after taking a backward stance, the animal would not even enter its home. The Europeans thought it

did not make sense; it would give any predator an added advantage. They combined several words and coined the term “dingbat” to refer to these animals. We all know what that term means. Thanks to Charles Darwin, with whom I disagree a lot, made sense of this foolish behavior. The native animals turned around to make sure no predator was in pursuit. This was especially true if the animal was a mother still nurturing her young. If a predator was detected, through one of the five senses, she would take a detour and not go home in fear of exposing her babies to danger. Dingbats are not foolish; in fact they are pretty smart. I said all of that to say all this: Sometimes we Christians look foolish to the world, but upon closer analysis, what we do makes perfect sense to those who are spiritual. It makes sense to love your enemies. It does make sense to pay your tithe. It does make sense not to seek revenge. Thank God for the foolishness of the gospel of peace and power.

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