



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Third Sunday in Lent (B) – 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Focus: *God's Wisdom*

word of life

“For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.” 1 Corinthians 1:25 (NRSV)

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

The Apostle Paul is not going to tolerate foolishness among followers of Jesus. Nor is he going to be swayed by those who cannot comprehend a cross being used as an instrument of God’s grace. This eloquent passage from Paul’s letter to the Corinthians contrasts and compares God’s wisdom and foolishness with human wisdom and foolishness. There is no contest. Even God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom.

1. *Define foolishness.*
2. *Give examples of human foolishness.*

In this passage, Paul focuses on the theology of the cross. He acknowledges that the message of the cross seems like foolishness to many. As Jesus is crucified outside Jerusalem, it seems God has disappeared and is defeated. Followers of Jesus walk away from the crucifixion of Jesus crushed. Their hopes are shattered. Their dreams are destroyed. “Wise” people are confused.

3. *Why did God not rescue Jesus from the pain of the cross?*
4. *What kind of God allows someone like Jesus to die on a cross?*
5. *Some might ask, “Who wants to follow a god so limited in power and strength?” How might you respond?*

But crucifixion is not the end of the story for Jesus. God turns the world upside down and defeats death. Only God could conceive such a plan: to send Jesus into the world, to dwell among humanity, to suffer death on the cross, and to defeat the power of death. Christ died. Christ rose. Only God could imagine resurrection and bring that hope into reality.

6. *What part of this story (if any) causes you to marvel at God’s ways?*
7. *Might there have been another way to reach humanity other than the cross? Explain your answer.*

If the death of Jesus is the end of the story, then there is nothing to preach. But the power of God is stronger than the humiliation of the cross and the finality of death. Those “wise” people who walked away defeated were foolish to rule out God’s power and ability to defeat death itself.

Even after Jesus rose from the dead, some people request another sign from God. But Paul is satisfied. God’s power has been revealed in Christ. Paul needs no more signs to prove God’s love or wisdom.

8. *Have you seen and heard enough to believe in Christ? Explain your answer.*
9. *What sign would be more convincing to you?*

“For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.” (1 Corinthians 1:25 NRSV)

10. *How does that make you feel to know God’s foolishness is wiser than your wisdom?*
11. *Contrast God’s weakness and human strength.*

word *among us*

Have you ever seen a giraffe run with its skinny legs and tall neck? Talk about awkward! What was God thinking? And what about mosquitoes? Did God really need mosquitoes in the food chain? Or if God needed them, maybe humans could have been created with some natural repellent from mosquitoes. Is that too much to ask? God seems to have gotten a chuckle out of skunks. Now that's a creative idea. Fortunately, God did not create more animals with the capacity to stink up a place by simply lifting its tail.

Some might put giraffes, mosquitoes, and skunks on a short list of God's foolishness.

1. *What parts of creation might you add to a list of God's foolishness?*
2. *What are other examples of God's foolishness?*

And yet, God's foolishness exceeds our human wisdom. That certainly takes the pressure off you and me. As wise as we might become in this life, we cannot outwit God. Hopefully that is a relief.

If God chooses to send Jesus Christ to dwell among us, so be it. If God chooses to permit the worst of humanity to be thrown at Jesus Christ, so be it. If God chooses to defeat death, so be it. If God chooses to extend grace and love to each of us, so be it. Thanks be to God!

We are the recipients of God's love as shown not just in the sacrifice of Jesus, but in the power of resurrection. We are the recipients of God who goes to extreme measures to reach us.

3. *What does the message of the cross mean to you?*
4. *What aspects of the cross are foolish or wise to you?*

faith practice *in daily life*

Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed.

Paul is a preacher! He preaches Christ crucified. It does not matter if others think his words are foolishness. He trusts in God's wisdom, not in the words (and foolishness) of humans. He needs no more proof or signs. Paul is content in the love shown to him through the death of Jesus on the cross. He answers the call to proclaim the good news of God in Christ.

Each of us in life has the opportunity to reflect on the wisdom and foolishness of the world. We seek wisdom greater than our greatest wisdom. Hopefully, we hear the story of the crucifixion and hear God at work. Death is not the final word. God's power is greater than that.

5. *Who in your life needs to hear of God's wisdom and love?*
6. *What prevents you from sharing the good news of God in Christ?*
7. *Might any of those reasons be described as foolishness? How so?*

Prayer

O Wise one, fill us with your wisdom. Do not let our foolish arrogance and pride crowd out your wise word to us. Amen

last word

Begin each day in prayer,
asking for God's wisdom
to serve as your guide.

Daily Faith Practices

Written by John and Robin McCullough-Bade

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