
The sermon text for today is based on the
Second Reading, 1 Corinthians Chapter 1, verses 18 to 31.
Provided by The Lutheran Church of Australia

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.

I wonder how many times you have felt there is foolishness in the cross of Jesus or in other words the whole story of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

How many times have you prayed and asked something of this almighty powerful God and yet been left waiting not seeing anything change at all? Is it easier to start listening to the voices of the world who seem to be wise and have it all together? Those people who are influencers who share their opinions on just about anything and seem to be wise – yet why then is there so much foolishness in our world. Surely if there seem to be so many wise people giving advice wouldn't our world see a diminishing of the foolish ways and things?

This message we follow and believe in is powerful, yet the world in its ways continues to turn away from God. So the message that has power to save eternally, to save now and forever is simply too many in the world another story and even worse total foolishness for they are perishing.

Saint Paul writes for it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”

Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

So we live in a world where we see in faith things all upside down. It doesn't make sense does it? We all want to be wise about things – to be right and in this our human hearts sin when we make our point, the things that we must prove to someone in an argument that I am right and the other person well is clearly not as wise. We might want to be secure, we are often told we need to have a certain amount of money or we won't be satisfied. Perhaps as we hear this or ponder life that there is a certain pride that comes with building wealth and status. After all wouldn't we all want something named in honour of our excellence influencing others? Yet we are called to follow Jesus this man, fully human and fully God to the cross and into the world where often we feel overwhelmed at the injustices and hurt and sadness and brokenness we see and let's be honest often carry and feel ourselves.

Saint Paul continues, for since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

The so called worldly wisdom then blinds people from the truth. The worldly wisdom we see and hear about on the news can never point to God. The world demands power, status and wealth. Surely an almighty, all knowing and all powerful God wouldn't be seen among those who are sick or poor or struggling with mental health concerns. Surely God must bring prosperity and power and happiness through this?

Yet God uses the exact things that the world sees and foolish for His purpose. And yet people want more. They want again to see or want God to be one of success for them.

Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. So many want proof or to attain a knowledge of God to be close. They then struggle that God could come to the weak, the lonely, those whom society seems to have no use for anymore. If God was God then surely He would work through the strong, the young and vibrant, the wealthy, those whom are learned.

We also are tempted often to think like the world. That it should be easier to be a Christian because of God. Or God has no use for me as I am not like those who seem to fit the mould.

But to those Saint Paul encourages whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

You do not seek God in the foolish blindness of the world. Rather you seek God in His word and He has called you.

Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.

The wonderful thing about our call to follow Jesus to be Christ follows, Christians is that we cannot boast about our contribution or status.

Once there was a man who struggled with the story of the thief on the cross who lived how he wanted to by the way of his own desires and then in the last hours of his life Jesus promises eternity for him. This man felt ripped off as he felt he had been trying to live a good life and it simply wasn't fair that someone should go to heaven so easily.

We have eternal life as easily. Jesus remember me, be with me, forgive me, I believe in you. You see we can't contribute to our salvation at all no matter how good a life we live. We live a life by God's grace, love, mercy and forgiveness and by faith. Our life lived is lived in an ongoing changing way – Jesus continues to grow in us and then we grow in Him. Our actions change, our need to be right changes, our attitude toward power and status changes

as we see in faith that the power lies in God's gift Jesus and what He won for us on the cross.

You know we have all been blessed with spiritual gifts, in fact with so many gifts we don't even use for the work of our Lord. Instead we get slack and look to others and marvel at the gifts they have. We then elevate that and then we can take a back seat. No sisters and brothers, you are never too old or young or in between, it is not too hot or cold or rainy to serve the Lord by serving or sharing God's love with others. You are not too tired to give thanks or pray for your neighbour. You have more than enough gifts to do God's work. You are not too broken or unlearned to share Jesus love. You are not too busy to hear how another person has come to faith or is asking about it for God will give you the words and the patience to listen, then He will give you the joy as you see in that other person the power of the cross in changing their life.

We can't ever boast about our salvation from our effort or planning or our status. Simply because our efforts to know God and be saved are foolish rather the message the very word Jesus saves us. Saint Paul finishes

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.

So go out boasting sisters and brothers. Boast that it is the Lord Jesus who has given you purpose, gifts to use until you draw your final breath, gifts to use for the work of God in Jesus. Amen.