

Lenten Devotional February 26, 2023

Scripture

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

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

*“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”*

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, 23 but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

26 Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, 29 so that no one might boast in the presence of God. 30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Devotional

The Rev. Brett M. Dinger '09

As I read through the various texts for today, I found myself drawn to Paul's invitation to “consider your own call” (v 26). So I did just that. I enjoyed reliving old memories of the surprising and unlikely ways God called me into a life of discipleship and ministry. I recalled conversations with unusual characters—farmers and janitors among them—who named the Holy Spirit's work in me. I remembered encounters with strangers who saw something in me that I could not see in myself. And I recounted times in college when fellow students would randomly knock on my door to ask for spiritual advice. Looking back, I can testify to the truth of the Lord's words in Isaiah 55: 8, where we read that the Lord's thoughts are not *our* thoughts, nor are the Lord's ways *our* ways. God was clearly writing a story that only God could write!

I don't know if Paul was thinking about Isaiah 55:8 when he penned 1 Corinthians 1, but he clearly understood that God's ways in this world sometimes look foolish. Only God would choose to take on human flesh to birth a new kingdom. Only God would count fishermen and tax collectors and sinners as worthy messengers of good news. And only God would defeat the darkness of death through the cross of Christ! Take heart, friends. What may look absurd and foolish in your life may very well be the redeeming and restoring work of a loving God.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for authoring the story of my life. Grow my trust in you when I encounter surprising twists and turns along the way. Remind me that your thoughts and ways are far better than my own. Amen.