

2—The Irony of the Cross

3/12/23

INTRO:

I. → 1 Corinthians 1:17-25

*For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the **cross** of Christ be **emptied of its power**. 18 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**.*

→ 19 For it is written:

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

→ 20 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**? 21 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**.

→ 22 Jews demand **signs** and Greeks look for **wisdom**, 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a **stumbling block** to Jews and **foolishness** to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the **power of God** and the **wisdom of God**.

→ 25 For the **foolishness of God** is wiser than **human wisdom**, and the **weakness of God** is stronger than **human strength**.

II. MADONNA DELLA PIETÀ—MICHELANGELO (1499)

BODY:

I. A Scandalous Sign

*22 Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a **stumbling block** to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.*

- A. A Messiah who dies contradicted every Jewish expectation.
- 1) **Luke 23:35**
The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One."
 - 2) **THE MESSIAH WAS TO SAVE THE NATION OF ISRAEL**
- B. No one standing at the cross understood its meaning.
- 1) **1 Corinthians 2:7-8**
*No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age **understood it**, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*
 - 2) **ANointed AT BAPTISM—CROWNED ON THE CROSS**
 - a) Put a scarlet robe on Him
 - b) Put a crown of thorns on His head
 - c) Put a staff I His right hand
 - d) Knelt in front of Him and mocked Him
 - e) They hailed Him the "King of the Jews"
 - f) They took Him out and crucified Him

II. A Foolish Wisdom

21 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**.

- A. Greeks reasoned that God is incapable of suffering.
- 1) Grk (*sophós*) sophist, philosophy—love of wisdom
Perfect, Eternal, Immutable, and Impassible
 - 2) **1 Corinthians 3:19-20**
For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."

3) **ST. ANSELM'S ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT**

"I do not endeavor, O Lord, to penetrate your sublimity, for in no wise do I compare my understanding with that; but I long to understand in some degree your truth, which my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand. For this also I believe, that unless I believed, I should not understand."

B. To find God our reason must go beyond that of the world.

1) **1 Corinthians 2:13**

This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

2) **EINSTEIN—WHAT IS TIME?**

III. A Victorious Weakness

25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

A. Jesus took the symbol of weakness and turned it into victory.

1) Crucifixion was reserved for slaves

Roman society was built around power and status

The cross was the epitome of weakness

2) **1 Corinthians 1:27-29**

*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** . . . so that no one may boast before him.*

3) **WILD BABIES**

4) **PASTORS' DAUGHTER CHARLIE**

B. It is only in God's power that we will win the battle.

1) **2 Corinthians 13:4**

*He was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by **God's power**. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by **God's power** we will live with him.*

2) **JESUS LOVES ME**

OTHER SCRIPTURES:

Isaiah 40:28

Do you not know?

Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can fathom.

Matthew 12:39-40

He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Colossians 1:22

But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.

Revelation 5:6

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.