

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."^[c] 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. I Corinthians 1:18-23 NIV

I found myself in a bit of a trap at my wife's office Christmas party some years back. We were playing a trivia game, and I was doing pretty good. People were glad to have me at their table. Finally a question a question came to our table about the number of "thys" in the King James Version of the Lord's Prayer. Not sure, I said it out loud, and thought there were three. Yet it seemed too simple there must be a trick to it, so I thought I would say four. There are three. My vanity wanted to look good so much that I ignored the simple and obvious for the complex.

Imagine my embarrassment, since they knew that I was a pastor. It will be hard to live that one down.

Al Pacing, playing the Devil in the "Devil's Advocate" smiles broadly in the process of Tempting someone saying "Vanity....it's one of my favorite sins".

It was that kind of a trap that the church in Corinth was falling into. It was a city that took great pride in its Greek philosophical and rhetorical tradition. To be part of the "in crowd" at Corinth was to dabble in such things. Along those lines was to attach one to those who had impressive resumes and charisma in speaking to the faithful at Corinth .The more impressive the speaker, the more in line with Greek philosophy and culture, t

There was one problem however. All of this tended to obscure why they came together in the first place, and what was really life giving for their faith. That is why Paul brings it down to what really saved them, the cross of Christ. The logic of the cross cuts across any human logic or pride. It is not the first thing any rational human being with look to for a spiritual path.

If you're looking for a sign for a spiritual path the cross is scandal. It was an instrument of death and torture for vile criminals. What kind of logical sign is that? If you're looking for an intellectual experience of God, the cross is base, crude, and disgusting.

Yet it is in that cross the Corinthians having found life, God, and salvation. This is how they have experienced the power of God. It is also by this power that God has the victory over the world.

It is the cross that we should be drawn to each time we are in worship because it draws us to the deep love of God. It is the place where all of us approach it together, because no one is innocent before the cross.

The cross makes us needy for God

Where are you searching for your "spiritual life" today? ? If you come to worship here at St. James we partake of the body and blood of Christ in Holy Communion on a weekly basis. The cross is at the center of our Eucharistic celebration. Someone once said: "At the old rugged cross we see humankind at their worst and God at his best"

May our need for a life-giving faith be renewed and strengthened through the foolishness of the cross and experience Christ the power of God and Wisdom of God.

Pr. John Van Haneghan