

# ***Foolishness Of God***

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

March 4, 2018

First United Methodist Church, Lindstrom

(This is a manuscript prepared for sermon delivery and may not represent actual words spoken.)

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

So last week mention was made of how some things God asked people to do seemed unreasonable...almost laughable. Our text for today mentions the foolishness of God. Let's consider that.

A brief bit of background here. The seventeenth chapter of Acts records an incident in Athens involving Paul. Paul was a bit distressed by all the idols he saw in that city. Paul did a little preaching. Some of the local philosophers disputed with Paul. We are told that the people of Athens, as well as foreigners who lived there had not many better things to do than to talk about all the latest ideas. They invited Paul to talk with them further about these strange ideas he had.

Paul spoke at a meeting of the Areopagus. A think tank. These were people who thought deep thoughts. Paul talked to them about God. He also talked a little philosophy with them. Paul, after all, was no slouch in the intelligence department. He even quoted from their poets. So Paul got into a bit of a heady discussion with them. A few became believers, but many of them wanted to further discuss Paul's so-called "strange" ideas.

Paul went from Athens to Corinth. He told the Corinthians that while he was with them, he determined to preach nothing but Jesus. Enough of that philosophy and deep thinking stuff. It was all about Jesus. As for humanity's so-called wisdom? Well, God's foolishness is wiser than our wisdom anyway.

Anyway, that church in Corinth was kind of in a mess. The city itself was a rather immoral metropolis. We discover later in this letter that

some of that immoral stuff had made its way into the church. But one of the big issues in the church was that of division. They were divided over all kinds of issues...theological and practical matters. So Paul would talk to them about unity in the body and love and all that. Division is not good. It is not of the Spirit. It compromises our message. And our message is the cross.

Paul addressed the issue of divisiveness right off. In the tenth verse of this first chapter he said, "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...that there be no divisions among you." Evidently this person named Chloe had informed Paul that people were not getting along. They were following different people. Paul then told them that he was sent there to preach the gospel. And he preached the gospel not with any words of human wisdom. He did not want to empty the cross of Christ of its power.

Then come the words we read today. Paul talked about the message of the cross being foolishness to those who are perishing. But to those who follow Jesus that message is power. God's foolishness is wiser than our best wisdom. God's weakness is stronger than our best strength. In the midst of this discussion, Paul mentioned how the Jews demand miraculous signs and the Greeks look for wisdom. But what we do is we preach Christ crucified. And that message is a stumbling block to some and foolishness to others.

Okay. So we all know that the Jews of Jesus' day were expecting this political Messiah. We touched on this last week. This Messiah they were expecting would bring them their long hoped for deliverance from their oppressors. When this Savior they were expecting arrived...well, then all their big life's problems would be solved. They