

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Foolishness, wisdom, divided churches, the Apostle Paul has seen it all. Paul is writing to the saints in Corinth where there is some turmoil over, believe or not, who belongs to who, "I belong to Paul, or I belong to Apollos, or I belong to Cephas, or I belong to Christ." He asks them is Christ divided? He asks them if Paul was crucified for them, or if any had been baptized in Paul's name. Then he tells them Christ sent him to proclaim the gospel, "and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power." Now for what's it worth, I usually think of Paul's writing as incredibly eloquent, admitting sometimes he tortures his syntax, but then I do the same thing although I am not eloquent.

Paul is addressing their divisions, and he quotes from the Prophet Isaiah, an even more eloquent voice. You might say that God confounds the wise and the eloquent he tongue-ties. God makes foolish the wisdom of the world, because the world doesn't know God through wisdom. God's not against learning or any such thing, but true wisdom is found in the cross, foolishness to who hear the message of the gospel, except for those who believe. Christ crucified is true wisdom, it's deep wisdom, from the depths of our Savior. It's not concerned with appearances even though it seems foolish to those who reject it. Christ crucified is wisdom for the vulnerable, the weak, the rejected and marginalized, it is true wisdom, saving knowledge, the grace of God for all who believe.

So if you wish to understand this wisdom from on high, don't be distracted or concerned with whether the preacher or whoever sharing with you, is eloquent and well spoken. Is your pastor proclaiming, preaching, Christ crucified? Are you hearing about the grace of God, salvation through faith alone, not from works? Have you heard that false wisdom, false power, even death do not have the final say, that they are not the end all-be all of existence? The very source of our life is the life that died on the cross for us, the life that has been here since before the very world was created, the life that holds all things, through whom all things came into being.

Here in this congregation named Trinity Lutheran Church, we hear Christ crucified when we gather as a community to worship. If you were looking at us from above or from a distance, you would see a community surrounding this table, a cross on the wall, a chalice on the table, the font in front of you, the pulpit and lectern for proclaiming and reading the Word of God, you would see and hear a community of brothers and sisters supporting one another, offering and sharing mercy, love, grace, service to one another. You would hear and see musicians and singers and dear ones in Christ singing songs of praise and thanksgiving, singing from hearts expressing mercy, love, grace and service. This is the wisdom of God, this is the power of God!

As you stand in the back your eye is continually moving, from cross, to chalice, to lectern, to font, to pulpit, back to the piano. As you stand in the back you see a service, a

congregation in motion, moving with the grace of God, dancing a dance of joy no eye can follow, bathed in the grace and love of God, who has gifted this assembly of believers, of dear ones in Christ, beloved brothers and sisters all created by our Creator God. God's wisdom is known to us through this assembly of mercy, love, grace and serving. God's wisdom understands all that is said and not said, done and not done, God's wisdom has wings, but in Christ God's wisdom was scourged, crucified, taunted, and died, only to be raised by the power of Almighty God. God's wisdom takes the blows, the mocking, the cross, and rises above it all to proclaim that our tongue-tied voices notwithstanding, true wisdom is in the cross of Christ. Christ crucified knows pain, the pain that results from another's selfish desire, pain that is had from watching the world eating itself alive, pain that is measured by profit-loss statements. Christ crucified sees the weak, the voiceless, the suffering, the poor as precious dearly loved brothers and sisters.

True wisdom is in faith given by God's grace, in believing when we have not seen, in believing without proof, in seeking and knowing God's foolishness and weakness. My dear ones, join with me in proclaiming Christ crucified, the triumph of the cross, join with me in inviting, bringing others that they may believe in Jesus Christ and no other, that believing in him they will have eternal love, eternal life.

AMEN