

Preaching Christ Crucified
Third Sunday of Lent - Year B - 03/07/2021
Psalm Reading: 19
1st Reading: John 2:13-22, 2nd: 1 Cor. 1:18-25

Our reading comes from the Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Corinth was a rough and tumble town on an isthmus that connected Greece with the rest of Europe. The divided congregation he was dealing with was made up of a diverse group on both an economic and a cultural basis. In this passage Paul addresses a topic that remains challenging in our own day. It has to do with the basis of our our faith and how we approach faith as we are surrounded by a secular society. Verse 18 begins our reading:

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.

What is this message?

Cross designed for punishment.

A criminal taking on our sins?

19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."

Loose translation of Isaiah 29:14

Philosophy Class Story

Meaning of Life

Frustration.

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?

Wise person = philosopher / scientist

God the creator made the universe to be knowable,
and science delves into it.

Many Worlds theory

Isaac Newton – understood science just an
expression of God's creation.

Teacher of the Law = Pharisee

Rigid adherence to the Law 613 rules

Ten Commandments / Prophets – just a pointer to
who God is.

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.

Re: Philosophy Book story – I could not have told you why at that moment, but I was unsatisfied. But I can tell you now that it was because as great as all those philosophers were, all they could produce was just a little chunk of weak human wisdom. All of it lumped together was incomplete without the historical revelation of Jesus Christ on the Cross. That was the piece that was missing.

22 Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom.

People focused on incomplete concepts.

23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.

Because our view becomes myopic, we can't see the big picture. It is like that old story of the elephant and the six blind men. Trunk – snake, legs - tree, ear – fan, side – wall, tail – rope, tusk – spear. ...Take a step back.

*24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks,
Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

So we need to see the big picture. What is all of this science/wisdom, all of this prophecy, all of these laws leading to? ... Jesus Christ, of course.

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

God all-knowing, all-wise. Our wisdom is nothing to God's.
God all-powerful. Our power nothing to God's power.
God all-present.

What I did not realize as I sat on those steps leading to my basement bedroom reading that philosophy textbook, was that my disappointment was due to the fact that all of this philosophy, all science, *in fact*, was just part of the elephant, the elephant, that even then was in the room. Philosophy could not satisfy my curiosity, my longings, it was incomplete.

I encourage you all to take a step back from the elephant and try to see it in its moral context. Forget for a moment all the rules imposed upon us on a daily basis meant to shape our behavior in positive ways. Forget for a moment all the philosophies and sciences, and come to understand that God's greatness, wisdom, and power are focused on God's love for us, manifested in one all encompassing sacrifice that we will continue to explore throughout this Lenten season. It is what Paul preached to the Corinthians. It is, of course, Christ's Crucifixion. God's saving Grace to us. The elephant in the room.

ἀμήν