

## Holy Tuesday Meditation

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Text: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Why is the word of the cross folly to those who are perishing? Because sin is folly to those who are perishing. Sure, there is *wrong* in the world. Injustice, inequality, intolerance, insensitivity. But sin? How quaint. But that's really not our problem. And so forgiveness? That's really not our need. And so the cross? Irrelevant, really. And it's folly to think that the cross can solve our problems. We need justice, not forgiveness. Action, not atonement. Tolerance, not judgment.

Sounds like Paul could have written these words today, not almost 2000 years ago. Not much has changed. The world still doesn't understand sin, and so doesn't understand the cross.

So how do we preach to this generation? Well, the same way Paul did. For if the problem is the same (and it is), then the solution is the same (and it is!). ***We preach Christ crucified.***

If we don't, if we think the solution is to be found elsewhere, in adopting the agenda of the world and the ways of the world, then we are leaving behind the very thing Paul calls ***the power of God***. And we are leaving it for what is weaker and more foolish. And what will not work.

And it's not just others. This is a temptation for us. Will I believe God's Word? Or will I believe the word of man? Will I walk in God's ways? Or decide they don't really work, and so I must do something else? Will I fill my eyes with what looks great and impressive to men? Or will I look to the things of God, even though they look weak and so often despised? Can an old fashioned, outdated book really change the world? Can a little water poured on my head really change me? Can God really be present in little churches filled with big sinners and hypocrites, doubters and deniers? Can that little bread and wine really be more than bread and wine? You really believe all that? And that a crucified criminal is your Saviour? You're foolish. Or stupid. Or both.

But if you are foolish, or stupid, or both, then there is good news for you. ***God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.*** Or in other words, to show the wise and the strong that their faith is in the wrong place. For if your faith is in your own wisdom and strength, well . . . the cemetery is full of such people. No one's wisdom and no one's strength have been able to save them from death. Sooner or later you will be caught and ***brought to nothing***. And then what will be your boast?

No, there is only one grave in one cemetery that does not have a dead body. Only one person that death could not hold. Only one who was able to defeat death. The crucified one. So it seems that God in His weakness, the weakness of the cross, really was stronger than men. It seems that God in His foolishness, the foolishness of the cross, really was wiser than men. It seems that the cross really is *the power of God*.

And there, on the cross, is the answer to the problems of the world. Injustice? There is God's justice against our sin, poured out on Jesus. Inequality? Jesus died on the cross for every sin and every sinner equally; no distinction. Intolerance? Jesus could not tolerate losing *anyone* for eternity, and so went to the cross to be our *righteousness and sanctification and redemption*. And insensitivity? There was no one more sensitive to our needs than our great High Priest who, as Hebrews tells us, was like us in every way, except without sin, and so is able to sympathize with us in our weakness (Hebrews 4:15).

So *Christ crucified* really is the answer! So that is what we preach - this week and every week. And through that Word the Spirit of God works, to convict us of our sin and to show us our Saviour. That we boast not in ourselves, not in our wisdom or strength or anything else we have, but *boast only in the Lord*. On Him we depend. On Him we rely. And we will not be ashamed.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.