

# The Foolishness and Power of the Gospel

June 5, 2022

## Introduction

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. Services are presented on YouTube, Facebook and our website one week following recording. This week's message is titled "The Foolishness and Power of the Gospel." Thank you to Earl, Ed, Gloria, and Paul for being involved in the video. The scripture reading is first Corinthians 1:18 to 21.

## Welcome

Good morning. Good morning. We welcome each of you here this morning. And we'll begin with a few announcements. Sustain Ability -- Nice terminology -- Tanzania. Ralph Williams is going to be bringing a presentation of his work there, providing water supply work on June 12th in Fenwick, June 19th at Tintern and I guess we can maybe just say ask Geoff for details in terms of the timing, I'm not sure what time those meetings are just but okay. More information forthcoming and of course, as far as prayer requests, Val's family has been reunited in Kyiv after an absence being in Hungary. So we continue to pray for their safety in that situation in that country. Dianne mentioned a fellow in Grimsby. His name is Jim, and he's had some health issues. A brain aneurysm isn't it? And so we we recognize that there are people who are within our congregation who have wider reach into the community and where we can be of help and comfort.

Let's be that to people in our sphere of influence this week. Let's go to God in prayer. Our father. We thank you for the blessings of this life. We thank you for our earthly families. We thank you for the joy that we receive. We thank you sometimes, Father, for the opportunities to serve, even in unexpected ways within our own families. But even more so, Father, in our in our spiritual family, the church. And we pray, Father, that you will help us to be sensitive to the needs of others help us to be helping each other, be aware of who needs help so that we collectively can be your hands and your feet in this community. We pray for that this week. Help us find opportunities to serve. Father, we think especially of Gloria and Jim we pray for your comfort and your peace. We think of Grant and Barbara. We pray that you will be with him. Help him to feel your comfort and your peace. At this time, we thank you for these folks who have served so faithfully in our congregation.

We thank you for the Parkers. We pray that you will be with the Parker family. And even as many of us were gathered for the funeral of all of this week, we celebrated her life, her service, her thoughtfulness to others. And we pray that you will help us to emulate that kind of service in our daily walk. Father, we pray that you will help us this morning as we sing songs of praise, as we hear a message from your word presented by Don.

We thank you for his service among us. We pray, Father, that you will help us to listen attentively and more importantly, Father, help us to find something today that we can apply to our life, to our situation, and therefore live it for you this week. We pray, Father, that you will help us to that end. And especially, father, we thank you for Jesus. We thank you for his sacrifice. We thank you for his example. And we pray that you will help us to grow closer to Him and to you for a time together today in Jesus name, Amen.

## Communion

I asked for this song to be led this morning prior to Communion for several reasons. What's the song really about? It's about giving praise to Jehovah. Sometimes we will call God or Yahweh the spirit, creative power, energy within the within the universe to have control over our existence.

So whatever word you use to describe this -- doesn't really describe it. It's just fall short of the reality of what this is about. But it is saying that we should praise because of the things that we see. So some people say, well, I have never, never really had any interest in religion. Church in the scriptures that says you were -- you are without excuse because of the things that have been made by the things that we see around us.

So I like to just open up a little crack of what that looks like. Of course, we're living on this planet. This planet is just the precise distance from a sun that is just the precise amount of energy to support ecosystems and to support life on this planet. Amazing. We're part of a solar system that involves the sun, the middle of which is in them is the energy source. Well, we're part of a galaxy, the Milky Way galaxy. It's been estimated that this galaxy that we're in has around a hundred million, a hundred billion stars Well, how many galaxies do we have? The estimate is somewhere between 100 and 200 billion galaxies.

So the solar system, how big is it? Our solar system, the diameter of our solar system is 37.2 billion kilometers. Well, what about the Milky Way? The Milky Way galaxy that we're in it's measured in light years. A hundred thousand light years. Well, how fast light travel? 300 million meters a second. Well, how fast is that, really? I mean, it's just a number, right? If you were to stand at the equator and fire a bullet, that would go around the earth and come back to your body in one second, you would have seven holes in your body. That's how fast light travels To imagine that we're in a galaxy that has a thousand 100,000 light years in diameter, just one of 100 to 200 billion galaxies Now, I don't know about you, but I like going out before I go to bed. Almost every night. I go out on the back porch and I look up because I'm always like, Where in the world are we and what are we supposed to be doing?

Well, this song indicates that because of those things that you see that you should praise, praise God, So having a knowledge of God helps us to recognize and appreciate God as humans, we are the center of the creation on Earth here. We've been placed there and we've been placed sort of in charge. Now, sometimes we do okay with that. Sometimes we don't So what are we supposed to do here?

We're like God in a lot of ways. We're capable of thinking. We're capable of planning, loving, caring for the world. Almost sounds like loving God and loving each other. We understand this creator and the power that God has sends Jesus as a demonstration to us of God's purpose, personality, and love for us. But we have a choice I would recommend that you this week take a long look at the book of Romans. Romans is all about begins with what the gospel is, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and that we shouldn't be ashamed of this gospel. And then it, it talks about not being with not having any excuse because the things that have been created point to God. And then the rest of the book is about the journey, how we journey back to him, how we respond to him, So the universe declares the glory of God. It's emphasized in the song and we believe and act out our belief by participating in His glory. You see, we are part of His glory. And because we're part of His glory, then we get to participate in His glory.

So as we remember Jesus who was part of the creative process of the universe, let us be thankful for the opportunity that we have because of Jesus to participate in God's glory here on this little planet, spinning in a huge space. Let us pray to our Father in heaven. We pray that we'll have the eyes to see the heart, to understand the ears to hear the feeling of touch, to experience to understand that we are part of your plan and that we've had a choice to believe. We're grateful, Father, for this choice. We're grateful for the Jesus gives us this choice. And that as we read about Jesus and as we think about him and meditate upon him, that we're really understanding you, our Heavenly Father, Creative power. Creative energy, loving, patient, humble, may, may you help us to become these things so that more and more in our life we can give glory to you in how we live our lives, behave and interact with others on this little planet, spinning in space we pray, Father, that we might be moved by Your grace and love for us through Jesus. As we commune today as we take this bread and drink this cup we play, pray your blessing on it and us as we journey along with you in this life, we pray in Jesus name, amen.

## Reading

The reading this morning is taken from First Corinthians 118 through 25 for the message of the cross as foolishness. To those who are perishing. But to us who are being saved, it is the power of God, for it is written. I will destroy the wisdom of the wise the intelligence of the intelligent. I will frustrate 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 word world 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

## Sermon

Good morning. Good morning. I am not Don. This morning we'll be looking at First Corinthians one if you'd like to turn your Bibles there and or devices and. There was once a man who is considered the town fool. The town folks would play a game to show how foolish he was. They would approach him with a penny in one hand and a quarter in the other. The townsfolk would then town's person would hold up both hands and see which one the person would take. The man would always choose the penny over the quarter, and of course everybody would chuckle and move on. One day, a newcomer to town went and asked the man, Why is that? You always take the penny when you could take the quarter Don't you know the quarter is worth much more than the penny? And the man replied, Understand? I understand the value of both coins. Well, if I took the quarter they would stop playing the game.

Like the fable We, we have similar things in our lives that are lived out on a daily basis. There are certain ways of doing things that we tend to follow, even if they make sense or not. And if someone else operates outside of the way that we commonly think of as the appropriate way we kind of look at them and say, Hey, you know, you're kind of foolish. Let's give a few examples. If you can legally buy an item at \$20 instead of \$50 you do it. Saving money is good. The best price is the best thing. If all considerations are equal, you're offered a promotion at your job. You would take it. If it advances, your career, increases your salary, improves quality of life. If you're at a restaurant, something good is served to you to eat. You're hungry, and there's no risk to your health. You'd be a fool not to eat it. And above the illustration is to act contrary is to be considered foolish by many. Most of the time it's

healthy to avoid foolishness. But the message of the passage today is that there is a time and a place to act in what maybe considered foolish ways.

We see the Apostle Paul addressing what he calls the foolishness of God. In two paragraphs in this text, he explains that most people consider the work of Christ and those who follow Him to be foolish. The first paragraph addresses the perceived foolishness of Christ's own works on the cross and his message. And the second turns to the perceived foolishness of God, of God who is working through to

Verse 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. For it is written. I will destroy the wisdom of the wise. The intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate. Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher -- philosopher of this age? Has not God made the foolish the wisdom of the world for since the wisdom of God to guide the world through its wisdom did not know Him. God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom. But we preach got Christ crucified a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. But to those whom God has called both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God. And the wisdom of God for the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom. And the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

The focus of the first paragraph is to contrast the work of Christ on the cross with the wisdom of the worldly powers, both Jewish and Greek. Those who are called perishing are divided into two groups, both of which consider the story of Christ and the Cross to be foolish. Those who are called Greeks here include Romans, Greeks, and any who are not of Jewish descent in the Roman world. The thought of an executed carpenter -- carpenter in a remote, troublesome province of the mighty Roman Empire being the salvation of the world was simply too much to take. They lived in a culture which exalted the achievements of man. The original Olympics stemmed from their fascination and respect for the physical potential of man. The original athletes, you may know, competed naked to show off their physical form, their acts of strength and endurance were legend throughout the empire. The Romans celebrated the power of the state to bring peace and a type of unity to all these diverse provinces, which was the first in that history. They ruled with an iron fist, but their influence did bring peace to the lands they had conquered. The rule of the day was that might was right, and the mightiest ruled over those who were weak to accept an act of apparent weakness. In the saving event of an entire world simply did not mesh with that type of thinking.

Furthermore, both the Romans and Greeks were also famous for their wisdom, their high thinking. The writings of Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, and other Greek and Roman thinkers are still today considered of the most intelligent things written by humankind ever. They knew they were smart, and they made it well known that they were smart, and they considered themselves the wisest people in the world. If anyone was going to save the world, it was them and they world had better listen to them.

The Jews, on the other hand, knew that salvation would not come from mankind, but from God through the promised Messiah. They looked for someone who would shake up the world's way of doing things and take over establishing Israel at the center of the world and brought under control by the Messiah. The powerful, awe-inspiring words of the prophets they interpreted as predicting the Messiah as a great, downright miraculous military takeover. The Jews were captives of the Romans. So a military takeover would have to be miraculous. An intervention by God upon the world, as it was known at the time. The Jews who could not reconcile the work of Jesus on the cross with what they

expected from the promised Messiah. They considered him a failed attempt at Messiah, a fake who professed to be Messiah but couldn't deliver on the expectation of that Holy war. His death was an act of weakness. Whereas the Messiah was to operate in strength. The crucifixion of Christ therefore offends the sensibilities of both parties. One who sees His work as foolish compared to the wisdom of the world, and the other who sees Him as weak compared to the strength of the world.

What neither group is ready to see is that God works in ways that the world may consider foolish and weak and bring salvation to the whole of mankind humankind. In that way, Christ work on the cross goes straight to the root of the world's real problem. You see both the Greeks and the Jews. Their solutions weren't actually addressing the world's actual deep problem: The sinful nature of humans past, present, and future Christ attacks and defeats the root of what causes the world's trouble. Our sin, our evil, a rebellion. And in doing so, he allows people to be free of the evil which encompassed them and to live under the love of God and in the light of God who created them and create a beautiful community Jesus does not simply think and write about the solution to our difficulties, nor did He lead armies to defeat a temporary foe. He rescues us by undermining the sin upon which the evil of this world is built. The foolishness of God brought sin its deathblow allowing us to be free both collectively and individually. It also led God to use those who the world looks down upon to change the world forever in the same way. The focus of the last part of our section verse 26

Brothers and sisters Think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards. Not many were influential. Many were of noble birth but God chose of the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things and the things that were not to nullify the things that are so that no one may boast before Him because it is of him that you are. Because it is. Because of him that you are in Christ Jesus who has become for us the wisdom for God that is our righteousness. Holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written, let the one who boasts boast in the Lord

Now, we've talked about what Christ has done. We now look at the people through whom He has chosen to spread His news and his work. Those who followed someone considered weak and foolish are naturally considered weak and foolish themselves. When, if you're going to do your dissertation or thesis at a university and as if you know the details of that, you need to get a panel of people to guide you along that process. You intentionally look for the best person in that field to be your supervisor. What the Apostle Paul is saying here is in effect? You know, we've gone out and according to the world, we've looked for the worst person in that field and said, Hey, can you be my supervisor? To those who in the world would write off God says, I will use you to achieve my great purposes. So in that analogy, then we sat down, write our thesis, and it's published in the Science Journal of blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And it's an amazing, groundbreaking discovery that everyone is shocked at. And now they're Googling our name and the supervisors. And we're going, Well, who's this guy? What's going on?

I found a story which illustrates this in a certain way. If you're into gardening, a water bearer had two large pots each hung on the side of a pole on his shoulders, and he carried them across his neck. One of the pots had a slight crack in it halfway up, and the other part was perfect in every way. Always delivered a full portion of water on the long walk from the stream to the house. But the other pot had this crack. It would only come half full by the time it came to the house. For two years. This went on

daily and the bear delivering only one and a half pots of water to his house. Of course, the town, these people would laugh a little bit every time they saw him go by. With a little dribble coming out the side. The perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. It was perfect to the end. It did what it was made to do. The poor crackpot was ashamed of its imperfection. It considered itself miserable. It was only able to accomplish half of what it was made to do. And it felt worse because the bearer, the water bearer was mocked for only delivering one and a half pots.

After two years, it perceived itself to be a bitter failure and spoke to the water bearer and said, I'm ashamed of myself and I want to apologize to you. Down by the stream. Why? Said the bearer. What are you ashamed of? Why? I've only been able to, over these past two years, deliver only half of my load because of the crack in my side. And it leaks all the way. Because of my flaws. You've been made to do all this work and more. And do you suffer mockery from others? The water bearer felt sorry for the cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, As I return to the house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path. Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot look to notice the sun warming the beautiful wildflowers on the side of the path. Then it cheered some. But the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it leaked out half of its load So again, it apologized. The bear said to the pot, I hear the laughter from others. But what? I want you to notice something. Do you see the flowers? Only on your side of the path and not on the other side. That's because I always have known about your flaw. I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side. Of the path. And every day while I walk back to the stream and back from the stream, you water them. For two years, I've been able to pick these beautiful flowers and decorate my table. Without you being just as you are. You would not have this beauty to grace the house.

Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots and probably to those who would observe us during those cracked pot times were a bit foolish, whether intentionally or not. But if we allow it, the Lord will use our particular flaws to grace His table. They can appear to foolishness as the rest of the rest of the world. But God knows what He's doing, and he can use cracked, imperfect humans for his purpose. Humankind likes to tell God what to do and how to do it. Have you noticed that people do it all the time? They did at the time of Christ. They continued to do it. Today, the work of Christ on the cross. It does not fit in any of the directions that God was being given at the time. But it was successful nonetheless. It works despite the scorn of the powers of the day, and it still works today. Those who like the Romans and the Greeks seek salvation based on their own ideas about what salvation is. Are bound to be disappointed since the Gospel negates their efforts and requires only faith in Christ. Those who like the Jews of the day seek salvation in the hands of a physical enemy by the hands of a warrior Messiah are also bound to be disappoint If you've regarded the work of Christ as foolish in the past, may you see that His is the only way to win the battle against the world.

I encourage you to reexamine the Gospel and its author Jesus Christ, to experience true wisdom and love from the Savior who knew exactly what He was doing and why he was doing it. And to those who have already chosen to accept, to believe in, and to be obedient by the foolishness of God, never lose sight of the greater wisdom of the of the Cross of Christ. May we never shortchange ourselves for God. And His wisdom has chosen us to be the wisdom, to put the wisdom of the world to shame and to bring strength of the strong to shame So to two applications for us today. One, like I said, if you've considered the foolishness of Christ in the past, maybe look at it not from the world's perspective, but from Christ's perspective. The power that is there. It may take a second look, but it is truly there. But if you've accepted that faith, you may be around people who consider that faith to be foolish. You may

be told that. You may feel that. I encourage you today to remember that your faith is actually so advanced that those with fancy, many fancy letters after their name don't get it. You're actually the more progressive advanced one in the in the in the group. And I want to further encourage all of us to not let those feelings of may be inferior into inferiority. There's a word in there. Don't let those feelings stop you from living and acting the gospel to those around you. They may look at you and go, why would you make that choice?

Or Why would you do that? Or Why would you trust that person? We all know that person's just going to whatever they use, throwing your money away. Blah, blah, blah. But we understand it from a different perspective. Those actions, if done it through the Gospel of Christ and the love of Christ, are actually actions of strength and power. For the message of the cross as foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved. It is the power of God.

## Closing

We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed, perplexed, not in despair, persecuted but not abandoned, struck down and not destroyed. Let's stand

As I was as I was getting ready to come up here. I was reading through all the announcements, you know, and the very last thing is Speaker. Very small print. Paul Moore underneath it. I didn't get there. So I apologize to Paul. I wasn't here last week. And yet we do appreciate, Don, as I said in my prayer and his service among us. And we appreciate people are willing to fill in when he's not here. And thank you, Paul. The you know, the idea of foolishness. Sometimes we use the term he's a crackpot. Well, there's a difference between a crackpot and a cracked pot. Right. So if we can take that with us today, in the sense that the world might think of it as foolishness, but we know that it is salvation for those who are in Christ. And so the reality is we want to be cracked pots spreading the essentials, in this case, water that helps flowers grow on our pathway of life. Maybe we can be the same this week so that we might help others to see ultimately the growth and the power of small deeds of kindness in our world. So we thank you, Paul, and thank you for the juxtaposition of these thoughts. You know, the foolishness, but really the wisdom and the wisdom of our God who created this universe, as Ed so masterfully pointed out to us. What are we? We're a speck. But he created he created this universe beyond our comprehension. And yet he cares about you as an individual. And he said, his son for you and for me, amazing. The bigness and the smallness. But the idea of no one is unimportant. As you mentioned, Paul, we all can do something in his kingdom.

And we can all point others towards him. No matter what our limitations are, no matter what challenges we might have in life. There is always an opportunity to be his messenger. And may we strive for that this week? Let's pray Our father, we thank you for your goodness. We thank you for your love. We thank you for your plan. That would include even each of us. We pray, Father. That you will help us this week to comprehend the scope of your love for us. That would send Jesus into this world. We pray that you will help us to live for you. Is our prayer in Christ name? Amen. And have a good week.

## End credits

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