

08.17.2008 (Sun) Christ the Power of God & the Wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:18-24)

The story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 is about vanity. He wasted time and things. His life condition was more like the condition of the earth in Gen 1:2 - "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep!"

This son was confused, empty in his heart. His thoughts and thus his life was dark. Fortunately, one thing that made him right was his going back home - to his father! Going back home solved all that confusion, emptiness and darkness!

Likewise, we must be with the Father thru the way of the cross because the thoughts of men are futile (Psa 94:11). If we don't know who God is then our deeds will be amount to nothing (Isa 41:29). We will know nothing, understand nothing and walk about in darkness (Psa 82:5).

That is why John 17:3 says that knowing God is eternal life. It is the message of the cross that saves people from confusion, emptiness and darkness. The cross saves us from sin and death!

The Bible teaches us that the emptiness and darkness began with confusion. People didn't know how to react to Jesus when He came to them. Jn 1:10-11 says "He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came that which was his own, but his own did not receive him."

What made the people turn away from Jesus? Well, why don't we start with us? We want new ideas, new way of doing things. We want more and better knowledge. And, when all else fails, we want miracles. Ancient people thought the same. They were just like us.

The Jews are miracle seekers. They demanded miracles. If you look at their history you'll amazed by the sheer incidents of miracle after miracle from generation to generation. Look at their rich history of miracles!

Ten miracles that allowed the freedom of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt, parting of the Red Sea, raining down of the heavenly manna, river from rock, the guidance of the pillars of cloud and fire are just the few examples of so many jaw-dropping miracles.

Take for instance a pair of shoes. A good shoes might last for years. But, not something like 40 years. It would not matter if the shoes were *made in Italy*. No shoes will last that long!

The Israelites walked in the desert for 40 years in the 100 plus degrees during the day and 50 degrees during the night. They climbed mountains, crossed rivers and valleys.

Yet, they lacked nothing. They didn't need new pair of shoes every now and then. Ne 9:21 tells us "For 40 years you sustained them in the desert; they lacked nothing, they clothes did not wear out nor did their feet become swollen!"

So the Jews were used to miracles. Thru so many miracles in their history they were somehow *lost* in the power of miracles. They demanded miracles to solve their problems. They wanted to overcome their hardships thru some kind of miracles.

The miracles by themselves are not evil. It's how you deal with miracles that's more important to you. Will it become the *ideal* way of life? There's no doubt about people's wanting and desiring and even dreaming about miracles.

*But, there's no John 4:24 in it. "God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."* Jesus said "A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign" in Mt 16:4. Mk 9:19 says that it's the "unbelieving generation" asks for miracles.

Faith is not based on sight. Seeing and then believing needs no faith in the first place. That is why Jesus said "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders, you will never believe" (Jn 4:48). Even His disciples didn't have faith, before receiving of the Holy Spirit. "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Mt 14:31, 16:8).

The Greeks are wisdom seekers. They put new knowledge first. Ac 17:21 says "All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas." They were *that* serious about knowledge and wisdom.

So when they heard how the death of the Savior brought salvation to the sinners they scoffed at the very idea. They thought it was so foolish to believe in the idea of *death of one man solving death of all men*. How can death solve death itself?

Foolishness means lacking good sense. It means silly, absurd, unwise. But, what does the Bible say? 1 Cor 1:23-24 says "*but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*"

Why is the message of the cross the power of God to those who are being saved (1 Cor 1:18,24)? Because it wipes out *all* sins. *Not just some but all sins*. Can you say amen to that? The way of the Cross may look and sound foolish, but it takes care of sin. Small sins, great sins and indescribable sins are gone for good - at the cross!

Look at the cross. It has no beauty. It has no majesty. It has no attraction at all. Jesus and the cross are the same. There was nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. *This is how Jesus looked like according to God in Isaiah 53.*

That is why Isaiah 53 begins with a question: *“Who has believed our message?”* The way of the cross is narrow and difficult. *It still is.* But, life-giving power is in the cross of Jesus. How? By taking up our infirmities and carrying our sorrows.

Jesus was *“pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”* *“Yet, we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.”*

The cross may look silly to some. It may be a stumbling block to some. But it opens the door of eternity. It re-opens and re-connects the relationship between God and the sinners. *People are being saved from their sins.*

*People are made righteous. People are being born again and they are becoming holy.* Yes, the cross has no looks. It has no splendor. But, it has the forgiving power of any sins. God’s sin-forgiving message and life-giving message are being preached at the cross!

It is the reason why the message of the cross can save lives. *The problem of my ego, the problem of my sin, the problem of death, the problem of salvation and holy life are solved perfectly at the cross.*

The message of the cross is *“God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life,”* also known as John 3:16.

*The life of God is in the message of the cross! Jesus Christ is the message of the cross. He alone is the wisdom of God and the power of God. Won’t you pray in the life-saving name of Jesus Christ this moment?*