

Lent Meditation 8



1Cor.1,18-25

“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 of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the 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. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 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. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.”

If we breathe the wisdom of the world, we will assume that we are capable of bringing about that which God wills, to reach the goal of knowing God. Not that we think our power and wisdom unlimited, but given the right tools we can, and must, go to work successfully and achieve the right result.

To this, the world’s confidence in the strength and right-ness of its own wisdom, corresponds on the one hand the demand for signs (Jews) as God’s way to do his bit, and on the other hand the search for more findings, better understanding, more knowledge (Greeks). This belief in our capacity to bring about what God wills is necessarily twinned with the belief that God’s power and wisdom must (or: naturally does) fall in with such wisdom, that is, that it will bring about what the world wills (since in its wisdom it knows what that is that God wills...!).

But if the message of the cross, the preaching of Christ crucified – which is the proclamation that Christ died for our sins and was raised for our justification – is God's power and wisdom to save all who believe, to bring people to a knowledge of Himself and renew them in Christ's image, then the world's wisdom with its demand for signs and its search for knowledge is declared foolish. Indeed, then it is shown for what it truly is: pretending to bring about what it did not, nor can – know God.

That *Christ* is God's power and wisdom, rather than according to the world's mind and wish the power of miracles and its own wisdom, makes our salvation a matter of grace, and safeguards it as such.

Human strength and wisdom mark their presence and influence in our hearts and minds a) as pride, when we add to the grace of Christ in his death and resurrection for us something we need to do and believe we are doing, and b) as despair, when we believe that the lack of power and wisdom do bring about conformity with God's will in our lies is the sign of a graceless state.

When God's power and wisdom take from us our own power and wisdom – which neither miracles nor the strength of our own wisdom will do, but Christ crucified in those who are being saved! – we become nothing. For, what can no power and no wisdom bring about? But here, made nothing, grace comes into its own – Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.