

Traditional Home service Sunday 7th March

READINGS - Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 1:18-25

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified:
mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Lord Jesus Christ, we confess we have failed you as did your first disciples.
We ask for your mercy and your help.

Our selfishness betrays you:
Lord, forgive us.

All Christ have mercy.

We fail to share the pain of your suffering: Lord, forgive us.

All Christ have mercy.

We run away from those who abuse you:
Lord, forgive us.

All Christ have mercy.

We are afraid of being known to belong to you: Lord, forgive us.

All Christ have mercy.

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.
Open our lips, Lord:

and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (*When I survey*)

TALK

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Spend some time praying for our nation, our community and our families.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

HYMN 2 (*At the name of Jesus*)

CONCLUSION

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.
Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me
most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His
feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled
down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow
meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a
crown?

Were the whole realm of nature
mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

1 At the name of Jesus ev'ry knee
shall bow,
ev'ry tongue confess him King of
glory now.

'Tis the Father's pleasure we
should call him Lord,
who from the beginning was the
mighty Word.

2 At his voice creation sprang at
once to sight,
all the angel faces, all the hosts of
light,
thrones and dominations, stars
upon their way,
all the heav'nly orders in their great
array.

3 Humbled for a season to receive
a name
from the lips of sinners unto whom
he came,
faithfully he bore it spotless to the
last,
brought it back victorious, when
from death he passed.

4 In your hearts enthrone him; there
let him subdue
all that is not holy, all that is not
true;
crown him as your Captain in
temptation's hour:
let his will enfold you in its light and
pow'r.

5 Brothers, this Lord Jesus shall
return again,
with his Father's glory, with his
angel train;
for all wreaths of empire meet upon
his brow,
and our hearts confess him King of
glory now.

Sermon for 7th March 2021

Nigel Clent

1 CORINTHIANS 1 18-25

When I first read this Corinthians passage, the word Wisdom or wise I noticed was mentioned ten times, God is mentioned nine times and foolishness is mentioned five times. So, I want to talk about Gods wisdom and how we as humans interpret that wisdom in conjunction with our own thinking. In the opening of this passage Paul says, For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God.

If I was to speaking with a non-believer friend of mine, who was going through a tough time, and I was to tell him he needs Jesus, to experience the power of God through his son Jesus Christ. He would probably reply with I was stupid, foolish, or maybe something a bit stronger. A man nailed to a cross, who doesn't fight back, doesn't have anything to do with power, its weakness, it's foolish, unimpressive and quite frankly, I am offended you even mentioned it, knowing what I am going through. This person is looking at God and applying human logic, Human wisdom. Human wisdom understands power as strength, not weakness, humbleness or surrender.

It understands wealth and prosperity, money, fashion and the latest must haves. It also understands looking out for oneself, it does not understand self-sacrifice for the benefit of others. We know that Jesus freely gave himself up to the worst torture known to man and to ridicule and unimaginable pain, we know that he did it for us. That it was God's plan all along, but Gods vision of power and wisdom flies in the face of what this world understands, it's the opposite of what they already know.

Paul carries on to say that the wisdom of the wise will be destroyed, the intelligence of the intelligent will be frustrated. Where are your philosophers, he says, where are your teachers and wise people.

It doesn't matter how clever or wise you think you are, you will not understand. The foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. The only way to understand it is by coming to Jesus Christ. But to many people God does simply not exist, it's not logical. There is no wisdom in it. There is no God, they say.

In a classroom somewhere in the world, a teacher was instructing some science students. One of them proclaimed that they, the class, had come to the conclusion that God doesn't exist. It's not possible. We have worked it out mathematically. I see said the professor.so, In your infinite wisdom, how much of the worlds knowledge, do you as a class think you possess. After conferring they replied 5% sir. We as a class have 5% of the worlds knowledge. The professor thought that this was rather generous, but said ok, you can have your 5%, so in your vast knowledge does it not then follow, or could it at least be possible that God could exist in the 95% of everything you don't know and understand.

This to me is far more logical, I would of loved to have seen the look on the students face, glowing from the embarrassment, as he sat back down in his chair.

Thank you sir, I hadn't thought of that. We as believers, look to Christ and it all makes perfect sense. The gift God gave us to understand him, to have a better life, to help others have a better life. To have life more abundantly and eternally. We all come to Christ in different ways. By chance, out of desperation, or out of

intrigue and study. Whether you are rich or poor, successful or not successful, whether you are intelligent and wise or not. The outcome is the same, a better richer life, a tender heart and the want and the need to help others. Jesus changes you from the inside out. It's all about what he has done for you, not what you understand. When you try and fathom him without faith, how he has done what he has done and how he does it, you struggle, because it's not logical, it seems foolish.

Gods wisdom is a divine wisdom that requires faith. Until you go to Jesus you have nothing to build that faith on. It will always seem illogical unless you let Jesus into your life, up to this point you will always only be relying on your own intuition and wisdom, not Gods. This, as many of us have found out, is not very wise at all, I would actually take that a step further and say all my decisions where devoid of all wisdom, until I met Jesus.

Roughly twenty five years ago, I decided I would attempt to fit plaster coving around the ceilings in our home. I had never tried to do anything like this before, I would do it myself and save myself some money in the process. How hard could it be? I thought. I have a builder friend who would tell me how to do it and he would lend me the tools to do it.

No problem, my friend said to me. All you need is a coving mitre block, pop round and I will show you how it works. It's quite simple, for a internal corner you would cut it this way and for an external corner, you would do it that way, making sure your wastage is always going this way. Should you get confused there is a diagram on the block.

Well that makes no sense at all, how does that work.

It doesn't matter how it works mate, it just does. I have no idea how it works, It's all been worked out for you, all you have to do is follow the guide.

Well, of course once I got home, I did it my way, the logical way, the practical way, because in my infinite wisdom, I know best. Very soon I ran out of coving, and then I ran out of patience. I got frustrated, I may of even of said a few naughty words. I couldn't understand why it wouldn't work. Jayne was so impressed she went shopping with her mother, for three days, the amount of time it took me to do the one day job. I did eventually do what I was told to do, I followed the guide, and everything fitted into place with seamless edges. But not before I had exhausted all other options. I wasted time, resources energy and patients. I wasn't very obedient to the instructions. I would of made a lousy prophet. If Noah had of been anything like me none of us would be here. Sorry Lord, why on earth would I want to build a boat in the middle of the desert. That makes no sense, how's that going to work.

Why do we as humans have to complicate things, why can't we do as we are told. Why do we think we always know better. Why has everything got to be logical, especially concerning the matters of God.

God tells us through Isaiah 55
For your thoughts are not my thoughts
Neither are your ways my ways
As the heavens are higher than the earth
So my ways are higher than yours
And my thoughts than your thoughts.
In the reading of psalm 19 this morning,
from verse 7 it tells us

The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing
the soul
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,
making wise the simple
The precepts of the Lord are right giving
joy to the heart

The commands of the Lord are radiant,
giving light to the eyes
The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring
forever
The decrees of the lord are firm and all of
them are righteous
They are more precious than gold, they
are sweeter than honey
Than honey from the honeycomb

I'll take all that, I don't need to know how
it all works anymore, it just does.

The only way to God the father is
through the son, Jesus Christ. That's the
only way you can gain some
understanding of his wisdom.

I looked to Jesus in the first instance,
with no faith, no understanding, but with
lots of doubt. He still changed my life,
my ways and my thinking. He gave me
something to build my faith upon. Now I
read the bible knowing it is truth. No
longer is the message foolish, it is the
saving power of God. I have a glimpse of
God's wisdom. Because I decided to go
to Jesus and keep going to him.

We don't need to understand it, just
believe it. We cannot fathom God. My
tiny brain cannot comprehend the
workings of an infinite God. If the science
teachers students have 5% of the world's
knowledge, I probably don't even have
1%, but that's enough to ask him in to
my life and get a glimpse of him. To
know the truth.

We need to stop over complicating it and
just accept it.

When someone wins the lottery, the
lucky winner doesn't ask how the
machine managed to pick their numbers
out, I couldn't possibly spend one penny
until I know how, they just say thank you
very much.

We don't need to ask God how, we only
need to say thank you.

The hard part, the complicated part has
been done for you. Jesus did that on the
cross. Because he loves you, Thank you
Jesus.

Everyone is just one call away from being
transformed. From receiving a faith from
which they can build upon and get a
glimpse into God's wisdom. To have life
more abundantly.

We need to keep it simple and enjoy
what we do know and accept that there
are things that we cannot understand.
We need to read the instructions that
have been given to us and follow the
guide.

God's wisdom is Christ crucified for our
foolishness.

AMEN