

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 4-23-21



Dear Friends in Christ,

For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. (I Corinthians 1:25) God sees and does things in the opposite way from what the world tells us. It's backward for us, yet this apparent foolishness of God is wiser than our human wisdom. Much of the time, though, it's hard for us grasp fully what this foolishness is all about.

Easter is a good example of this foolishness of God. Or, more accurately, Good Friday that illustrates God's foolishness (in light of our wisdom). God's greatest accomplishment for God's people was death. That's right. Success was failure. Victory was defeat. The foolishness of God. Because, you see, without this crushing defeat, there wouldn't be the victory of the resurrection. Without the failure of Jesus' ministry, there wouldn't be the Christian Church and the spread of God's Kingdom throughout the world. But that's backward. That's foolish. The foolishness of God.

The challenge for us is to learn to give ourselves over to God's foolishness. Paul had to learn to do this, going from being a very prominent and rising Pharisee in the Jerusalem community, to being a blind-on-the-road-to-Damascus man dependent upon the very One whose mission he had been trying to end. That reversal is reflected in Paul's words in II Corinthians 12:9: Therefore, I will boast

all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. Paul came to understand the whole backward, upside-down foolishness of God as he allowed—choose to be dependent upon God and God's leading.

Again, that is the challenge for us. The world speaks of strength and rising up and getting ahead and growing in importance. Yet, once more, with God it is just the opposite. God doesn't look for powerful leaders; God looks for servant leaders. God's strength is not revealed in might and resistance and domination; it is shown in humility and sacrifice and surrender. That doesn't sound very inspiring or appealing. Nevertheless, it is exactly to what God in Jesus invites and calls us.

But it can be exciting. And freeing. And full of promise and hope and purpose. It works like this. When we are genuine and honest in confessing our failure to be who God wants us to be that we receive forgiveness and a fresh start that allows us new opportunities and freedom from our trying to get right with God. When we admit our dependence upon God and that we cannot do it all ourselves, we find the promise and strength that God provides. It is backward from what the world tells us but the gifts of God come to us most fully when we acknowledge as Paul says, "For when I am weak, then I am strong." (II Corinthians 12:10) That is the foolishness of God.

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jeffrey