

# Clippings

*Newsletter of Good Shepherd  
Lutheran Church  
September 2017*



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From 1 Corinthians 1:

<sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

<sup>25</sup>For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

At Corinth they had seen firsthand how many of the Jews had rejected the preaching of the cross (see Acts 18). And Paul had come there fresh from Athens, where the sophisticated and philosophical Greeks were largely unimpressed with the message about Jesus. And so it continues today. The modern correspondent to “the Greeks” would be people who are interested in exotic and imaginative ideas. They are “Spiritual But Not Religious” (sometimes abbreviated as SBNR). They call the Psychic Hotline or get into Tarot cards. On the other hand, we have people who are only interested in what God can do for them. “Jews demand miraculous signs” becomes, in our culture, coming to God in search of health, or wealth, or solutions to people’s problems. “If you’re God, show us a sign,” they said to Jesus in the first century. “Feed me. Heal me.” Today their modern counterparts say, “If you’re God, solve my problems. Fix my marriage. Make me happy. Make my kid obey me.”

Both kinds of people are turned off by the message of the Cross. They want to hear about interesting theories or victorious living, not the death of God’s Son for our sins. Yet this boring old message is “the power of God and the wisdom of God”—*wisdom* because it reveals to us what we need to know about our sin, about God’s love, and about how He bridged the gap between us—*power* because it contains the solution to the root of all real-life problems, the problem of sin.

Yes, it’s an ugly story. Yes, it’s painful to admit that our situation is so desperate that God must take such a drastic step. We would love to skip Good Friday and go straight to Easter, and hear about victory and hope. But notice this: the Holy Spirit did not inspire Paul to write, *we preach Christ risen*. He made him write, *we preach Christ crucified*. . . *the power of God and the wisdom of God*. The resurrection of Jesus is meaningless without the sacrifice of Jesus.

A SBNR spirituality, that is only interested in abstract and intellectual speculation, can’t supply the power we need for living in the real world. A therapeutic spirituality, that is oriented toward just solving my problems, is satisfied with treatment of symptoms, while the real disease goes untreated. Only the preaching of Christ crucified can give us what we really need.

Easter is coming, but we’ll get there the proper way. No short-cuts. No “Christianity Lite”. No cheap grace. No feel-good religion. Just power and wisdom from God!

Worthy is the Lamb Who Was Slain...! (Revelation ch. 5)

*Pastor Fremer*