

Wise or Foolish? Which are You?

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Preacher: Lisa Brown

[0 : 00] Let's pray before we start. Our Lord, the simple truth about what Jesus has come to do on the cross is so powerful.

Our Lord, we pray tonight as we look at this passage that, once again, we would be reminded about the power it has in our life and in the world. Lord, that we wouldn't be people who are fooled by the world's wisdom, but we would be people who will be fools for Christ and be wise in your eyes. Amen. When I was growing up, I believed heaps of stuff that wasn't true. I still remember many years ago believing in the tooth fairy.

I don't know how many of your mums and dads told you about the tooth fairy, but I actually believed that my baby tooth, once they fell out, went to make a castle in the tooth fairy sky for the tooth fairy to live in.

It was a hard realisation to come to terms with when mum and dad forgot to replace one of my baby teeth with a 50 cent piece, because the tooth fairy wouldn't forget that sort of thing.

[1 : 15] So that came crashing down. I also believed on TV that if a character, this was in high school, this wasn't when I was little, this was like teenage land.

I believed that the characters, if they died on the TV series, actually died. And I remember one time, one of my favourite characters on Flying Doctors fell off a cliff, and I thought he'd actually died.

And so it's probably not to your surprise that next time I saw him on another TV series, I was a little bit freaked out. I watched also too many of those Crimestopper ads when I was in high school.

And another thing that I believed was that I would never go to Melbourne because if I did, there's a high chance that I would get murdered, because every murder that ever happened on Crimestoppers was in Melbourne.

I shouldn't watch that before I go to bed. But now that I'm all grown up, there are still things that sometimes I hear and I'm not sure whether they're true or not. But at least I've been able to attain the skills of going, really?

[2 : 26] Are you sure about that? But when I was a teenager, I was a particular sucker, especially if the fib came from a credible source. I'm reminded of that ad on television where the little boy is sitting in the car and he asks his dad why the Great Wall of China was built.

And he says, it's to keep the rabbits out, son. And the little boy is in the back seat just going, oh, okay. Totally believes it. You see, what appears to be truth and sometimes even wise can just be lies.

It's very hard in this world sometimes to work out what the difference is. But this is a real problem because even though it doesn't really matter if you know why the Great Wall of China was built, it does matter what you believe about Jesus and about your eternal destiny or your fate.

Because what you believe about these things will impact the way that you live your life and it will impact your eternal state as well. But there's lots of rubbish out there that's disguised as gold.

And there's lots of wisdom out there that just is not wisdom at all. It's not true. That would be very easy to believe. But I want to encourage you tonight to go away with one thing.

[3 : 48] And that is to not rest your faith on human wisdom, but to rest your faith on the power of God. That's a quote from chapter 2, verse 5. And we'll find out later on this passage that it is actually the power of God is a message of the cross.

It's the work that Christ has done on the cross. Let me give you a bit of background to this passage.

If you're not open to Corinthians, 1 Corinthians chapter 1, please open that. But the Corinthians were getting a little bit led astray because Paul had come in, planted a church.

He wasn't around anymore, but there were leaders in the church that were put in place to look after the people there. But rather than the people trusting in Christ, which was the message that Paul

came and preached to them, they ended up putting their trust in all the different leaders who were in the church, the influential people in their lives.

I'll just read verse 11 and 12 from chapter 1 to you. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, I belong to Paul, or I belong to Apollos, or I belong to Cephas, or I belong to Christ.

How crazy is that? Imagine being part of Holy Trinity, and rather than following Jesus, which is the very reason on the very person why you meet together on a Sunday, you start going around saying, oh, I'm just going to believe what Lisa says, or I'm just going to believe what Tullo says, or I like what Amelia says, so I'm just going to believe what she says.

[5 : 18] That's crazy. And I know that many people, just thinking of another illustration here, many people, when it came to election time, thought it was time for John Howard to step out of leadership and thought that Labor would be a nice change, and so made the decision to switch.

But I'm guessing a lot of people just ended up voting for Labor, because Kevin Rudd's quite charismatic. And I saw him on Rove the week before the election, and he convinced me to vote for him, because he was funny.

And he said some funny things. He said some funny things.

You see, Paul goes on in Corinthians 1, verse 19, and says that all wisdom of the world and of the wise will be destroyed. I'm just going to read that for you. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the sermon of the discerning I will thwart.

I was thinking about what worldly wisdom there is out there that is designed to trick teenagers these days. And I was reminded of those little books that you find at the front of bookstores, the little books of wisdom.

[6 : 51] And I thought the teenage edition would probably have these things in it. Your life will be happy. No, your happiness in life is the most important thing. If you do well at school, you will be in a success in life.

Be tolerant and accepting of all religions, because they all have positive aspects. Make sure you get your first kiss well before 16. A mobile phone is a necessity.

The more friends you have on Facebook, the more loved you are. Outward appearance is very important. It's okay not to do what your parents say, as long as they don't find out.

Do whatever you like and think about the consequences later. And Jesus, he's worth praising, because it means we get a holiday at Easter and Christmas. The weird thing is, if you actually decide to follow those things in life, your life isn't going to suck.

In fact, during high school especially, you're going to be fitting in, cruising along. You're going to have quite an awesome time. You're going to feel loved, normal, accepted.

[7 : 59] Because these are the things that most people in this world live by. Not only do they think that these principles are truth, but they also think that the message about Jesus is weird and crazy.

Foolish even. Let me read verse 18 for you. 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.

I was reading a book for one of my theology subjects last year, and I was quite shocked when I read this statement from a lady. I won't name her name. I don't remember it. But she said, how can I possibly believe in a God who would kill his own son?

I thought about that, and I thought, that's fair enough. Like, that makes God out to be some evil being. And if you think about it that way, it just doesn't really make sense.

I mean, why would God send his only son just to have him killed? You know, if God were actually God, why doesn't he just get rid of our sins by clicking his fingers?

[9 : 12] Isn't that possible? Why does his son actually have to die? Or if Jesus were actually God, when he was on the cross, why didn't he just jump off the cross and, like, zap all the people who were laughing at him?

That would make more sense, I would think. Or, you know, if God were actually God, why didn't he make us so he would stuff up in the first place? Like, surely he had the ability just to make us all perfect, so it just seems crazy.

Or if I was God, or if God were God, why didn't he send Jesus to earth not as a little baby and then as a carpenter? Why didn't he make him like this rich ruler who would have popularity and be successful and be rich, I suppose, or be a king or something?

The simple message that God would send his only son to die for his people, it sounds weird and it sounds crazy to those who do not believe.

If you try and tell, I don't know, people who don't believe the gospel and try and say to them that it's the only truth, that this is the only way in life and in death.

[10:17] It's the only thing that you can believe that will give you salvation. And it's the only thing that will let you be forgiven before God. And I think that's foolish. But wouldn't you rather be a fool and foolish and be a follower of Christ than be wise in the world's eyes and be an enemy of Christ?

I think I would, definitely. Let me read to you the end of verse 20 and 21. Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

For since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided through the foolishness of our proclamation to save those who believe. And verse 25 says, For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

The funny thing is, the very thing that we think is weak or the world think is weak, that God would send his son to die, the very thing that they laugh at and think is foolish is actually wiser than any single thing that can be found on this earth.

It's wiser than any wisdom or any eloquence or any knowledge of this age. God's flipped it all on its head.

[11:39] Everything that appears to be sure and wise is foolish. And the foolishness of the message of the cross is actually the power in this world, the power and the wisdom of God.

So the message of the cross is really simple, but its impact is amazingly powerful, more powerful than anything that you could ever know.

The simple message that Jesus came to earth and died on the cross for us shows us that God loves us. Because on the cross is where a ransom is paid for us.

On the cross is where our sins are completely forgiven. It's where our guilt is dealt with. We don't need to feel guilty anymore for the sins we commit. It's a place where death is defeated and ultimately we will not die, we'll have eternal life.

It's a place where we are reconciled to God. We are friends with him. He holds nothing against us. It's a place where sickness is healed. It's a place where Satan is destroyed, where Jesus is glorified and where life is given.

[12:48] And that's something that's promised and we look forward to. It's such a simple message, isn't it? But it's such an amazing power. But I want to warn you that if you take this message seriously and if you decide that you're not going to rest on human wisdom, but rather on the power of the cross, then things are not going to be easy.

And when I was at St. Jude's, there was one particular year level of students who were in our youth group. And they were, I don't know, like the prodigal year level or something.

Yeah. They were awesome. There was like maybe, I don't know, a stack of them. And they were really excited about Jesus. They were passionate about him. They were evangelizing their friends at school. They were involved in ministry at youth group.

They were saying no to the normal pressures of teenage life. And they were really making a difference everywhere they went because they were just so zealous. But as they got older, particularly in year 11 and 12, those years of particularly difficult in high school, and now as they go into uni, they began to change.

And I think what happened was slowly but surely they began to listen to the wisdom of the world. You know, the wisdom that told them that if I don't have a boyfriend or girlfriend and if they're not sleeping together, then you're a bit of a loser.

[14:10] And that, you know, the wisdom that, you know, why worry about eternal consequences? Let's just have fun now and let's just do whatever we want to. Or the wisdom that rebutted Jesus and his message and said that it was all rubbish.

One of these girls had a really difficult time at school by one of her teachers. She was at a public school and one of her teachers used to single her out in class and they'd just have debate for most of class about why Christianity was wrong.

And she put up with that for a long time. But finally she snapped and she believed it. She believed what her teacher said. And today, from this group of really passionate teenagers, six of them come to mind, only one of them still called themselves a Christian.

That's really sad. And it's just simply because they started to let the world influence them and the wisdom of the world. And eventually they thought that the message of the cross was foolishness as well.

So the reason is, if you are going to reject human wisdom, then you're going against the flow of society. And even if you go to a Christian school, which I know that a lot of the youth do, there are still values and influences around you day in, day out that are not from God.

[15 : 29] If you decide to be a fool for Christ and stand firm, then you're going to be against most things that you see on the television or hear about when you listen to pop songs.

If you decide to base your life on the power of the cross, then there are going to be times where you'll be really lonely in this world. There'll be times where you're mocked and you're teased and rejected from friendship groups because you're not the same as everyone else.

I feel this pressure a lot at the moment when I hang out with my school friends. Since school, we've all changed in lots of ways. We don't live in Hamilton anymore for starters, but the direction of our lives have really gone in opposite directions.

And things in my life have changed quite significantly since I decided to follow Jesus. And so when I hang out with my school friends who haven't made that decision yet, I end up just feeling like, they make me feel like a piker all the time.

And they are really disappointed in me because I used to be, you know, up for anything and having fun and doing whatever they wanted us to do. But that's not what I'm on about anymore.

[16 : 43] It's not what I'm into. And I have stronger convictions in life. And I don't know, I feel really left out every time I hang out with them. It's just, it's very hard. But are you willing to face rejection to believe in Jesus?

Are you willing to give up what the rest of the world values and takes for granted to be a fool for Christ? Are you going to sacrifice the things in this world that you long for so that you can rest your faith on the power of God rather than on human wisdom?

This is a choice that you need to make tonight. And this is a choice that we actually make every day when we wake up. What do we listen to? Do we listen to the wisdom of the world or do we listen to the wisdom of God, which far surpasses any wisdom that you could ever hear, any good advice you could ever get from a friend?

God's wisdom is the only wisdom to listen to. God's wisdom is the only wisdom that you can do.

And some of you, even in your early years of high school, probably have felt this pressure already day to day, sort of what you believe and what you're on about conflicting with people around you.

Well, my concluding words for you tonight is never move away from the message of the gospel.

God's wisdom is the only wisdom that you can do.

[18 : 34] God's wisdom is the only wisdom that you are on the up-ported and act of radio. God's wisdom is the only wisdom that you can do. So glad to thank God's wisdom. God has service God has service God has service God Fields God hasaremos God God God God God God