

30 March 2021
Holy Tuesday

Saint Athanasius Lutheran Church
Vienna, VA

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Holy Tuesday Meditation
Text: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

The cross is the power of God, not the power of man.
Wisdom is foolishness and foolishness is wisdom.
Strength is weakness and weakness is strength.
The low are high and the high are low.
You win by losing.
You live by dying.

That's what St. Paul just told us. He packed all that in the few verses we heard tonight. He's not being contrarian. He being truthful. To the world, the things of God don't make sense. They are exactly upside-down.

But it is not God who is upside-down, but the world. That's what sin has done to us. What God calls good, satan calls bad. What God calls life, satan calls death. What God calls truth, satan calls a lie. And who do we believe? Who do *you* believe?

Well, take a look at your life. Do you see your success in getting or giving? Do you measure yourself by what you do or what God has done for you? Do you put your energy into climbing or serving? When you don't get what you want, do you thank God or get mad at Him?

This week above all others highlights this truth: just how upside-down our world is. How wrong our thinking has become. How different than how God created us to be.

It's why Pilate can't figure out Jesus. Why isn't He answering? Why isn't He trying to save his life? It's why Peter keeps trying to save his life by denying Jesus. It's why James and John ask Jesus for seats of honor and glory. It's why Judas thinks money more valuable than Jesus. It's why the people trade Barabbas for Jesus and mock Jesus on the cross. And it's why tears are shed when Jesus dies. They didn't know, and we keep forgetting, **that was part of His victory!**

That's an important part of this week, too. To remind us of that. To help us see that. So that maybe we'll stop challenging God, like the Greeks and the Jews, demanding signs and wisdom - the signs we want and what we think is wisdom, that is - and start believing Him and the sign and the wisdom He did provide us: namely, the cross.

The Romans thought the cross was the power of man. Don't cross the government or this is what will happen to you! But with the sign of Jonah, when Jesus died on that cross and the rose from the dead three days later, he took that power of man and broke it across his knee like a stick. Power? What power?

And what so-called wisdom is the world spouting these days? What so-called truth opposing and contradicting God's Word? That will give you what you want? That will save you? Everyone one of them, who have made such claims, so far, have died. There are still wars. There is still poverty. There is still division and hatred. We villify our ancestors and think we know so much better. But is the world any better? Really?

This week, this Holy Week, is like hitting the reset button in the church. ***We preach Christ crucified. Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.*** It's what we should do all year round, but maybe forget or drift away or get caught up in the currents of the world. Not this week. This week we see God's strength in weakness, and His dying to live. And we say: Amen! Truth. There is God for me! That's the source of your life, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. What else do I need? What else do I think He should do, if He did that for me?

So are you low on the world's totem pole? Are you weak in the world's kind of strength? Does the world think what you think and believe foolish? Are you ***a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles?*** Good! So was Christ crucified. And we know what God did with Him.

So maybe the good news of this week and all that Jesus has done for us can help us beyond this week. That we forget a little less, and not drift quite as far, and get caught up in the ways of the world not so much. As Christ crucified lives in you. And where Christ lives, there is life.

So rejoice! And boast in your weak and lowly and foolish and crucified God.

In the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.