

Sermon Notes



Series: Against the Current

Sermon: A Day for Fools

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? 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. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.

Monday: Read John 20:1-18

Why was Mary crying? For the bluntly obvious fact that all of us are too familiar with death; we know about death's irretrievable finality. Mary wept because death had done to Jesus' body what death does to each person's body. Jesus twice asked his logical question out of a deep well of both compassion and empathy. Mary Magdalene on Easter morning is a symbol of the whole human condition. And so it is precisely into that situation of dereliction that Easter must burst forth. Easter does not happen in a bright, airy, and decked-out-in-white church sanctuary. Easter doesn't happen around the dinner table with our family around us and mounds of delicious food to eat. Easter happens in the E.R. when the doctor comes out to the waiting area and shakes his head. Easter happens at the funeral home when that first glimpse of coffin hits you like a punch to the gut and you can't breathe. Easter happens in the crack house, and the nursing home, and on the front lines. Easter happens where death is, because that is the only place it is needed. None of us weeps without cause. Mary Magdalene didn't either. The tears of truth Mary wept meant exactly what they still mean: we have the hope of new life smack where we need it most: in the midst of a world full of death and dying. So today Jesus still comes up from behind to ask, "Why are you weeping? Mournful? Depressed? What are you afraid of?" The hope of Easter is found in the knowledge that something new is born from the ashes. What new life is being born in you today? How are you experiencing resurrection? What new thing is God doing in your life?

Prayer: Thank you God for the gift of new life.

Tuesday: Read John 20:19-23

Jesus came to the disciples with the greeting of "Peace be with you," while they fearfully hunkered down behind locked doors. Showing them the reality of his crucifixion, his pierced hands and sides, he again offered them words that defined his mission, "Peace be with you." A peace not imparted to encourage staying sheltered in secure confines but embedded with mission to go forth into the world, replicating God's sending of Jesus, sharing a peace that is deep and lasting. It's a peace that says despite everything, we'll be okay. Peace like a breath that reminds us life is worth living. How do we receive the peace Jesus freely offers and let it flow forth into the world? Will we allow ourselves to be filled with that peace? Are we willing to carry it into a world full of trouble?

Prayer: Holy God, fill me with your peace today.

Wednesday: Read John 20:24-31

Don't you hate it when you make one mistake and it defines you from then on out?! One little mistake and Thomas becomes a morality lesson, a byword, a counter-example of anything we'd ever want to be. But there is more than a little of Thomas in all of us, and maybe that's not such a bad thing. What if doubt is not the opposite of faith but an essential ingredient? What if hardboiled real-

ism is an asset to vibrant faith? What if we can bring our questions and skepticism, as well as our insights and trust, to Christ? What if this is the model of discipleship that prepares and blesses us for faithful mission in the world?

Prayer: May my questions and doubts bring me closer to you, Jesus.

Thursday: Read John 21:1-14

We find the disciples doing what they normally did – fishing – when they encountered Jesus. Isn't that true for us, as well? In the post Easter return to routine, we quickly go back to our predictable habits. Lent is over, Jesus is risen, and we have things to do. But Jesus shows up again, in the midst of the ordinary, Jesus is there. This gospel story gives us the opportunity to consider where and when we meet Jesus as we go about our daily lives. Do we recognize Christ in the midst of our routine? And more importantly, are we willing to have our lives changed and transformed by those encounters, even if that means disrupting all that is familiar or comfortable?

Prayer: Jesus, help me to recognize you in my everyday ordinary life.

Friday: Read John 21:15-19

The exchange between Jesus and Peter is a masterpiece of economical communication. Jesus succinctly poses the irreducible question that frames the relationship between God and humanity: Do you love me? But what does loving God actually mean? The Resurrection is not a spectator sport. We are not meant to marvel at the miracle from afar and respond with polite applause. It is our Resurrection, too. We are risen with Christ. We are here to do his work. In kindness, in caring, in generosity, in patience, in forgiveness. This Easter season Jesus asks us again: Do you love me? If you love me...then love them. Are you angry with someone? Is there a sense you need to help someone? Can you send a card or note to brighten someone's day? How can you best love Jesus today?

Prayer: I love you, God, help me to show that love by caring for others.

Saturday: Read John 21:24-25

John's whole Gospel is one long, narrative attempt to convince us that Jesus is the Christ through whom we find, not just life, but life in abundance. There is a promise here so rich and deep it is difficult to fathom: that the work of God through Christ is immeasurable, "the whole world could not contain the books that would be written." A promise as true today as it was then. How do you see God at work in your world? What stories of God's grace do you need to share? In what ways is God calling you to participate in God's story of redemption?

Prayer: Thank you God, for all the ways you rescue, redeem, and restore this world.