

#11 16-17

Psalm 15

Micah 6:1-8

Matthew 5:1-12

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

## *What Kind of Humans Are We?*

**<sup>18</sup>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. <sup>19</sup>For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." <sup>20</sup>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? <sup>21</sup>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. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness 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 God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. <sup>26</sup>Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup>But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup>God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no one might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup>He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup>in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."**

All of our scriptures for today are focusing on the question, what kind of humans are we called to be, if we strive to be sacred people. The Psalmist asks God, what humans can hang out with God. It seems there is a desire from the Psalmist to be closer to the Holy One. In Micah we are reminded that people can get confused, and compare being acceptable by God with what our fellow humans seem to desire - that of wealth and great extravagances, a big show of who we are as extraordinary humans! And in truth, God desires us, "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."

Our Gospel reading the beatitudes, which also seems to set our trained human behavior on its head! In these words from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is taking all the things that appear to be painful, or troublesome, and makes them of utmost value to God! All of these scriptures from today seems to ponder what values a person has faith has, that is in contrast to what we experience focusing only on the human developments.

Which calls into question immediately, *are* we striving to be sacred humans? What kind of humans are we? Are we even able to separate our human desires from what God requires of us, in order for us to live in God's company? There is so much blinding us, and keeping us from seeing where our cultural influences, our weaknesses and desires, keep us from seeing how God is calling us to be. And do not make any mistakes in thinking that one can claim Christ, and just go on our merry way without introspection. For, as the reading from Corinthians tells us, there is a tremendous difference between what humans seem to value, and what God values. Paul describes the perfect dichotomy of human values vs. sacred values. We think we know what is of value, but without comparing our lives to the teachings of Christ, and then desiring to adapt our thoughts, behaviors, actions, to be more aligned with Christ - we are just being foolish.

And being called foolish is a kindness. Nowadays we use bigger words, like Narcissistic, Bully, Greedy, Selfish, ignorant . . . all these people who seem to try to twist the word, "justice" so that it fits their personal needs. Who think that being kind means bossing others around for their own good, and who boast and try to twist the world to fit their own desire to BE God, rather than to be willing to sacrifice parts of their ego for the love of God and God's creations.

In our scriptures we find that there really are 2 kinds of humans ~ those who desire to be in constant creation of their own souls with the Sacred, and those who desire to control the world so they can affirm their own selves as being the most important part of this life we all share.

What kind of human are we? Are we humbly walking with God, seeking to lesson our prejudices, thoughts, fears and angers, in order to replace them with the wisdom and love of God? Or are we tired of trying and figure what we have done so far is good enough, any more is too hard? Can we not remember when we thought we knew something, and learned, therefore grew in wisdom, ~ and from there extrapolate the experience to other beliefs.

For example, I remember when I was a child, and I met a girl, and learned her mother had been divorced. I was stunned. I felt dirty by even knowing that. Somehow that woman and her daughter had been tainted by a divorce. And then my mother talked to me, and I got to know the family, and I realized that what I had thought before was wrong, to judge someone by their marital experiences. So, when I saw my first interracial couple, the first shock didn't last as long and when I had to contemplate about the divorced woman. I had experiences with catching myself in my own opinions, with the possibility that they may be wrong. I am reminded of the Prego commercial where the customer contemplates what other questionable choices she made, after discovering she prefers Prego to Ragu.

My point is, and so is Paul's, that when we don't start off contemplating that we might just possibly be wrong in our opinions, and not even be open to the possibility that there might be a kinder, more just, less greed and fear based, more compassionate, godly way of thinking about things, we are the second kind of humans - those who value selves more than God. Paul goes ahead and calls us fools when we do that.

And then he goes on to point out the brilliance, and the majesty and the power of God! God is so wise, even his dumbest thought is greater than our own! And we can trust that brilliance - even when we mess up. God doesn't care if we makes mistakes, forget God for a while and run on our egos, God only cares that we try, and keep trying. That we turn around and learn and trust that being the kind of human that wants to be as sacred as possible, is a process and is enough.

Nadia Bolz Weber; wrote: "James Wall tells about how difficult a certain Carmelite nun found contemplative prayer to be because her thoughts would wander a thousand times during a 20 minute prayer session. She was sure her teacher Thomas Merton would rebuke her for such a failure, so she was surprised when instead Merton said that her wandering thoughts were just 1,000 opportunities to return to God."

With practice, turning first to God gets easier. We learn to question our preconceived notions. And when we do this, we open up the amazing power of God to perform what seems like miracles. Are we expecting powerful miracles of compassion from God? Or do we think we know all there is to know. Are we going to go forth in the power and trust of God, or are we holding the wisdom of God from entering into our lives with our own foolishness?

I close with Thomas Merton's most famous prayer:

"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone." AMEN