

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Sep 4th 2014

All this talk about the wise being foolish sort of has me down. Probably because I'm one of the wise guys they're talking about in Corinthians. I am educated. I am smart. I'm a college professor. I'm in Mensa. And people like me tend to rely pretty heavily on our intelligence. We think we're so smart. But what do we really know? I saw a t-shirt the other day that said, "I'm a college professor: to save time, let's just assume I'm right" I know a lot of stuff. I'm well read. I'm a whiz at trivia. But what do I know, really? Seriously, I don't know anything. I don't know how we got here. I don't know what all this means. I can't see the big picture, because I'm human. I'm not God. And that's the point. We humans are naturally restricted. We don't know how everything happens. We don't know how the earth got here. We don't know what happens when we die. We are human. We live, then we die. We couldn't do this. We couldn't make a world or make people from scratch or understand how it happened or where it's going. We have to have faith. And we have to accept that we don't know everything. We call ourselves wise and think we know so much, and we think we have all the answers, but in fact, we know very little, and we do not have all the answers. Even those who know a lot, in the bigger scheme of things know very little. We think we have everything, but everything we have and our very selves belong to God. Nothing is really ours, not our possessions, not our environment, not our experiences. It is all from God, and it is all God's.

When Peter is having a bad day fishing, Jesus tells him to put out his nets one last time. Peter says that they've been fishing all day and have nothing to show for it, but he puts out his nets on Jesus' word. And the haul is so great he can't get them all in the boat. And Peter says, in effect, I'm not worthy. He doesn't know how this could happen. There were no fish, then there were so many fish he can't contain them. That's not possible. But it happened. Peter thinks he knows about fishing, but what does he know? He knows enough to put his faith and trust in Jesus and to follow him. Jesus says he will be a fisher of men now, able to share his faith and his experience.

We don't know anything, but we should know enough to put our faith and trust in the Lord and follow him. We don't know it all. We can't know it all. But we can accept this and trust in God.

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