

Message for Sunday, February 1, 2026

Title: Doesn't Make Sense

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1: 18-31

Welcome

Announcements: *Giving options-online, in the back, offering etc; Special Offering for the month of February-Human Relations Day (2-minute video); Ash Wednesday services on February 18th at 5:30PM. Volunteers needed for hospitality.*

Fellowship of Love

Song

Call to Worship

L: What does the Lord require of us:

P: To do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

L: With what shall we come before the Lord?

P: With speech that is gentle, and words that build up.

L: How shall we live our faith?

P: With actions that bring peace, and works that lift up the lowly.

L: Come and worship God in spirit and in truth.

Unison Prayer

The hills hear your voice, O Lord. The mountains quake before you.

As we call on your name, help us walk in the ways of righteousness and speak in tones of peace.

As we seek to be blameless and do what is right, may our hearts be free from guile and deceit,

that we be known as peace makers, and blessed children of God.

Amen.

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L: As we come to this time of offering, let us remember that giving is an opportunity to respond to God's generosity with our own.

Offering/ Song

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 NRSVue

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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.

For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."

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Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

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For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

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Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

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but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

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but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

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For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

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Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.

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But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

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God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are,

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so that no one may boast before him.

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It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

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Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

Meditation: Doesn't Make Sense

I am a Trekkie. I watched The Next Generation as I was growing up in the 90's.

I watched all of the original movies, and I have watched various episodes of the original series. I've watched many of the other iterations of Star Trek over the years as well. One of the original series' favorite characters is Spock. Spock is a Vulcan, he is a person of logic and facts only. In The Next Generation, Data was one of my favorite characters, the android that had trouble understanding human emotions and feelings but always tried to do the right thing.

Both of these individuals express a deep sense of coherence in their lives. They tried to live to a code of logic where everything fits together and works together. However, inevitably in their stories they run up against many very human things that don't make sense. Like emotion, gut feelings, or politics. I think much of the church world has been inhabited by people who want to act more like Spock or Data, they want a logical coherence, they want a faith that makes sense and a faith that elevates their status; whatever status that might be.

This is not something new. In fact, this is the very issue that Paul is addressing in this scripture. Paul is addressing the issue of why are you a believer? Underlying Paul's argument is the issue in the church of Corinth of believers applying their perspective and their social constructs to faith in Christ. Paul talks about the Jewish people looking for a Davidic monarch, and he talks about the Greeks looking for esteem and power. Paul's argument is not that these perspectives are foolish. His argument is that the Gospel, which is embodied in Paul's understanding of the cross, does not do what either of these groups want.

For the Jewish person what we see is a person of Davidic line being killed but that somehow still saves us. From the Greek perspective, we have someone who saves us who died the death of a convict. Someone who does not give power or esteem. Jesus somehow is greater than these desires that we have for what God is or what God is doing.

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In our world today we see Christianity being twisted to be things that it isn't. Christian Nationalism is rampant in our society. Stephen Wolfe author of "The Case for Christian Nationalism" states the following thesis statement: "A Christian nation is a nation whose particularly earthly way of life has been ordered to heavenly life in Christ, having been perfected by Christian revelation as grace perfects nature, without undermining that particularity but rather strengthening it so that the people might achieve the complete good" (p. 174).

A website I read summarized the major points of his book this way,

1. Civil government ought to direct its people to the true religion [Major Premise: "a principle of nature"].
2. The Christian religion is the true religion [Minor Premise: a "supernatural" premise]
3. Therefore, civil government ought to direct its people to the Christian religion [a "supernatural conclusion"].

Of course there are many questions I have regarding his ideas. Questions such as who's version of Christianity? The heart of this ideology runs directly contrary to what the apostle Paul is bring to our attention today.

Paul is saying the cross doesn't have the same values as the world does. Whether that value is in ruling a kingdom or in giving its members power over others. That is not the point of the cross. (Before some of you say something this author is someone who is expressing a popular view of Christianity in the country, and much of this ideology is at work in our society and in our politics right now.) Unlike my heroes in Star Trek, our faith doesn't make sense. The beatitudes call us to humbleness, not to country take over.

Our faith calls us not to the halls of power; our faith calls us to helping the poor. Our faith doesn't call us to violent suppression; our faith calls us to caring for those who need the help. Our faith doesn't make sense from a business standpoint, we aren't making money, we are giving it away. We are seeking to live into the foolishness of the cross. Amen.

Communion Lead In-The Great Thanksgiving

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**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING
Communion Liturgy
UMH pp. 13-16**

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L: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Lift up your hearts.

P: We lift them up to the Lord.

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

P: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

L: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

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**P: Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

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L: Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

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L: On the night in which he gave himself up for us he took bread gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

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"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

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L: When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

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L: And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

P: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

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L: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

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L: By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

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P: Amen.

Communion Songs

Benediction

Goodbye