

Get Wise to the Gospel

It's in our nature to love what works. We often ask of ideas "What is the practical value of this?" If a medicine cures our disease, we'll take it in spite of the side effects (e.g. chemotherapy). If a coach is victorious we cheer; if he has a couple of losing seasons we say "It's not working out" and call for his firing.

So why are we so opposed to the gospel? This week's epistle text says that the cross appears foolish to our human nature but it is, in fact, the very power of God himself (1 Cor. 1:18). The cross works. It is effective. The cross reveals the Father's determination to adopt humanity through the incarnation of the Son in spite of our sin and enslavement to death. By the cross Jesus defeats the powers of evil that would have derailed the Father's plan of adoption and circumcises our human nature (Col. 1:13) to make humanity fit for the Triune Life in which we are now included. That is powerful, practical, and effective!

Yet, as Tim points out in his article this week, we persist in turning away from the "ineffectiveness" of the cross to the "effectiveness" of human work: works like anger, revenge, war, and oppression which are completely ineffective. As John points out in his article, we will even pursue this human "wisdom" to the point of addiction and bondage—thus forcing our Father to stage an intervention to wake us up!

The cross reveals the adoption of humanity into the life of the Trinity by the incarnation of the Son as the man Jesus Christ. And from our fallen, sinful perspective this seems like foolish spiritualism. Yet all our "practical" moralism, ethics, and self-help is being revealed as a miserable failure. Maybe it's time we got "wise" to the way the universe created by the Trinity really works and embraced the reality and effectiveness of the "foolishness" of the cross.

~ Jonathan Stepp