

Luke 24:25 Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!"

This was not the first time that Jesus had told his disciples of their foolishness and slowness in believing.

In some ways, it is surprising that Cleopas and his companion, did not recognise Jesus in these familiar opening words. Nor in the way that he opened up the scriptures, our Old Testament, foretelling how the Messiah would suffer. It was not until Jesus broke bread with them, that the truth of who he was, dawned on these grieving people.

For many, with the current Coronavirus restrictions, breaking bread - Holy Communion - is what they are missing most. Not the words; not the opening of scriptures, but the reality of Christ's presence made known through Communion. And it will be wonderful when that is restored to the Church. Perhaps it will take on a new meaning and importance for us all.

In Proverbs, foolishness is the opposite of wisdom, sowing itself in loud-mouthed words, in quick-tempered actions, and results in breaking down, rather than building up.

In the Gospels, it was the foolish man that built his house upon sand rather than rock, and the foolish bridesmaids who failed to bring oil for their lamps and missed the wedding.

But there is a foolishness in the Bible that is commended. That is the apparent foolishness of the Gospel and those who preach it.

1 Corinthians 1:18 "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."

If the message of the Gospel seems foolish to the world, then the means of preaching it does too: "Not many of you were wise... powerful... of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish... what is weak ... what is low" (1 Cor 1:26) to preach the Gospel. This is another example of God turning things upside down, so that the glory goes to Him.

A month ago, the thought of a 99 years old WWII war veteran. raising in excess of £25 million, by doing circuits of his garden, would have seemed complete foolishness. Captain Tom Moore's desire to raise an initial £1000 in thanks for his treatment by the NHS, caught not just the imagination of his family and local community, but the nation and indeed the whole world. Other spin-offs, like CD's and the opening of new hospitals have accompanied this initial small action, done by a man of such great character, have humbled us all.

The Gospel seems foolishness to the world: God coming in human form to die as a sacrifice for sin and opening the way to eternal life beyond death. It is "foolish" in its very simplicity. The people who preach it are perhaps not the ones the world would choose, but the message is the power of God, unto salvation, for everyone who believes.

There is, in the Gospel, both a foolishness to be avoided and a foolishness to be embraced.

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