

The Lord's Message: What Is a Church? God's Wisdom, Not Ours

Date: February 8, 2026

Where: Tilghman Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

I am firmly convinced that we are living in the time of Star Trek. I came to this conclusion as I was watching the old Star Trek shows from the 60's. Captain Kirk flips out his phone and says to Scotty, "Beam me up!" Doc is using robotics to perform surgery on an injured crew member. Uhura has a hearing device in her ear, and she is talking with someone on it. Spock is facetimeing his family who live on Vulcan. The only thing that I am waiting for is for my body to be atomized and beam from one place to another.

As much as our technology and knowledge continues to expand, there is no comparison to the knowledge of God. All the knowledge of all the Einsteins in the world would not even fill a thimble compared with the knowledge of God. The profound Biblical statement which supports this fact is found in the very first book, the very first sentence of that book, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

This morning, we going to do our best the understand the knowledge of God and why it is so important for the church to understand this knowledge.

Let us pray.

Looking at the culture of the church in Corinth, Paul says in **1 Corinthians 1:22**. The Jewish people were looking for God to relate to them through miraculous signs. Looking at their history of interaction with God, you might remember that God parted the Red Sea, God brought down the walls of Jericho, God gave them victory over their enemies, God rescued their prophets from a fiery furnace and the mouths of lions. These are just some of the examples of the miracles that God performed for the Jewish people. Their knowledge of God was in the miracles.

The Greeks, on the other hand, did not have as long a relationship with God. They relied on wisdom. Wisdom found in nature and wisdom found in human thinking. Names such as Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Homer, and Herodotus shape the culture of the Greeks with their profound wisdom.

But with all of this human wisdom and understanding of God through miracles, Paul asked these questions in verse 20, “Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age?” In other words, who has the wisdom and what has it got them? Paul states, “Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?”

I noted that this word foolish, or foolishness, is used 6 times in this brief passage of scripture. I do not think this was an accident, but the word was specifically chosen by Paul. The Greek word for this is “moros,” from which we get the word “moron.” Let us look at these verses. In verse 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”, verse 20, “Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world”, verse 21, “for since in God the wisdom of the world thought its wisdom did not know Him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe”, verse 23, “but we preach Christ crucified; a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles”, verse 25, “For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength,” and verse 27, “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.”

What was the wisdom God had which made the world’s wisdom foolish? The cross! Verse 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.”

We are going to be exploring the journey that Jesus took to the cross during our season of Lent that will begin in less than two weeks on February 18, Ash Wednesday.

I know the cross today has been cleansed and become common place, so much that the cross has lost its message. It is not just me saying it, but the courts are saying the same thing. In Bladensburg, Maryland there is a 40-foot cross at the intersection of Annapolis Road and Baltimore Avenue. It is located in a small park called Peace Park. The cross is named the Peace Cross. It was erected in 1925 by mothers who lost their sons in WWI. In June of 2019 after many years of debate and court trials, the Supreme Court ruled that the cross could stay because, “despite being a Christian symbol, has acquired a significant secular, historical, and community meaning over time.” The cross has lost its rightful place as the symbol of God’s work of salvation and become just another symbol. It is “foolishness to those who are perishing.”

It is “a stumbling block” to unbelievers. There are many people and may include some of you who are here today or watching us online, who do not believe Jesus is God’s Son who came to earth to be one of us, so that He could die on the cross to save us from our sins. God resurrected His Son from the grave three days later. Jesus appeared to 500 people in 40 days and then ascended into Heaven and one day He is coming back.

The wisdom which God has, to be able to devise this wonderful plan of salvation, has destroyed all human wisdom forever. In **Isaiah 29:14**, God says, “Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.” There is not any human argument that can stand up to God’s.

The most powerful nation on earth at the time, and many would argue today that it is the most powerful nation in all of history, was Rome. The Roman empire existed for 500 years. The Roman empire controlled the Mediterranean, much of Europe, Western Asia, and North Africa. To keep order in the conquered lands, the Romans took great strides for implementation of the cruelest form of punishment, which was crucifixion. This brought great fear to the masses. God used the cross, the weak thing of the world, to shame the powerful by using the cross to be the symbol of salvation.

One of the first symbols that was adopted by the Global Methodist Church was the cross. You see the cross in the center of the three circles. The three circles represent the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The cross once a symbol of hate, became the greatest symbol of love. Sadly, many churches today are doing away with the cross, to their tragic demise.

We need to reclaim the power of the cross. We should display the cross not as a secular or historical symbol, but as the symbol of the love and wisdom of God.

In a short while, we are going to sing together one of my favorite hymns, the Old Rugged Cross. I can remember from an early age singing this beautiful hymn. I may have struggled with the words, but as I grew, and continue to grow, in my walk with Christ this hymn continues to deepen my understanding of God and His love for me. This was written by George Benard, a Methodist evangelist in 1913 as he was meditating on this passage of scripture and John 3:16 for a better understanding of Christ crucifixion. It took him over a year to write this song. He said about this song, “I really didn’t write it. I was merely the instrument God used.”

My prayer every day is for God to use me. Not because I am wise, because I know that I am not. My prayer is that God will use me because I love Him and am faithful. All the technology in the world, can not replace the wisdom of God. The cross has not lost its power for me.

This morning we are concluding our sermon series on What Is a Church? I would conclude that a church is a church because it is where the faithful gather in fellowship with God and each other. During this gathering Christ is present and even though there are many different people gathered with different thoughts and ideas which can cause negative happenings, they are all united in Christ. Forgiveness and grace should be the theme of these gatherings. The church is the church because it does not rely on human wisdom, but on God's wisdom. God uses the weak and disregarded things of the world to display His wisdom.

Let us continue to meet together, with Christ in the center of our gathering, and let us continue to listen to God so that we may do His will. Amen.