

**~Other Speakers A-F: John Chrysostom:**

For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but to us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent will I reject. Where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of the World?

To the sick and gasping even wholesome meats are unpleasant, friends and relations burdensome; who are often times not even recognized, but are rather accounted intruders. Much like this often is the case of those who are perishing in their souls. For the things which tend to salvation they know not; and those who are careful about them they consider to be troublesome. Now this ensues not from the nature of the thing, but from their disease. And just what the insane do, hating those who take care of them, and besides reviling them, the same is the case with unbelievers also. But as in the case of the former, they who are insulted then more than ever compassionate them, and weep, taking this as the worst symptom of the disease in its intense form, when they know not their best friends; so also in the case of the Gentiles let us act; yea more than for our wives let us wail over them, because they know not the common salvation. For not so dearly ought a man to love his wife as we should love all men, and draw them over unto salvation; be a man a Gentile, or be he what he may. For these then let us weep; for the word of the Cross is to them foolishness, being itself Wisdom and Power. For, says he, the word of the Cross to them that perish is foolishness.

For since it was likely that they, the Cross being derided by the Greeks, would resist and contend by aid of that wisdom, which came (forsooth) of themselves, as being disturbed by the expression of the Greeks; Paul comforting them says, think it not strange and unaccountable, which is taking place. This is the nature of the thing, that its power is not recognized by them that perish. For they are beside themselves, and behave as madmen; and so they rail and are disgusted at the medicines which bring health.

2. But what do you say, O man? Christ became a slave for you, having taken the form of a slave, Philipians 2:7 and was crucified, and rose again. And when you ought for this reason to adore Him risen and admire His loving kindness; because what neither father, nor friend, nor son, did for you, all this the Lord wrought for you, the enemy and offender — when, I say, you ought to admire Him for these things, do you call that foolishness, which is full of so great wisdom? Well, it is nothing wonderful; for it is a mark of them that perish not to recognize the things which lead to salvation. Be not troubled, therefore, for it is no strange nor unaccountable event, that things truly great are mocked at by those who are beside themselves. Now such as are in this mind you cannot convince by human wisdom. Nay, if you want so to convince them, you do but the contrary. For the things which transcend reasoning require faith alone. Thus, should we set about convincing men by reasonings, how God became man, and entered into the Virgin's womb, and not commit the matter unto faith, they will but deride the more. Therefore they who inquire by reasonings, it is they who perish.

And why speak I of God? For in regard of created things, should we do this, great derision will ensue. For suppose a man, wishing to make out all things by reasoning; and let him try by your discourse to convince himself how we see the light; and do thou try to convince him by reasoning. Nay, you can not: for if you say that it suffices to see by opening the eyes, you have not expressed the manner, but the fact. For why see we not, one will say, by our hearing, and with our eyes hear? And why hear we not with the nostril, and with the hearing smell? If then, he being in doubt about these things, and we unable to give the explanation of them, he is to begin laughing, shall not we rather laugh him to scorn? For since both have their origin from one brain, since the two members are near neighbors to each other, why can they not do the same work? Now we shall not be able to state the cause nor the method of the unspeakable and curious operation; and should we make the attempt, we should be laughed to scorn. Wherefore, leaving this unto God's power and boundless wisdom, let us be silent.

Just so with regard to the things of God; should we desire to explain them by the wisdom which is from without, great derision will ensue, not from their infirmity, but from the folly of men. For the great things of all no language can explain.

3. Now observe: when I say, He was crucified; the Greek says, And how can this be reasonable? Himself He helped not when undergoing crucifixion and sore trial at the moment of the Cross: how then after these things did He rise again and help others? For if He had been able, before death was the proper time. (For this the Jews actually said.) Matthew 27:41-42 But He who helped not Himself, how helped he others? There is no reason in it, says he. True, O man, for indeed it is above reason; and unspeakable is the power of the Cross. For that being actually in the midst of horrors, He should have shown Himself above all horrors; and being in the enemy's hold should have overcome; this comes of Infinite Power. For as in the case of the Three Children, their not entering

1 Corinthians 1:18-20

the furnace would not have been so astonishing, as that having entered in they trampled upon the fire " and in the case of Jonah, it was a greater thing by far, after he had been swallowed by the fish, to suffer no harm from the monster, than if he had not been swallowed at all " so also in regard of Christ; His not dying would not have been so inconceivable, as that having died He should loose the bands of death. Say not then, why did He not help Himself on the Cross? for He was hastening on to close conflict with death himself. (See Hooker, E. P. v. 48. 9.) He descended not from the Cross, not because He could not, but because He would not. For Him Whom the tyranny of death restrained not, how could the nails of the Cross restrain?

4. But these things, though known to us, are not so as yet to the unbelievers. Wherefore he said that the word of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but to us who are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent will I reject. Nothing from himself which might give offense, does he advance up to this point; but first he comes to the testimony of the Scripture, and then furnished with boldness from thence, adopts more vehement words, and says,

1 Corinthians 1:20-21

Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Where is the wise? Where the Scribe? Where the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe. Having said, It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, He subjoins demonstration from facts, saying, Where is the wise? Where the Scribe? at the same time glancing at both Gentiles and Jews. For what sort of philosopher, which among those who have studied logic, which of those knowing in Jewish matters, has saved us and made known the truth? Not one. It was the fisherman's work, the whole of it.

Having then drawn the conclusion which he had in view, and brought down their pride, and said, Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? he states also the reason why these things were so done. For seeing that in the wisdom of God, says he, the world through its wisdom knew not God, the Cross appeared. Now what means, in the wisdom of God? The wisdom apparent in those works whereby it was His will to make Himself known. For to this end did he frame them, and frame them such as they are, that by a sort of proportion, (á¼€í½î±î»ïCEî³ï%ï.) from the things which are seen admiration of the Maker might be learned. Is the heaven great, and the earth boundless? Wonder then at Him who made them. For this heaven, great as it is, not only was made by Him, but made with ease; and that boundless earth, too, was brought into being even as if it had been nothing. Wherefore of the former He says, Psalm 102:25. ï,á¿ïï½ ï±ïµïïïá¿ïï½. Septuagint The works of Your fingers are the heavens, and concerning the earth, Isaiah 40:23. Septuagint Who has made the earth as it were nothing. Since then by this wisdom the world was unwilling to discover God, He employed what seemed to be foolishness, i.e. the Gospel, to persuade men; not by reasoning, but by faith. It remains that where God's wisdom is, there is no longer need of man's. For before, to infer that He who made the world such and so great, must in all reason be a God possessed of a certain uncontrollable, unspeakable power; and by these means to apprehend Him " this was the part of human wisdom. But now we need no more reasonings, but faith alone. For to believe in Him that was crucified and buried, and to be fully persuaded that this Person Himself both rose again and sat down on high; this needs not wisdom, nor reasonings, but faith. For the Apostles themselves came in not by wisdom, but by faith, and surpassed the heathen wise men in wisdom and loftiness, and that so much the more, as to raise disputings is less than to receive by faith the things of God. For this transcends all human understanding.

But how did He destroy wisdom? Being made known to us by Paul and others like him, He showed it to be unprofitable. For towards receiving the evangelical proclamation, neither is the wise profited at all by wisdom, nor the unlearned injured at all by ignorance. But if one may speak somewhat even wonderful, ignorance rather than wisdom is a condition suitable for that impression, and more easily dealt with. For the shepherd and the rustic will more quickly receive this, once for all both repressing all doubting thoughts and delivering himself to the Lord. In this way then He destroyed wisdom. For since she first cast herself down, she is ever after useful for nothing. Thus when she ought to have displayed her proper powers, and by the works to have seen the Lord, she would not. Wherefore though she were now willing to introduce herself, she is not able. For the matter is not of that kind; this way of knowing God being far greater than the other. You see then, faith and simplicity are needed, and this we should seek every where, and prefer it before the wisdom which is from without. For God, says he, has made wisdom foolish.

But what is, He has made foolish? He has shown it foolish in regard of receiving the faith. For since they prided themselves on it, He lost no time in exposing it. For what sort of wisdom is it, when it cannot discover the chief of things that are good? He caused her therefore to appear foolish, after she had first convicted herself. For if

when discoveries might have been made by reasoning, she proved nothing, now when things proceed on a larger scale, how will she be able to accomplish anything? Now when there is need of faith alone, and not of acuteness? You see then, God has shown her to be foolish.

It was His good pleasure, too, by the foolishness of the Gospel to save; foolishness, I say, not real, but appearing to be such. For that which is more wonderful yet is His having prevailed by bringing in, not another such wisdom more excellent than the first, but what seemed to be foolishness. He cast out Plato for example, not by means of another philosopher of more skill, but by an unlearned fisherman. For thus the defeat became greater, and the victory more splendid.

#### 1 Corinthians 1:22-24

5. Next, to show the power of the Cross, he says, For Jews ask for signs and Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.

Vast is the import of the things here spoken! For he means to say how by contraries God has overcome, and how the Gospel is not of man. What he says is something of this sort. When, says he, we say unto the Jews, Believe; they answer, Raise the dead, Heal the demoniacs, Show unto us signs. But instead thereof what say we? That He was crucified, and died, who is preached. And this is enough, not only to fail in drawing over the unwilling, but even to drive away those even who are willing. Nevertheless, it drives not away, but attracts and holds fast and overcomes.

Again; the Greeks demand of us a rhetorical style, and the acuteness of sophistry. But preach we to these also the Cross: and that which, in the case of the Jews seemed to be weakness, this in the case of the Greeks is foolishness. Wherefore, when we not only fail in producing what they demand, but also produce the very opposites of their demand; (for the Cross has not merely no appearance of being a sign sought out by reasoning, but even the very annihilation of a sign "is not merely deemed no proof of power, but a conviction of weakness" not merely no display of wisdom, but a suggestion of foolishness;) when therefore they who seek for signs and wisdom not only receive not the things which they ask, but even hear the contrary to what they desire, and then by means of contraries are persuaded "how is not the power of Him that is preached unspeakable? As if to some one tempest-tost and longing for a haven, you were to show not a haven but another wilder portion of the sea, and so could make him follow with thankfulness? Or as if a physician could attract to himself the man that was wounded and in need of remedies, by promising to cure him not with drugs, but with burning of him again! For this is a result of great power indeed. So also the Apostles prevailed, not simply without a sign, but even by a thing which seemed contrary to all the known signs. Which thing also Christ did in the case of the blind man. For when He would heal him, He took away the blindness by a thing that increased it: i.e. He put on clay. John 9:6 As then by means of clay He healed the blind man, so also by means of the Cross He brought the world to Himself. That certainly was adding an offense, not taking an offense away. So did He also in creation, working out things by their contraries. With sand, for instance, He walled in the sea, having made the weak a bridle to the strong. He placed the earth upon water, having taken order that the heavy and the dense should be borne on the soft and fluid. By means of the prophets again with a small piece of wood He raised up iron from the bottom. 2 Kings 6:5-7 In like manner also with the Cross He has drawn the world to Himself. For as the water bears up the earth, so also the Cross bears up the world. You see now, it is proof of great power and wisdom, to convince by means of the things which tell directly against us. Thus the Cross seems to be matter of offense; and yet far from offending, it even attracts.

#### 1 Corinthians 1:25

6. All these things, therefore, Paul bearing in mind, and being struck with astonishment, said that the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men; in relation to the Cross, speaking of a folly and weakness, not real but apparent. For he is answering with respect unto the other party's opinion. For that which philosophers were not able by means of reasoning to accomplish, this, what seemed to be foolishness did excellently well. Which then is the wiser, he that persuades the many, or he that persuades few, or rather no one? He who persuades concerning the greatest points, or about matters which are nothing? (Reg. ms. Bened.) What great labors did Plato endure, and his followers, discoursing to us about a line, and an angle, and a point, and about numbers even and odd, and equal unto one another and unequal, and such-like spiderwebs; (for indeed those webs are not more useless to man's life than were these subjects;) and without doing good to any one great or small by their means, so he made an end of his life. How greatly did he labor, endeavoring to show that the soul was immortal! And even as he came he went away, having spoken nothing with certainty, nor persuaded any hearer. But the Cross wrought

persuasion by means of unlearned men; yea it persuaded even the whole world: and not about common things, but in discourse of God, and the godliness which is according to truth, and the evangelical way of life, and the judgment of the things to come. And of all men it made philosophers: the very rustics, the utterly unlearned. Behold how the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness stronger? How stronger? Because it overran the whole world, and took all by main force, and while men were endeavoring by ten thousands to extinguish the name of the Crucified, the contrary came to pass: that flourished and increased more and more, but they perished and wasted away; and the living at war with the dead, had no power. So that when the Greek calls me foolish, he shows himself above measure foolish: since I who am esteemed by him a fool, evidently appear wiser than the wise. When he calls me weak, then he shows himself to be weaker. For the noble things which publicans and fishermen were able to effect by the grace of God, these, philosophers, and rhetoricians, and tyrants, and in short the whole world, running ten thousand ways here and there, could not even form a notion of. For what did not the Cross introduce? The doctrine concerning the Immortality of the Soul; that concerning the Resurrection of the Body; that concerning the contempt of things present; that concerning the desire of things future. Yea, angels it has made of men, and all, every where, practice self-denial, (ἰπὶ τῆς ἀποκατάστασης) and show forth all kinds of fortitude.

7. But among them also, it will be said, many have been found contemners of death. Tell me who? Was it he who drank the hemlock? But if you will, I can bring forward ten thousand such from within the Church. For had it been lawful when prosecution befell them to drink hemlock and depart, all had become more famous than he. And besides, he drank when he was not at liberty to drink or not to drink; but willing or against his will he must have undergone it: no effect surely of fortitude, but of necessity, and nothing more. For even robbers and man-slayers, having fallen under the condemnation of their judges, have suffered things more grievous. But with us it is all quite the contrary. For not against their will did the martyrs endure, but of their will, and being at liberty not to suffer; showing forth fortitude harder than all adamant. This then you see is no great wonder, that he whom I was mentioning drank hemlock; it being no longer in his power not to drink, and also when he had arrived at a very great age. For when he despised life he stated himself to be seventy years old; if this can be called despising. For I for my part could not affirm it: nor, what is more, can anyone else. But show me some one enduring firm in torments for godliness' sake, as I show you ten thousand every where in the world. Who, while his nails were tearing out, nobly endured? Who, while his body joints were wrenching (ἀποσπασθέντων τῶν ὀστέων) asunder? Who, while his body was cut in pieces, (ἐκτεταμένον ἐν μέλησιν) member by member? Or his head? Who, while his bones were forced out by levers? (ἀποσπασθέντων τῶν ὀστέων ἐκ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν) Who, while placed without intermission upon frying-pans? Who, when thrown into a caldron? Show me these instances. For to die by hemlock is all as one with a man's continuing in a state of sleep. Nay even sweeter than sleep is this sort of death, if report say true. But if certain [of them] did endure torments, yet of these, too, the praise is gone to nothing. For on some disgraceful occasion they perished; some for revealing mysteries; some for aspiring to dominion; others detected in the foulest crimes; others again rashly, and fruitlessly, and foolishly, there being no reason for it, made away with themselves. But not so with us. Wherefore of the deeds of those nothing is said; but these flourish and daily increase. Which Paul having in mind said, The weakness of God is stronger than all men.

8. For that the Gospel is divine, even from hence is evident; namely, whence could it have occurred to twelve ignorant men to attempt such great things? Who sojourned in marshes, in rivers, in deserts; who never at any time perhaps had entered into a city nor into a forum; whence did it occur, to set themselves in array against the whole world? For that they were timid and unmanly, he shows who wrote of them, not apologizing, nor enduring to throw their failings into the shade: which indeed of itself is a very great token of the truth. What then does he say about them? That when Christ was apprehended, after ten thousand wonders, they fled; and he who remained, being the leader of the rest, denied. Whence was it then that they who when Christ was alive endured not the attack of the Jews; now that He was dead and buried, and as you say, had not risen again, nor had any talk with them, nor infused courage into them whence did they set themselves in array against so great a world? Would they not have said among themselves, what means this? Himself He was not able to save, and will He protect us? Himself He defended not when alive, and will He stretch out the hand unto us now that he is dead? Himself, when alive, subdued not even one nation; and are we to convince the whole world by uttering His Name? How, I ask, could all this be reasonable, I will not say, as something to be done, but even as something to be imagined? From whence it is plain that had they not seen Him after He was risen, and received most ample proof of his power, they would not have ventured so great a cast.

9. For suppose they had possessed friends innumerable; would they not presently have made them all enemies, disturbing ancient customs, and removing their father's landmarks? (ἀποσπασθέντων τῶν ὀστέων Ms. Reg. ἀποσπασθέντων Ben.) But as it was, they had them for enemies, all, both their own countrymen and foreigners. For although they had been recommended to veneration by everything external, would not all men have abhorred them, introducing a new polity? But now they were even destitute of everything; and it was likely that even on that account all would



of doctrines and of life. For many entirely disbelieve the resurrection; many fortify themselves with their horoscope; many adhere to superstitious observances, and to omens, and auguries, and presages. And some likewise employ amulets and charms. But to these also we will speak afterwards, when we have finished what we have to say to the Greeks.

In the meanwhile hold fast the things which have been said, and be ye fellow-helpers with me in the battle; by your way of life attracting them to us and changing them. For, as I am always saying, He that teaches high morality ought first to teach it in his own person, and be such as his hearers cannot do without. Let us therefore become such, and make the Greeks feel kindly towards us. And this will come to pass if we make up our minds not only not to do ill, but also to suffer ill. Do we not see when little children being borne in their father's arms give him that carries them blows on the cheek, how sweetly the father lets the boy have his fill of wrath, and when he sees that he has spent his passion, how his countenance brightens up? In like manner let us also act; and as fathers with children, so let us discourse with the Greeks. For all the Greeks are children. And this, some of their own writers have said, that that people are children always, and no Greek is an old man. Now children cannot bear to take thought for any thing useful; so also the Greeks would be for ever at play; and they lie on the ground, grovelling in posture and in affections. Moreover, children oftentimes, when we are discoursing about important things, give no heed to anything that is said, but will even be laughing all the time: such also are the Greeks. When we discourse of the Kingdom, they laugh. And as spittle dropping in abundance from an infant's mouth, which oftentimes spoils its meat and drink, such also are the words flowing from the mouth of the Greeks, vain and unclean. Even if you are giving children their necessary food, they keep on vexing those who furnish it with evil speech, and we must bear with them all the while. Again, children, when they see a robber entering and taking away the furniture, far from resisting, even smile on the designing fellow; but should you take away the little basket or the rattle or any other of their playthings, they take it to heart and fret, tear themselves, and stamp on the floor; just so do the Greeks also: when they behold the devil pilfering all their patrimony, and even the things which support their life, they laugh, and run to him as to a friend: but should any one take away any possession, be it wealth or any childish thing whatsoever of that kind, they cry, they tear themselves. And as children expose their limbs unconsciously and blush not for shame; so the Greeks, wallowing in whoredoms and adulteries, and laying bare the laws of nature, and introducing unlawful intercourses, are not abashed.

You have given me vehement applause and acclamation, but with all your applause have a care lest you be among those of whom these things are said. Wherefore I beseech you all to become men: since, so long as we are children, how shall we teach them manliness? How shall we restrain them from childish folly? Let us, therefore, become men; that we may arrive at the measure of the stature which has been marked out for us by Christ, and may obtain the good things to come: through the grace and loving-kindness, etc. etc.