

**Series:** Path to Glory  
**Title:** The Perplexing Power of God  
**Text:** I Corinthians 1:18-25; (I Corinthians 1:25)  
**Proposition:** Everyone will trust in God's perplexing power because of the evidence of the biblical evidence and real life application.

For the past few weeks we have been exploring biblical signs along the path to glory. We began this journey by making preparations for the long road to the cross and the empty tomb. We took a look at what we needed to reach the summit of God's glory. We learned that our failure, our brokenness, our sin, requires a savior to make us ready for glory.

Clothed with the mercy of Christ, we began our journey to glory, realizing that we also needed a companion along the dangerous, difficult path. God gave us a sign that we do not have to go it alone. His Son Jesus went to the Cross so that we would never be alone on the path to glory.

Last week, Pastor Bonita told us that God always fulfills his promises in His time and in His ways. God's faithfulness simply invites our complete trust. Today, Paul, a leader of the early church, explains that God's ways are higher than our ways; His power often leaves us completely bewildered. Hopefully, we will see that we can rely upon God's perplexing power because of biblical real life evidence.

A mother asked her seven year old son what he learned in Sunday school. He said, "Well, Mom, today we learned about the time when Moses led the Hebrew people out of Egyptian slavery. They arrived at the Red Sea, and Moses realized the Israelites couldn't cross over. So he asked the Israeli Corps of Engineers to build a

pontoon bridge over the sea. Then they walked over the bridge. But when the Egyptians got there, they had their tanks, guns and heavy artillery, which sank in the mud. Moses then commanded the Israeli air force to bomb them, wiping them out."

Horrified, the mother asked, "Is that what they taught you in Sunday school this morning?" He said, "Well, not exactly. But if I told you what our teacher told us, you'd never believe it."

Upon hearing or reading the stories in Scripture I suspect that some folks today are like that little boy. They have a hard time believing that God still gets personally involved in the everyday stuff of life. They may think that God doesn't care about their personal problems or their challenges. They may have cried out to God, and only heard his silence. They may have been enslaved by some anxious thoughts or addictions and yet their deliverer has failed to show up. So they doubt. They question.

What really happened when Moses led the Hebrew people out of Egypt? After a series of several plagues that afflicted the Egyptian, even the killing of all their first born, Pharaoh, the Egyptian leader, let the Hebrews go to worship in their own land. Pharaoh's heart though grew stubborn, so he and his army with horses and chariots chased after the Hebrew people. All Pharaoh's horse-drawn chariots and their riders, all his foot soldiers caught up with them while they were camped along the sea. As they approached the Israelites looked up and saw the Egyptians. They were totally afraid. They cried out to God in terror. They complained to Moses, "What have you

done to us, taking us out of Egypt? Back in Egypt didn't we tell you that this would happen? Didn't we tell you to leave us in Egypt? Didn't we tell you that we would be better off as slaves in Egypt than a corpse in the wilderness?"

Moses stood on the banks of the sea and told them not to be afraid. "Stand firm and watch God do his work of salvation for you today!" Take a look at those Egyptians today, for you will never see them again. God will fight the battle for you."

Then God told Moses to tell the Hebrews to get moving. God said, "Hold your staff high and stretch your hand out over the sea. Watch the sea open up so that my people will walk over to the other side on dry ground. Meanwhile the Egyptians will follow you. I will use Pharaoh and his army to show my people my glory so that all Egyptians will know that I am the Lord God."

The angel of the Lord that was leading the Hebrews went to the rear, standing between Pharaoh's army and the Hebrews. And the cloud also shifted to the rear shrouding the Egyptians in darkness and the Hebrews in light.

When Moses lifted up his hand over the sea, God sent a mighty wind from the east all night long, making the sea go back. He made the sea dry ground. The Hebrews walked through the sea on dry ground with the waters a wall to the right and to the left. The Egyptians followed them in the dry sea bed. Every horse-drawn chariot, every foot soldier, even Pharaoh himself chased the Hebrews. God looked on the Egyptians like a pillar of fire and a cloud causing fear and disarray among the

Egyptian army. God caused the chariot wheels to get clogged in the mud. They yelled to one another, “Run, for their God is fighting for them!”

After the Hebrews were on the other side, God told Moses to stretch out his hand again. After Moses obeyed, the walls of sea water came tumbling down on Pharaoh and his army, drowning every Egyptian, and Pharaoh himself. No one survived. God had delivered the Hebrews from their oppressors. The Hebrews saw the Egyptian bodies wash up on the shore and realized the tremendous, perplexing power of God. They stood there in reverent awe before God. *Yes, the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.*

Where are you feeling oppressed? Where your back is pressed against a wall and your enemy is in pursuit? What is your Egyptian Army? Debt...worry...addiction...resentment...depression...illness...loneliness. Take a look at your Egyptian Army for you will never see them again. Your Deliverer is Coming!!

When we hear such biblical stories with our academic, intellectual minds, sometimes our mind says, *“That can't be possible. It's absurd. It's foolishness.”* It's ridiculous that David, a shepherd boy armed with five smooth stones and a slingshot, would confront the Philistine giant, Goliath. David didn't have a chance against this incredible hulk. He was so big that he would make an NBA center look small. Everybody knew Goliath would quickly mow him down. That is everybody except David. The Bible tells us that David knew from experience that with the Almighty

God on his side he could do anything. So he took one of those smooth stones in his slingshot and put it right in the center of Goliath's forehead. Goliath dropped dead.

What giants are you facing? Someone defying your God...An overwhelming situation...a God defying attitude...a temptation. What weapons will you choose? Retreat...a sharp tongue...God's promises...forgiveness...prayer...Christian friends...trust in God. Will you trust as if it all depends on God and act as if it all depends on you? Yes, *the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.*

Then there is this bizarre story about the birth of God's Son. It is a crazy, ridiculous story. Many believed that when the Son of God would be born, he would be born in a palace. He would have royal parents. The pillowcases would be satin; the sheets would be silk. He'd be laid in a beautiful, handsome, lace gown. He would have clean cloth diapers around him. But that's not the way it was.

The Bible tells the amazing story when the Son of God was born. He was born not in a royal palace. He was born in a stable, in a manger, really in a drinking trough, that cows and donkeys drank and ate from. It was a filthy place surrounded by the smell of straw, sheep, cows, and donkey's along with their sweat and dung. It seems foolish for a king to be born in such a place.

He did not have royal parents. Joseph, his adoptive father was a young carpenter. Mary, the peasant girl, Jesus' mother, was probably was no more than 12 or

13. We're talking about young people who today would be either in junior or senior high school. It seems absurd that kids would be raising the Son of God.

The timing of his birth was just as bizarre. At that time many assumed that Son of God would be born, when the Jews would be in power. But Rome was in power. And to make matters worse, the Roman roads and the strength of the Roman army prevented and squelched revolutions. The Jews didn't have a chance. It seems stupid that the Deliverer would come from the weakest nation in the world.

Few spoke as the Jews did. The majority spoke Greek or Latin. The Jews, instead of being gathered together in Jerusalem for the birth of the Son of God, were dispersed all over the world.

And what made this really crazy was that Mary and Joseph believed God's messengers that they would raise the Son of God. After the angel told Mary that she would be the mother of God's son, he said, "*Nothing is impossible with God.*" Then Mary trusted God and said, "*I am the Lord's servant May it be as you have said.*" The God of the universe entrusted the care of his Son to a young carpenter and a very young woman who simply had the one quality that God looks for, faith. They trusted God. They believed this foolish promise, and so into their care the God of the universe entrusted his only Son.

What is God entrusting in your care so that His message can be revealed to your world? Your family...your career...your service area...your coworkers...neighborhood...Tipp City...Monroe Township...Miami County. Yes,

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

Yet, God's foolishness doesn't stop there. Paul, a writer of the several letters in the New Testament, said, *"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."* Paul reminds us that even though the gospel does not measure up to both the "religious" and the "secular," the Jewish world and the Greek world, it is the only word of salvation to those who believe. The Old Testament idea was that God showed his pleasure with an individual by pouring out material blessings and His displeasure by sending judgment in the form of illness, loss, or trouble. The ultimate form of loss was death, and only the worst of criminals were crucified. Then Paul, a Jewish teacher, came along and said that the cross of Christ was not a curse but God's demonstration of His love and mercy. No wonder the Jews resisted this witness.

For the Greeks it was absurd that a God would suffer with humanity. For them God was incapable of any feeling. God was simply apathetic toward all that humanity was enduring. He was incapable of caring or grief. He was detached from all that was of this world. God would never be involved in human affairs. To the thinking Greek the idea that God became flesh was totally foolish.

The Greeks also sought wisdom from rational, reasonable debate. They would have made Fox News, CNN, or MSNBC political pundits look like elementarily children. They were intoxicated by fine words; and to them, like many today, the

clear, simple preaching of the Gospel was simply to be laughed at or ridiculed rather than listened to and respected. But *the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.*

This absurd foolishness and perceived weakness is at work in our lives and in the church. When people face a dead end, when people face adversity or face something they can't conquer, it is opportunity to trust in God's perplexing power. The unemployed turn to God to open doors of opportunity. The heartbroken trust God to restore their heart. The guilt-ridden turn to God to find peace.

Those in conflict turn to God to find ways to reconcile in a spirit of humility. Those oppressed by addictions turn to God to find freedom. The grieving trust God's love to comfort them in loneliness.

Marge, a single woman with many physical challenges which keep her in a wheel chair loves the Lord. One day she had a successful surgical procedure. While she was recovering from her surgery she shared a room with an older woman, whom I will call Sally. They had a great time getting acquainted and sharing stories about their families.

After Marge's friend from church, Carolyn came to take her home, Sally shared that she recently lost her husband of 50 plus years. Adjusting to her life has been really difficult. Loneliness and grief often cloud her spirit. Marge had been praying for opportunities to share her love for God, and now the Holy Spirit placed her in a room with someone who hungered for love. Sally said that she has not been

attending church for quite some time. Both Marge and Carolyn, told Sally how much their church is a place where love grows. They shared how strangers become friends and friends become family. They talked about how they have grown closer to God through their fellowship. They invited Sally to come and see if their church is the place where love truly grows. Sally said that she would give that some serious thought. She told Marge and Carolyn, “If your church is loving and kind like you have been to me then I want to be apart of a church like that.”

Marge and Carolyn have not taken a course in Evangelism. They don't have a master's degree in theology. They may not know the Bible as much as some do. They can't preach like Billy Graham or Joel Olsten. But they love God and they love people. Some would think that God is a fool in sending two older women to witness to a grieving widow. But the God of the universe entrusted the care of a widow to a recovering patient and her friend who had the one quality God looks for, faith in the God who makes all things possible.

Friends, Let's open our eyes, and see the foolishness of God in our lives this week. I tell you the truth, the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. Let's Believe it. Claim it. Let's trust God's perplexing power.