

FAITH + ZEAL - WISDOM = FOOLISHNESS

Pastor David O'Dowd

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Series Theme:

Seeing how Jesus is your salvation will stir your love for him.

1Co 1³⁰ And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,
³¹ so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." ^{ESV}

ONE: FAITH plus ZEAL without INSIGHT yields nothing but pagan religion which you use to manipulate the powers for your own ends.

TWO: FAITH plus KNOWLEDGE of God shapes the way you trust him to the way he really is.

THREE: FAITH plus ZEAL plus WISDOM owns that God became foolish on the cross to make Christ our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.
1 Cor 1.30-31

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QUESTIONS FOR INTERACTION AND STUDY

1. The Book of Judges shows a cycle of Israel's turning from God, being oppressed by neighbors, crying out to God and then being at least partially delivered by a judge/deliverer. Jephthah's being called from exile to deliver his people takes place in a context of no real superpowers and of mini-kings and kingdoms vying for territory.
In what ways can it be spiritually helpful for us as Christians (and as earthly citizens) to be reminded that political life and spiritual devotion are rarely stable and consistent?
2. Reading our text what clues can you find to determine if Jephthah's focus was more on worshiping God or more on achieving the status for which he longed (since he'd been rejected by his family –which had both economic and emotional consequences)?
3. A wise man said: **what the Bible describes is often different from what it prescribes.** What clues do the context and specific wording of this text give us that while God uses Jephthah nevertheless God is much less than approving of Jephthah?
[Consider what God longs for as revealed in the 10 Commandments and what Jephthah actually achieved in **Judges 10.1-12.7**. Consider worship, humility, community, fruitfulness & life v. death.]
4. How do God's character and covenant promises of faithfulness to Israel reveal the foolishness of Jephthah's bargaining with God to assure victory (11.30)? How do we try to bargain, try to add to what Jesus has done for us so we can be accepted and blessed by God?
5. Jephthah seems to be a man who is a true child of a very compromised Israel (whom God nevertheless chooses to use). His lack of knowledge of God's ways leads him to vow and risk foolishly (perhaps showing off like Herod with Herodias—Mat 14) that he might be honored by others for his success. In manner and in outcome how is God's radical "foolishness" in slaying his only Son on the cross a great contrast to Jephthah's?