

“What Kind of Fool Am I?”

The Rev. Dr. Robert M. Zanicky

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*First Presbyterian Church
Wilkes-Barre, PA
Galatians 3:1-3
I Corinthians 1:20-25; 4:10*

(Rev. Zanicky begins by singing these words: “What kind of fool am I.”)

I’ll leave that to your imaginations.

But let’s suppose just suppose, that on some level, each one of us plays the “fool”, fits the title of “fool” sometimes in our lives. (Now wives – don’t go nudging your husbands.) And, of course there are all kinds of fools. That’s what’s so exciting, exasperating, and intriguing!

As you well know, Friday was April 1st – April Fools’ Day. I got through it without incidence. No April fools played on me. I did get some trepidation, going over to Dave Rudis’ office about my taxes, but he didn’t have any I.R.S. agents with cuffs waiting for me. All was well.

As best I can surmise in the Middle Ages, New Year’s Day was celebrated on the 25th of March in most European towns. In some areas of France, New Years was a weeklong holiday ending on the first day of April. So possibly April Fools originated because those who celebrated on the first of January made fun of those who celebrated on other dates. January first as the beginning of the New Year was officially adopted in 1564.

But those who kept celebrating April first were considered “fools”, they often were sent invitations to nonexistent parties and had other practical jokes played on them.

April Fools!

Oh, in Scotland, on April Fools’ Day their spoofs involve the buttocks. I’m very proud to that my daughter Heather is joining the clan. (Just kidding. I shouldn’t make them the butt of my jokes.)

There is a delightful and wonderful April Fools’ joke on YouTube – flying penguins. It’s marvelous! You think you are watching a national Geographic documentary and that penguins really know how to fly. Watch it. It’s on one and a half minutes.

What kind of fool am I?

There are all kinds of fools. We read in Psalm 14 about a certain type of fool. This one declares there is no God! The scripture sees great danger in the philosophy of atheism, where there is no foundation for life, for morality, for human dignity. There is no higher power than what man can, or chooses to muster. The Psalmist has a good measure of the godless foundation. In point of fact, the new atheists morality they so strongly propound is a derivative of – derived from the very source they deride – the Judeo/Christian tradition. How foolish to ignore, or ignorantly dismiss what has been fundamental, foundational to one’s culture, one’s formation!

Which reminds me of several years back when the intelligentsia of the European Union was drafting its new European constitutional treaty. A great raucous argument occurred over whether the preamble should acknowledge Christianity as a source of European civilization, and of present day Europe's commitments to human rights and democracy. The majority said "no". Can you believe it?!

A defender of this great Christian civilization came forward. Not a Christian, but an Orthodox Jew, Professor Weiler, of New York University School of Law. He was eloquent, in his argument! Historical argument! He wrote and spoke of the absurdity (foolishness), of excising Christianity from modern Europe's cultural story. To ignore Europe's Christian roots would be constitutionally illegitimate.

Theologian George Weigel writing about this issue, shares, "Historical memory, Joseph Weiler insists, it is essential for moral community. And there can be no free political community, without the foundation of a moral community, a community of shared moral commitments" (p. 55).

Professor Weiler went on and used a rather provocative term for what he believed was happening – "Christophobia"; a resistance to acknowledge anything from Christianity.

The preamble is, it stands without any reference to Christianities contribution to its civilization. Foolishness reigns when leaders either are ignorant of their history, or actively choose to ignore their history.

- A cautionary tale for us – is it not?

What kind of fool am I?

How about those Galatian Christians? Paul is rather put out with them, is he not? Paul started the church in Galatia. He knew these people. He had told them about Christ, and faith. He has gotten word that they are going off the deep end. And he is rather upset.

Oh foolish Galatians!

It's faith! It's God's grace! Stick to this! Don't be so foolish!! Get back on track!

That's one way Paul deals with his friends.

How about the Corinthians? Paul is into reversals. What is up is down. What is down is up. He's making a point.

What seems to be foolish is actually wise. The cross is not foolish, it is God's wisdom. It seems like foolishness, but it is God's wisdom. Some stumble over this, some see it as foolish. We see it as the power of God and the wisdom of God. Why?

What kind of fool am I?

"For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than me."

Now let me tell you what kind of fool I am, and that your are too... "We are fools for Christ's sake!"

What kind of fool am I? There are all kinds of fools. Be a fool for Christ!

Amen.