

HOMILY FOR SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A

1. Wisdom and foolishness
 - a. Are we fools to believe Jesus is the Son of God; that He came to reveal God's love for
 - b. There are many in the world who would say we are fools for taking the effort to come to church on Saturday or Sunday
 - i. No matter how good the music and homily may be, they are not going to live up to the excitement we will find in our hobbies and pastimes, whether sports, movies, TV even a book
 - ii. Then to actually share some of our hard earned money with people we may not even know, or to share our valuable time to serve a community that may or may not express gratitude or recognize our efforts
2. For many even more foolish would be to take seriously the words of Jesus in gospel today
 - a. He reminds us that the law limited revenge to a tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye
 - i. In time of Jesus and before families and clans protected their members
 - ii. If a fight broke out, and someone was hurt enough to lose teeth or an eye, before the law the family was honor bound to get revenge and to deter violence
 - iii. Before the law, they would have killed one or more members of rival family
 - iv. Law told Jewish people that they were forbidden to seek such revenge
 - v. Most they could do was inflict equal harm on the perpetrator
 - b. Jesus says however that even that is too much
 - i. For his followers, if someone strikes you on the cheek, offer him the other
 1. Not saying run away or cower in fear
 2. Rather have a confident resistance that may shame the perpetrator
 3. Similarly he says if someone wants your robe, give him your coat as well
 4. Freely lend what you have to one who asks
 - ii. Jesus puts these foolish commands into context
3. They are to fulfill the ultimate command
 - a. Law said you are to love your neighbor, but you may hate your enemy
 - b. Even for common wisdom that is hard enough, but we see the value in keeping friends and allies
 - c. For Jesus: if that's how you are going to live, you are missing the point of God
 - d. If we live according to the common wisdom of loving those who love us, we might as well be atheists
 - i. Just live it up until we destroy one another and the world
4. Jesus and St. Paul remind us that we believe in a God who has wisdom beyond the world
 - a. World may see it as foolishness but God is calling us to higher values
 - b. God is calling us to be His children, to trust that He has a plan that will make sense of everything
 - c. We believe that there is life beyond what we see here and now
 - d. This will give us the courage to withstand persecution and strive to love our enemy
5. this is not the same as pie in the sky faith that Karl Marx and others accuse Christianity
 - a. He and others were concerned that the powerful used the afterlife as an incentive to keep the masses from revolting against them

- b. People like Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King, actually had a better understanding of Jesus teaching
 - i. They taught those who followed them that weakness and vulnerability could be a weapon against evil
 - ii. Belief in a higher life can give us the courage to take risks in this life
 - iii. By choosing a non-violent resistance were eventually able to shame their persecutors into giving them some of their civil rights
 - iv. Non-violent resistance worked because it challenged the reasons for violence
 - v. Powerful get their power by provoking fear and division
 - vi. They say: You have to fight those protestors or we will be in danger
 - vii. Nonviolent resistance shows the falsehood of those claims, raise questions even in the security forces as well as the population: Who is the real danger
6. Jesus is telling us to go beyond even non-violent resistance to evil
 - a. We have to confront evil and evildoers with love and forgiveness
 - b. Look beyond their evil and see a goodness within them
 - c. They are part of God's creation and his creation is good
 - d. Jesus tells us that we must be kind and merciful to all
 - e. Stand up and tell them that they are doing wrong and rejecting God
7. Jesus set the example for us; He had no fears in bringing healing to people and challenging even the powerful to give up wealth and power to trust in God
 - a. We know His message did not go over well with those in power, they intended to destroy it and Him
 - b. At this point that the paradox of wisdom and foolishness confronts us directly
 - c. His insistence on a love that demands change from all of us led him to the Cross
 - d. For some this proves that He was the biggest fool of all
 - e. If we believe in the wisdom of God, we are convinced that he conquered even death
 - f. Not only did His message survive, but He lives
8. Because we believe that Jesus is alive and has conquered sin, we make the sacrifices to gather and remember his message
 - a. We pray together to seek His grace and support to live out the message of Jesus
 - b. Loving our enemy remains a difficult command, we are weak and wounded by Original Sin
 - c. On our own power we will fail, we will not always be loving people
 - d. That is why Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to form us into a Church to nourish us with His Word and with His Body and Blood
 - e. We form a community that celebrates God kindness and mercy
 - f. With the support and strength of a community of faith and given the power of God's Holy Spirit we can dare to hope that we too can show this same kindness and mercy for not just our neighbors but even our enemies.
9. Total love and forgiveness probably seems foolish to many, but as Paul says the wisdom of the world is foolishness in God's eyes.