

Text: I Corinthians 1:18

Theme: The Cross - Foolish or Fantastic

March 4, 2018

The telegram dated December 17, 1903 read, "Success four flights Thursday morning all against twenty-one mile wind. Started from level with engine power alone. Average speed through air thirty-one miles. Longest 57 seconds. Inform press. Home for Christmas. Orville Wright" To the press, it was foolishness. To the mother of Orville and Wilbur, the response was, "The boys will be home for Christmas." The message of the cross is a lot like that telegram, foolish to most, but fantastic to those who actually know the truth.

I. Thanks to the grace of God, the message of the cross is fantastic. A. Yet the majority of the world still views it as foolish. 1. They view it as foolish because they fail to understand sin. How many non-Christians in our country believe sin exists, that they are sinners, that there's something intrinsically wrong deep within their hearts? Their conscience may tell them something, but whether they notice or ignore it, sin isn't in their vocabulary. It simply doesn't exist in their minds and when sin doesn't exist, the cross is foolishness. Because of sin, because we know we are sinners, the cross is fantastic to us, but remains foolish to the rest of the world.

2. The cross is foolish because they see no need for God. How many of you would be comfortable with God taking a coffee break for the next weeks, with God taking a vacation to get away from all of us? To us, that sounds foolish! If God took even so much as a two-hour lunch break, the world would be in total chaos and we would all be dead by the time He returned from lunch. But, there's a problem. The majority of our world doesn't believe that truth any more than the press believed the Wright brothers first flight. Because they fail to understand sin, they fail to see any need for God and then, they wonder why life doesn't go as they had it planned.

3. The cross is foolishness because they don't believe in heaven or hell. Suppose for a moment that heaven didn't exist. How would it affect your day-to-day life? If there were no heaven, how many people would bail on God saying, "If there's nothing after this life, then I'll go my own way while I'm here and when I'm gone, it won't matter"? Before we miss the flip side of the coin, suppose there were no hell, that all there was was now and heaven. How many would say, "I'll take my chances. What's the worst that can happen?" To those who deny the existence of heaven or hell, the cross has no point, no purpose, no effect on their hearts or lives.

B. Although we're in the minority, to us, the message of the cross is fantastic. 1. It's fantastic because it's our solution to sin. Suppose each sin you committed weighed only a tenth of a pound. In the course of a single year, how many of you could carry the weight of your sins? Sin may not carry a specific weight, but we all know the weight of guilt, and it's a weight far heavier than any combination of sins at a tenth of a pound each. To our guilt, the cross is the greatest message ever told, not great for Jesus, but fantastically great for us. Relief from our sin, from a burden weighing far more than a tenth of a pound each, the cross is simply fantastic.

2. The message of the cross is fantastic because it's evidence of God's omnipotence. What's omnipotence? It means all-powerful and the cross is our proof, our evidence that our God has unlimited power. On a scale of 1-10, what can the most powerful person in our world do compared to the power of God? If God

were a 10, would they even be a 1? Christ on the cross and Christ stepping out of the tomb, that's evidence of God's unlimited power. If Christ can endure the cross and rise from the dead, He has a solution to your greatest pain, to your most significant heartache, to your worst fear, to anything that weighs on your mind at this moment.

3. The cross is fantastic because it's our source of comfort. When your son or daughter or grandson or granddaughter slip and fall on the ice, what do they need most from you? When life doesn't make sense, when you wonder how you can run faster to meet work demands, when you struggle with daily pain either mental or physical, when you pray and pray for relief, but relief doesn't arrive, what do you need most from God? We need His comfort, the assurance that God is in the trenches with us, that God is on our side, that God will get us to the other side. When we possess His comfort, we face the world and we find fantastic in the midst of foolishness.

4. The cross is fantastic because it's our source of hope. How many times have you said to yourself, "This is hopeless. This will never get better"? Discouragement waits at our doorstep every morning. Whether we think we have the world by the tail or the world has us by the ear, discouragement has the power to bring us to our knees in less than thirty seconds. In the middle of this world's pointless, useless, hopelessness, we rise to our feet in hope, in the confidence that God is still in control, that He will sustain us, that the greatest, grandest moments of our lives are yet to come and, when they do, they will last forever.

5. The message of the cross is fantastic because it's the embodiment of all God's promises. "Be strong and courageous." "Trust in the Lord with all your heart." "Cast all your cares on Him because He cares for you." "For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you." If the cross had never occurred, how many of those promises would vanish down the drain forever? If there is no cross, there is no crown and if there is no crown, every promise of God is gone in the blink of an eye. When we realize that every promise of God is attached to the cross, we say, "Thank God for the cross and the empty tomb."

6. The cross is fantastic because it's our access to eternal life. Suppose heaven actually had a door. How many of you could step through that doorway on your own? How many of you could do it with a little help from God? If it weren't for the cross, for Jesus making the payment in our place, not one of us could ever enter heaven. Your access, my access isn't found in our good works, in the wonderful life we live, even though those things are appropriate responses to God. It's only found on one path, by one route, and that route is through the cross. Without the cross, there is no crown. That truth stands as immovable and as our most glorious comfort.

7. The Wright brothers - the world thought they were foolish to think man could fly. Likewise, many still believe the cross is foolishness. But to you and to me, and to all those who know Christ and the cross, it is and always will be simply fantastic. Amen.