

## God's Foolishness

This was written by a chaplain I know:

When I was a young man I volunteered to be a firefighter in my home town. After a great deal of training, I eventually became a firefighter-paramedic in a small, rural fire department.



My friends told me I was crazy to do such dangerous work for free. One day in church, an old man called me aside and told me how foolish it was for a young man to do such a dangerous job without the security of insurance. I know they all meant well but I felt they just didn't understand what drove me to do such a job.

I once heard a story about a cottage in a little country village. In the cottage lived a family of four: father, mother, and two small children. One evening the cottage caught on fire. In a few seconds the thatched roof and the wooden timbers were ablaze. There was no fire engine in this remote spot and the villagers stood around helpless. Suddenly a young man, who had just arrived upon the scene, cried out, "What, can nothing be done to save them?" When no one responded he jumped through the flames and darted into the house. A moment later he emerged bearing a little child under each arm. He had carefully protected them from the flames by hiding them under his coat, but he himself was badly burned.

The parents of the two children died in the fire. There was much sympathy for the two children in the town and several people wanted to adopt them. When the judge arrived to decide who would adopt the children, there were two people who petitioned the court. The first was the squire of the village. He had money, position, and a fine house to offer the children. The second petitioner was the young man who had rescued the children from the flames. When the judge asked him what right he had to ask the court for the children he did not answer with words. Instead he held up his hands that had been badly burned and scarred in their rescue, and let his hands do his arguing for him.

St. Paul wrote this:

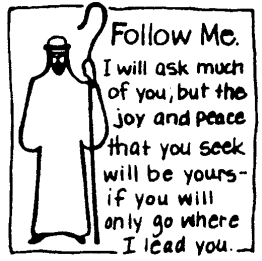
*I know very well how foolish the message of the cross sounds to those who are on the road to destruction. But we who are being saved recognize this message as the very power of God. As the Scriptures say,*

*"I will destroy human wisdom and discard their most brilliant ideas."*

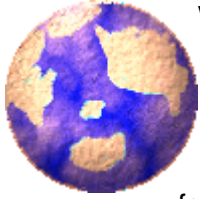
*So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world's brilliant debaters? God has made them all look foolish and has shown their wisdom to be useless nonsense. Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never find him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save all who believe. God's way seems foolish to the Jews because they want a sign from Heaven to prove it is true. And it is foolish to the Greeks because they believe only what agrees with their own wisdom. So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended, and the Gentiles say it's all nonsense. But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the mighty power of God and the wonderful wisdom of God. This "foolish" plan of God is far wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's weakness is far stronger than the greatest of human strength.*

*(1 Corinthians 1:18-25 NLT)*

Looking at the scripture passage above, we could ask if people can understand what drives us to be Christians today. Why should you be a disciple of Jesus? What right does He have to ask you—no, to command you—to follow Him? Simply this—the horribly brutal whipping that tore His flesh to bloody shreds, the thorns that dug into His scalp and the blood that ran down His face and into His eyes, the wounds made by the nails and the spear, and the agony of hanging on the cross until He died—all of that was the price He paid to claim you for His own, to rescue you from the fires of Hell.



Why would He do such a foolish thing? Ah, we may think it was foolish, but He knew it was not, because you are worth saving, even at such a cost. God's plan is wiser than human wisdom.



"But," you say, "He didn't do it just for me. It was for the whole world." *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."* And I reply, No, He did not do it for "the world", because that's an abstraction. He did it for each human being in the world, including you. He loves you, and He wants you to be with Him in eternity. Regardless of his many other reasons, He bled and died for you. He suffered that agony as the punishment for your sins against God, so that you would not have to pay that price yourself.

How foolish for the Son of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the only man who ever lived a perfect, sinless life, to suffer and die for the sins of a sorry sinner like you or me. How ridiculously foolish!

That's love for you. That's Love... for you.

Over and over again, the words of Jesus tell us of the sacrifice He made for each of us:

*"I am the good shepherd,"* He declares in John Chapter 10. *"The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."* And, *"I have come that [my sheep] may have life, and have it to the full."*

How shall we respond to this great, loving sacrifice? Shall we just ignore it, saying, "Thanks, but no thanks, Lord"? Much of the world responds in just that way. The cross is foolishness to those who are perishing....

Or shall we accept the gift of salvation, the gift of deliverance from the punishment our sins deserve, and still just go on about our own business, without being changed by it? Shall we be like the people of Israel whom God chastises through the prophet Isaiah: *"These people ... honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."*

No. Our acceptance of Jesus as Savior demands that we also accept Him as Lord. *"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command,"* says Jesus (John 15:13-14). If His laying down His life for us, His friends, means anything at all to us, it means that our lives—my life, your life—must change, with the help of the Holy Spirit, in ways that are pleasing to the Father. We need to lay down our selfishness, our rebellion, and all our sinful ways and habits, at the foot of the cross of Christ, and offer even our bodies as our reasonable sacrifice to such a loving God; and then allow Him to

change us—transform us—as the Holy Spirit renews our minds—literally forms in each of us the mind and the character of Jesus. (see Romans 12:1-2 and Galatians 5:22-23)

The Apostle Paul spells it out for us, and since this passage is so clear and direct, I'll quote it all, though it's rather long:

*Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.*

*Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more. Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody. (1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 NIV)*



How clearly the Word of God lays it out for us—

- Who God is—the only true God
- Who we are—His creatures
- How much He loves us
- What He has done for us
- What He wants from us—obedience
- How we are supposed to live
- And how He has sent the Holy Spirit to make it possible for us to live that way.

I pray He will give each of us grace to respond to His foolishness as He wants us to. May we be as foolish in following Him as He has been in making it possible.

God bless you, as always, in Jesus.

*Brother Roland*

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**Ask me ...** Send your Bible questions to me and I'll try to answer them in the "Good News Guide."  
Your question may help someone else. **Brother Roland, P O Box 14, Fayetteville PA 17222**

## Choices

“ I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life ....” (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

**Puzzle:**

S F O R G I V E N E S S G G O S R R E T F F D M S S A H S S  
 Y S B Y T I L A T U R B F F Y Q B C B D N E A S C S R S G T  
 T T E E S R E H T O G N I V O L A N I B N E E I U E E O N C  
 I M I N I H A Z T N O V T V V R Q L S I E N M G T N H W I A  
 L Q N S R N S E K A T S I M G N I K A M H I L H D H I P Y F  
 I N G C O E G V H L E X J H F G V L S S G I N R S S W E R G  
 B E L D H R T A C O N S I D E R A T I O N N A G D I M M R N  
 I M O O P I E T T I N Q I N J N L L D E E W Q O A D N H O I  
 S P N G G O L N I H D E C V B Q O S S C Y O M L I L E U W C  
 N J E G Z T S D E B I E S G Q O W S A A T D H E B I I E P A  
 O R L N O B A P I G A E X T F A T E W G I E E M E H M G R F  
 P A Y I N G F O R S T U F F Y Q P N U S V L K C I C S V H G  
 S D A T H S F T L E H I S E L F D I S C I P L I N E I Z J T  
 E I S S O E S H H I A N R B T R L L L S T O O H G E C R M T  
 R S S U A P V E D A F D E L W T A N A T C E Y A A M I I T L  
 R S G R O W T H N F N T I S Q W K A Z A U P A R B A N T E G  
 B A C T K Z V B Y E S K I N S J A E I G D G L D U T Y B A L  
 C T S S E N H S I F L E S N G R K L N N O N T N R U C A R P  
 T I C O M M I T M E N T R G G D D C E A R I Y E D R E C I Z  
 H S E R V I N G S A T A N V I P A K S T P G S S E I H K N Z  
 I F A N Y O T H E R W A Y E I V E R S I M N L S N T G B G K  
 J A S S E N L U F E T S A W G N I O K O F I S O E Y G I D K  
 W C J O Y F O R E V E R K F M K G N P N C R Y F J N F T O N  
 Y T I L I B I S N O P S E R R I B J G L E B E H K J D I W A  
 D I P U Z T G N I S S E L B A G N I E B E S X E I C N N N N  
 N O I T C I D D A W D T E B V Z X P P S P U S A D W I G I R  
 L N P U G N I D L I U B C U P R O A P Q U J P R E O E T A K  
 E T E R N A L S O R R O W G C H E O G E D S N T Z R M M A E

**Words:**

**Unproductive choices**

- ADDICTION
- ANGER
- ANY OTHER WAY
- BACKBITING
- BEING A BURDEN
- BEING A THIEF
- BEING LONELY
- BITTERNESS
- BRINGING PEOPLE DOWN
- BRUTALITY
- CHILDISHNESS
- CYNICISM
- DENIAL
- DISSATISFACTION
- ETERNAL SORROW
- FEAR

**FOOLISHNESS**

- GREED
- GUILT
- HARDNESS OF HEART
- IRRESPONSIBILITY
- LAZINESS
- MAKING MISTAKES
- PUNISHMENT
- SELFISHNESS
- SERVING SATAN
- SPREADING DARKNESS
- STAGNATION
- TEARING DOWN
- UGLINESS
- WASTEFULNESS
- WAYWARDNESS
- WORRYING

**Productive choices**

- BEING A BLESSING
- BEING A LIGHT
- BUILDING UP
- CLEANLINESS
- COMMITMENT
- CONSIDERATION
- DILIGENCE
- FACING FACTS
- FAITH
- FORGIVENESS
- FREEDOM
- GENEROSITY
- GENTLENESS
- GOD’S WAY
- GRACE
- GROWTH
- HONESTY

**HOPE**

- JOY FOREVER
- KINDNESS
- LIFTING PEOPLE UP
- LOVING OTHERS
- LOYALTY
- MATURITY
- PATIENCE
- PAYING FOR STUFF
- PEACE
- PRODUCTIVITY
- RESPONSIBILITY
- SELF DISCIPLINE
- SERVING JESUS
- THANKSGIVING
- TRUSTING GOD
- WISDOM

# John 15:1-12

## Puzzle:

M U O X B E C O M E M Y D I S C I P L E S J C U U I P E B Q T  
W O F O E E I T H R O W N A W A Y G L J U K R L G A G B W F N  
S Y R U A Y A H Z Q H X I Z I G U L A R R G W I K N X C L J E  
I D H A R A A R A S K F O R W H A T E V E R Y O U W I S H H M  
J E F V M D H I S V V D V E P K V F S J H W Z F P S O S N S D  
V V E C U J H Y V N E I T H W U O Y N I E B Y A M Y O J Y M N  
B O M X C T J C G I O L N H C S P M G Y S A R Z K S T D V I A  
E L M J H B P U Z H T F O E B R A N C H C A N N O T B E A R M  
K E O W F Q N F U A N E R V G M H K V S X Q I A H J O I Y X M  
U V R Y R U F M H V V G Z U E R K U K F B L T W N O Z F U S O  
B A F Z U O Y N I E D I B A I D O C A A Y K W U A Z O I V I C  
Q H T J I D L S R S I P A R Y T Y W P B O C I H X U V R P B Y  
G I R S T N T D B A V B U Y A M J O E N U C L P O X W O G M M  
G S A W L Q O Y M I I R E O B N K S U R R K L S K W V L E J S  
F A P A Z E I T L D M B J U Y E C Q Q L J L B E E E I G B W I  
L E A D S T H V E T D A F A D N I H C T O Z E J M N O S Z L S  
N Q V N S E L I S H K K K R W B I D E N Y P D S D V U I R G I  
D I O E V G N O S E V O M E R E H E E S M F O D E L F R A Q H  
L T L I R M N T V S M D R T I A L I D Y A A N E V Z C E P P T  
P F N K Y Y R M A E Q S S H S T T N C I Y R E E O R T H J E N  
G E O L U U B B X T O F A E G H B O R T B S E U L X G T C H H  
U E O A E L I R Q H N N Z B E F M E Q F E A R G S C S A O J V  
S V S V H D K U A I J S E R G M U U A X C W S E A E H F T V G  
E R I F E H T O T N I D C A A K T T M R O N N D H T H Y U V L  
P N Y I C M Q K C G C A C N N E Y W Y F M K D P R T H M M H A  
E V N L A R O R L S N H D C D O L Y H P P O K D E O I E J S J  
V M V K Z O S Y D Y R M P H G X T N C X L L R M H S W W R K J  
E R R H R P Z N O W E X T E H X Y H V T E P C E T Q B Y N E F  
H W X R I P B U H N V S R S L U L K E A T D N Z A A S S M K D  
T V D R O W E H T Y B D E S N A E L C R E E M C F M V T Y K E  
L P C Y R S A S Y O U C A N D O N O T H I N G B K N P R T M Z

## Words:

"I am the **TRUE VINE**, and my Father is the **VINEGROWER**. **HE REMOVES** every branch in me that **BEARS NO FRUIT**. **EVERY BRANCH** that bears fruit **HE PRUNES** to **MAKE IT BEAR MORE** fruit. You have already been **CLEANSSED BY THE WORD** that I have spoken to you. **ABIDE IN ME** as **I ABIDE IN YOU**. Just as the **BRANCH CANNOT BEAR** fruit **BY ITSELF** unless it abides in the vine, **NEITHER CAN YOU** unless you abide in me. **I AM THE VINE, YOU ARE THE BRANCHES**. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because **APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING**. **WHOEVER DOES NOT** abide in me is **THROWN AWAY** like a branch and **WITHERS**; such **BRANCHES ARE GATHERED**, thrown **INTO THE FIRE**, and burned. If you abide in me, and **MY WORDS ABIDE IN YOU**, **ASK FOR WHATEVER YOU WISH**, and **IT WILL BE DONE** for you. **MY FATHER IS GLORIFIED** by this, that you **BEAR MUCH FRUIT** and **BECOME MY DISCIPLES**. As the **FATHER HAS LOVED ME**, so **I HAVE LOVED YOU**; **ABIDE IN MY LOVE**. If you **KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS**, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. **I HAVE SAID THESE THINGS** to you so that **MY JOY MAY BE IN YOU**, and that **YOUR JOY MAY BE COMPLETE**. **THIS IS MY COMMANDMENT**, that you **LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU**."