

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

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Association Minister Message

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FOOL/BLESSED. "For the message about the cross is FOOLISHNESS to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18). "BLESSED are..." (Matthew 5; words from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount). The word FOOL or its derivatives are used 365 times in the Bible. The word FOOL is not a term of endearment that suggests insincerity or silliness. FOOLISHNESS is not taking life seriously or important. Yet Paul argues that his transformation as a follower of Jesus seems FOOLISH to those who rely on their own understanding. Paul implies that FOOLS do not take serious the power of God to transform their lives and the world.

In contrast to Paul's message, Jesus affirms *BLESSINGS* in weakness in what would be considered *FOOLISHNESS*. Jesus sermon lifts up those who are suffering, afraid, lacking sustenance, kind, and reconcilers: they are thought of as outcastes and Jesus declares they are the *BLESSED* ones. Those who seem to be helpless, hopeless, and *FOOLISH* are affirmed by Jesus' message of inclusion and are embraced by a loving and caring God. What a change would happen in our world if classism, exclusion, and rankings would be discarded. All people are created by God to be the image of God. United together in faith, we become God's Beloved Community. Jesus' Words from the Sermon on the Mount expands the Realm of God by affirming in *FOOLISHNESS* there is *BLESSEDNESS*. The Beatitudes of Jesus expand the Realm of God and include welcoming the *FOOLISH*.

Paul writes, *"Consider your own call, brothers and sisters..."* God calls and includes those who are not powerful, not wise or not *"of noble birth."* The weak becomes strong. The actress Audrey Hepburn said, *"Nothing is impossible. The word itself says 'I'm possible!'"* We are in the midst of the *Season after Epiphany* when the light of God is made known to us in Jesus. The *First Sunday after Epiphany* celebrated the Baptism of Jesus and that action reminded us that we, too, are affirmed as *"God's Beloved."* God *BLESSES* us with gifts and graces that are both human and divine. It is more than tangible rewards that we receive; it is knowing that we are part of God's abundant love, no longer estranged *FOOLS*, but *"FOOLS for Christ!!!"* (1 Corinthians 3:19). *BLESSINGS ALWAYS.*