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SERMON TITLE: **Why Did God Send Jesus?**  
*Advent One*  
SCRIPTURE: **1 Corinthians 1:18-21, 26-30**  
DATE: **November 29, 2020**  
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Read also Isaiah 7:10-14

If you have been reading through the One Year Bible recently, in the Old Testament readings you will have noticed again and again the words “then you will know that I am the LORD.” Sometimes it says, “the Sovereign LORD.” It also says certain things will happen so “**you will know that I, the LORD, have done it.**”

Isn't it great to know that God is the Lord, filled with power?

That's God's desire for us. It is a centering place; a wonderful lens through which to view life.

- That's what God said to Job during all his suffering.
- That's what God said to Abraham when he was asked to leave Ur and follow God.
- That's what God said to Jacob when he wrestled with God, and when Jacob realized it was God, he insisted that God bless him. (see Genesis 32:24-30)

But, “God is the LORD” does not always seem reasonable to humans. Remember the poem by William Ernest Henley who wrote these words:

I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul.<sup>1</sup>

How many of us have thought similar words? Most people believe God created them, but we are sometimes fuzzy on who is the master of our soul.

So what does God mean by saying “I am the Lord?” Why is it important that we know God is the Lord?

One day, at the edge of the Promised Land, Moses wanted to change God's mind and asked God to please let him go see the land. (God had prevented Moses due to a sin he had committed.) Moses prayed,

“O Sovereign LORD, you have only begun to show your greatness and the strength of your hand to me, your servant. Is there any god in heaven or on earth who can perform such great and mighty deeds as you do? Let me cross over to see the good land beyond the Jordan.” (Deuteronomy 3:24-25).

Moses was the most powerful leader in Israel's world yet God said no to his request.

**God being the Lord means God is in charge.**

Here's another Scripture:

- The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind: “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements -- surely you know!” (Job 38:1-5)

God says Job was thinking too highly of his own ability to figure out why God had allowed his suffering. He needed to understand that God, by his acts of creation, had the right to authority over Job. We can never know the things God knows.

**Creator . . . creation.** There's a difference in authority. The human tendency is to challenge God's authority. Adam and Eve fell because of Satan's temptation to eat the forbidden fruit: “*you will be like God, knowing good and evil*” (Genesis 3:5).

But God sees the temptation to be proud of our own knowledge. It gets us in trouble. Take Israel's people who insisted to the prophet Samuel:

“Appoint for us a king to govern us, like other nations.” . . . Samuel prayed to the LORD, and the LORD said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but *they have rejected me from being king over them.*” (1 Samuel 8:5-7)

God being the LORD means God rules.

God's way seemed foolish to Job, to Moses, to Adam and Eve, and to the people of Israel.

*Why shouldn't we rule ourselves;  
why shouldn't we know all God knows;  
why shouldn't we get to go where we want;  
why shouldn't we trust our own judgment?*

This was true in the Old Testament, the New Testament, and throughout history. We also live in a culture that does not like to accept the authority of God. But we can't live as captains of ourselves. **We cannot bear the burden of knowing it all and trying to fix ourselves.**

Paul addressed this subject to the Corinthian church. The church was divided. They were fighting over who ruled them: “I follow Apollos.” “I follow to Peter.” “I'm a follower of Paul.” One little quiet voice said, “I follow Christ!” Paul said to them all, “Is Christ divided?” “Who died for you?” “Not me!” (1 Corinthians 1:10-13)

<sup>1</sup> William Ernest Henley, “Invictus.” Poem published around 1888.

Human wisdom.

Now with that in mind, let's read our passage:

The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God. As the Scriptures say, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and discard the intelligence of the intelligent." So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world's brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish. Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe. ~ 1 Cor. 1:18-21

Notice this phrase: *God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom.*

Why? If it takes human wisdom, we would not have eternal life, since we do not have the power to attain it. Human wisdom leads to pride, not dependence.

I looked up the word "pride" in the Bible. It is listed in 70 verses. One thing I learned is that you cannot have both pride and be strong in the Lord. They are antithetical. Pride comes from the devil. Proverbs puts it well:

- "When pride comes, then comes disgrace; but wisdom is with the humble" (11:2).
- "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (16:18).
- "A person's pride will bring humiliation, but one who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor" (29:23).

To put it bluntly, pride is a problem for us!

But isn't it great that we have a God who loves us so much that he can overcome our sin?

Isn't it fabulous that God sees our problems throughout time and yet is willing to open our eyes and allow us to see him?

Isn't it magnificent that God is never hindered from overcoming our worst problem—which is pride—with his unique solution?

Pride or strength or force cannot open hearts. But an example of humility brings forth humility. And Jesus is the example.

Ahaz was the king to whom God said, "Ask me for a sign." But Ahaz would not ask because of pride. He was Hezekiah's father who trusted in idols instead. Scripture tells us he sacrificed to the idols of Aram because Aram's idols had helped him. Ahaz did not turn to the Lord. But the Lord gave him a sign anyway because God's plan would happen regardless of the faithlessness of the people. (See Isaiah 7:10-14)

That's because of God's relentless love for you and me.

So Paul continues his words to the Corinthians and to us:

Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God. God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin. ~ 1 Cor. 1:26-30

There's no better time than Advent to understand why God sent Jesus. The magnificence of God's plan is summed up here for us.

The Psalmist says, "The LORD looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God. But no, all have turned away; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not a single one!" (14:2-3) And yet God has been able to break through our corruption by sending Jesus.

How wise.

Whose wisdom do you depend on? Yours? A political view or a politician? A philosophy? A particular theologian? Or Jesus?

Which one was crucified for you?

AMEN