

Eighth Sunday After Pentecost – 2022
Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-26
Colossians 3:1-11
Luke 12:13-21

God wasn't invited into the conversation. He came in anyway. "Fool!" was the first thing out of the Almighty's mouth.

How many of y'all aspire to be a fool? No one? A nimrod, a putz, and pea-brain – we have a marvelous assortment of insults for those who behave foolishly. Lutheran aren't famous for being on the bright side and that doesn't bother me too much. What I would like us to have is Christian common sense. Towering intellectuals can lack common sense. I've never taken an IQ test; I'm depressed enough as it is. But common-sense, I hope that I would score above Harry and Lloyd from Dumb and Dumber on a common-sense test. Here are a couple of questions from a common-sense test. Let's see how y'all do. An electric train is moving at top speed through a valley, going east. Which way does the smoke blow, east or west? If a rooster laid an egg in Mid-March and it takes 21 days for an egg to hatch, in what month would it hatch?

I read an article supporting abortion in the *Redlands Community News* recently. The author promoted abortion as a blessing of liberty that is being taken away. She wrote this: "I think it is fair to say that the pro-life movement is heavily religious in nature. Many pro-lifers like to say that life begins at conception." Now, I wasn't a great high school student. Biology certainly wasn't my strong suit and Mr. Blasquez rolled his eyes more than once when I couldn't answer a question, but I'm pretty sure that I know what life is. Three criteria for life: it reproduces, it extracts energy from its environment and it is self-organizing. The sperm is not alive. The ovum is not alive. The fertilized egg *is* alive with its own DNA. That's true not because pro-lifers *say* it is true. It is simply patently, obviously, undeniably, objectively true and people with common sense know it and can say it out loud without being embarrassed, sort of like being able to say what a woman is.

Christian common sense – the world wants to rob you of it. There is a Creator. That's in the realm of Christian common sense. In fact, creation itself testifies that there is a God. His fingerprints are all over the things that have been made and His qualities (eternal power, innovative authority, and an orderly will) these qualities are revealed in creation and perceived by anyone who has their eyes open. Those who suppress the truth, that God is the creator of heaven and earth, well, they are simply deceivers. That's just Christian common sense and it happens to be in Romans chapter 1. Here's another bit: He is the judge. God sets the terms and He is a righteous judge. Us sinners live by grace; we live alone by mercy, God's mercy. We will all stand before Him. Life in this world will come to an end and we will all stand before Him. There is a heaven and there is a hell.

Christian common sense; Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken – he was a German pastor who came to the United States as a missionary. He became the second president of the LC-MS, and helped found Concordia Theological Seminary. The story goes that on the streets of Fort Wayne in the mid 1800's that Wyneken was confronted by a secure sinner who said: "I, for one, think your preaching is nonsense. I don't believe a bit of it." Wyneken, not missing a beat, said, "Fine.

When the devil's got you by the neck dragging you to hell, you just cry out, 'I don't believe it. I don't believe it.'" Then the great pastor hopped on his horse and rode off. The man stewed on the Law and finally was undone. He repented and became an upstanding member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne where Wyneken was pastor. Christian common sense goes a long way – for you and those around you.

Greed is a problem. Covetousness is a problem. Some ole boy shouts at Jesus: "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me" (Luke 12:13). Things, possessions, and desire for more – that can capture your heart. God wants your heart. He is your treasure. What supplants Him is dangerous. That's Christian common sense. Jesus told that ole boy a parable, a parable He tells you. A rich man experienced a windfall, a bumper crop. So, he consults himself on what to do. That is a fool's habit, consulting oneself for wisdom. His internal dialogue is littered with the first person singular. God is excluded from this dialogue, not consulted, not considered. The rich man who had the bumper crop didn't consider his neighbor either, just himself (his grain, his barns, his pleasure). God inserts Himself into this private conversation with some rather harsh and unexpected news. "Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things that you have prepared, whose will they be?" (Luke 12:20).

St. Paul asks a question that edifies our Christian common sense. The question is designed to knock the fool out of you. "What do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4:7). From the color of your eyes to the roof over your head to the faith in your heart – God is the Giver of every good and perfect gift. He gives you all that you need for this body and life. Are you mindful of it? Mindful, not in an abstract, detached sort of way but in a daily, intentional, concrete and substantive way. The rich man was an ingrate. The fool was unaware of both his neighbor and his God. What you have belongs to God. He gave it to you and He can take it away. You are to be a steward of what He has given you – manage it well and you are a good steward. Manage it poorly and you are a bad steward. Managing your gifts well means managing them in a way that is in keeping with His will.

A tithe is giving ten percent of your income to God, His church, a receptacle of your giving that is devoted to His Word. It was Christian common sense not too long ago that we simply gave a tenth of what we earn, right off the top, to Christ's church. Prompted by thankfulness to God for the blessing that He provides in the Gospel, prompted by a desire to support the mission of preaching the Gospel so that others may partake of God's peace and salvation, eagerly showing our fidelity to Him over our infatuation with the things of the world, we return to Him a portion of what He has given to us. Intentionally withholding from Him is a dangerous dance because it eats at your faith. One cannot easily hide from one's own hypocrisy and such a game tends to make miserable Christians. Greed is a masked robber who is only chased off by repentance.

Now I am not an advocate for rewriting the Bible but I have an idea of what that first ole boy should have said: "Teacher, divide *Your* inheritance with me." I don't think that Jesus would have thought of it as cheeky. He probably would have said, "Young lad, I'll give you *all* of it." Christ's inheritance; that what He wills to give you. All that I have is yours. That is what the Son of God being crucified on a cross says to anyone and everyone. He emptied Himself; for you. He became poor so that you might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). All of His life was

spent on your behalf. His blood, His righteousness, His love – His divine resources were poured out so that we who are mired in the poverty of our foolishness might become rich with His grace.

Someday, some definite day, you will stand before your Father, the Lord of heaven and earth. On that day your blessed Brother will fully divide His inheritance with you. His resurrection was a bumper crop and He knows where to store His grain – in your mouth. Now, in this life, the crucified and risen King gives you the bread of His body and the wine of His blood – given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins. He took your foolishness away into His death and rose again to give you new life. Wisdom is found here. Truth is found in His Word and His Word is proclaimed here, for you. Christian common-sense rules in this place and in your heart. Remember, Jesus is the good steward extraordinaire. He used His divine resources to save you. Heaven is His inheritance and because you belong to Him your name is written in the Book of Life.