

SAINT THOMAS CHURCH

Fifth Avenue · New York City

Sermon Outline

Holy Tuesday, 12th April 2022

Lord Bishop Sentamu

5:30 p.m.

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Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Theme: Living a Jesus Christ Shaped Life

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“For the proclamation of the cross is, for their part, Folly to those who are on their way to ruin, but, for Our part, the power of God to us who are on the Way to salvation” (verse 18).

Lord Acton wrote that, **“Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely”**. Since Adam and Eve, humankind has struggled to understand **power as donated** to them by God, looking instead at how to cling on to power and the influence they think it confers on them.

The Apostle Paul focuses on God as the source of power, and **the power of the Cross being EFFECTIVE, REDEEMING and EMPOWERING**. *Jesus of Nazareth, on the Cross doing for us that which we could not do for ourselves.* The contrast is not between **power** and **weakness**, but between **power** and **folly** that is *ineffective, ending in ruin and self-destruction*. But for those who live in Christ, the cross is an **effective reality**.

Archbishop Temple described this power: *‘I was saved. I am being saved. I will be saved.’* The Apostle Paul uses a **present participle** for those who are in the process of **perishing**, as well as those who are in the process of **being saved** (verse 18).

To the world the proclamation of a **crucified Saviour** is a **scandal** (v.18), an **affront**, an **outrage** - not that it was anti-rational but it conveyed social stigma and vulgarity. **“In the cross of Christ God has affirmed nothings and nobodies”** (Welborn, p. 250). And it is the heart and foundation of our **identity in Christ**. It may be **folly** to many who are wrapped up in an illusion of **wisdom** but it is the **reality and the transforming power** to those who are **being saved**.

We **‘glory’** in the cross because through it we are **accepted** and brought back to God. We **‘trust’** in the cross because it is the **pattern** of our saying no to our grasping self. We **‘revel’** in the cross because it is **the subject** of our **witness**.

We **‘rejoice’** in the cross because it is the means of our **justification**.

We **‘live for’** the cross because it is the **means of our sanctification**. We have crucified our fallen nature (Galatians 5:24). The cross of Christ, like The Sermon on the Mount **turns everything upside down**. **And offers us the gift of the mind of Christ**, *which as a process of salvation, as pure gift, will make us Live Jesus Christ Shaped Lives. Amen.*