

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Epiphany 5 – February 8, 2026

“And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.”

- 1 Corinthians 2:14 -

It is not unusual for Christians to try to convince non-Christians to believe in Jesus with the threat of impending doom. Books and other media focus on the end of the world. We think that if our neighbors can't believe in God for all the good things he has done, then perhaps they can be frightened into faith. We should know this doesn't work, because it is not the way it happened for us.

A motorist was driving in the country when he came upon a priest and a rabbi standing on the shoulder of the road, fishing. Next to them was a sign: “Turn around. The end is near.” The motorist didn't like to be preached to, so he rolled down the window and yelled, “Mind your own business, you religious nuts!” A few seconds later the two fishermen heard tires screech, then a splash. The rabbi turned to the priest and said, “I told you we should've just written, ‘Bridge Out.’”

The motorist saw two religious men and quickly rejected their advice. The motorist assumed the sign meant that the end of the world is near. It is no wonder that the man thought it was unreasonable; religious people have been preaching the end of the world for two thousand years. Such a message often seems nothing but foolishness; it is unreasonable to many who hear.

Many in Jesus' day thought he was preaching a foolish message. But it wasn't the teachings of Jesus that saved those who came to faith, it was Jesus himself. It was the Living Word, in flesh and blood, that took strangers by the hand and made them disciples. It was Christ, present among them, who freed people from their bondage and gave them new life.

There are many who still reject the Gospel today. Because the message of the cross is foolishness to those who do not believe, they cannot be argued or threatened into faith. But that does not stop Jesus. He came to give his life on the cross to set us free, even in the midst of our rejection. Even we who strive to live as disciples must confess that neither fear nor logic are the Savior of our lives, but Christ alone in whom we trust and believe.