

Dear Lillian UMC family,

Happy Atheists Day! Oh yes, I am quite serious. April Fool's Day should also be known as Atheists Day. "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" (Psalm 14:1 and Psalm 53:1)

He is not a clever intellectual, or a fact driven student of science who after years of study has come to the logical conclusion that God does not exist. He is a fool.

Romans 1 tells us that every man knows that God is real. Especially the atheist, who spends most of his time thinking about, and then denouncing a Being he says does not exist. Mankind has the unique ability of self-deception. There is no stronger deception than self-deception.

Romans 1 tells us that unrighteous men "suppress the truth." The truth about God. The truth about His creation. They suppress this truth from others and even from themselves. Here begins the self-deception.

"For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them." (Romans 1:19) God shows Himself to everyone "in the things that have been made." Scripture then proclaims the inescapable truth. "They are without excuse." They simply do not want to be accountable to a God that is their Creator and Sustainer. So, they suppress all evidence and truth about God, allowing their self-deception to take root.

Yet, He is still here. God's prevenient grace makes them aware of His presence. "The heavens declare the glory of God." "His invisible attributes, namely His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ... in the things that have been made." Still, "fools despise wisdom and knowledge," especially that which makes them accountable to a Holy God.

"They become futile in their thinking," developing and believing and then proclaiming myths and philosophies of man, in a desperate attempt to supplant the truth they have suppressed and denied.

With each denial of the truth, their heart hardened. With each denial of the truth, "their foolish heart darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools." (Romans 1:22) The man who says "there is no God" is a fool. The man who acknowledges God, but then lives his life as if there is no God, is just as much a fool.

Paul said that "we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray...but when the goodness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy...justified by His grace..." (Titus 3:3)

"There is no fool, like an old fool." Examine yourself. Live every day as if tomorrow you will give an account. Because one day, we will.

Perry Cunningham
Lay Leader