

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 8TH - 9TH, 2022 // BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

WISDOM? (1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-25) LESS OF US, MORE OF HIM

In the 1st half of chapter one, Paul tells us that human "wisdom" detracts from the "effect" of the cross. This simply means **that we are to teach the gospel, make Jesus the focus, and remove ourselves as much as possible.**

- We can add our testimony and personal experiences, but **we must let the Word speak for itself and trust in its wisdom.**

PRIDE WAS THE CULPRIT

Paul perceived that pride was the root cause of the divisions in Corinth. C.S. Lewis said, "Make no mistake about it; pride is the great sin. It is the devil's most effective and destructive tool."

- **When we start to make it more about ourselves than God and the well-being of others, we're destined for destruction.**

"FOOLISHNESS TO THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING"

For people that follow culture (the wisdom of the world), **Christianity is foolishness because it is incomplete contradiction of the pursuit of self and happiness.**

- We're to imitate a Savior that humbled Himself to the point of dying for people that may not care! **There's nothing in it for Jesus, and that makes no sense to selfish people.**

LIBERATION IN SUBMISSION

When self is elevated above all else, it seems foolish to follow rules that don't align with how we feel. The world sees the parameters of Christianity as shackles.

- **To those who give their lives to Jesus, His teachings, and principles outlined in the Word, we find liberation and contentment in His wisdom.**

THE IRONY IS THAT THEIR "WISDOM" ISN'T WORKING

V20 alludeS to Isaiah 19 and 33. Paul is mocking the "wisdom" of the previous cultures that have come and gone, like the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Greeks. He is saying that in all their "wisdom," their kingdoms all came to ruin, but the gospel of Jesus still remains.

- Because they thought themselves above God, they never knew Him.

LET'S APPLY THIS TO OUR SOCIETY

In 2018 CBS reported that **anxiety had reached all-time highs in all age groups.** Boston University said in November 2021 that these numbers have tripled.

- According to Pew Research, **violent crime is higher now than any other recorded time.**
- Pew Research (2019): **Christianity is declining** at the most rapid rate in American history.

"THE FOOLISHNESS OF WHAT IS PREACHED"

Jesus came as the antithesis of human wisdom. The cross was not only a sign of radical sacrifice and humility; the teachings of Jesus were, and still are, counter-cultural.

- In a self-centered culture, Jesus tells us to **take the low seat** (Lk. 14), **seek first His kingdom** (Mt. 6), the last will be first (Mt. 20), and **lose your life to find it** (Mt. 16).

SEEKING SIGNS AND "WISDOM" (V22)

The Jews wanted Jesus to prove Himself by miraculous signs but still refused to believe. The Greeks were more intrigued with the vague and open-ended questions of their philosophy than getting clear directives from God.

- Both are arrogant. **God doesn't perform at our beck and call, and there are absolutes regardless of our feelings.**

SUBMISSION IS OFFENSIVE TO THE WORLD

Jesus and the cross are ridiculous and offensive to the world because He not only identifies that we've lived in error but also that **we must acknowledge our need to turn from our ways and submit to God's ways in order to escape destruction.**

- This goes back to pride. **It is audacious to think we're the authors of truth.**

"YET TO THOSE WHO ARE CALLED"

To those that will humble themselves and submit to His ways, "God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength."

- This sarcasm reminds us that **God is always better at directing our lives than we are. We must humble ourselves and rely more on His Word than our feelings.**

NOT MUCH (1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-31) REMEMBER WHERE YOU CAME FROM

The Corinthians needed to remember how far God had brought them. Most of the people in the church weren't accomplished by the world's standards when they were saved.

- Jesus wants to save all people (2 Pt. 3:9), but **God often chooses people of humble worldly status to show His power through their transformation.**

IT IS A REMINDER TO ALL OF US

The Christians had let **pride and entitlement set in because they had become blessed and gifted people.** But, Paul wanted to remind them that **all blessings and gifts are from God, and they didn't earn any of it.**

- **Knowing all good things come from God and not our ability (Js. 1:17) should humble us and keep us connected to Him.**

AGAIN, THIS IS COUNTER-CULTURAL

We live in a culture that tells us to follow our hearts, listen to our feelings, choose our reality, and that we're entitled to all we can get in order to achieve the ultimate goal in life: happiness.

- **We cannot afford to confuse the current version of the American Dream with the Gospel of Christ.** They're not the same. In fact, they're in a great opposition.

"WHAT IS WEAK" TO "SHAME THE STRONG"

In His wisdom, Jesus used people the world saw as inferior (Peter, Matthew, Mark, James, John, Luke, Jude, and Paul) to write the direction humanity is to follow in order to be saved.

- **Regardless of society's deviation from and demonizing of the Bible, the teachings and principles work when applied to our lives.**

"NO ONE MAY BOAST IN HIS PRESENCE"

Paul makes it clear that "[we] are in Christ" and our "wisdom," "righteousness (living a moral life), sanctification (changing and being used by God), and redemption (being bought back)" are all because of Jesus. In light of this, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

- This simply means **Christians have no room for pride in their lives.**

IT SHOULD ALWAYS GO BACK TO HIM

It is perfectly fine to achieve, create, and lead, but we must remember that all good things come from Him, and we will eventually fail without His guidance and help.

- We should also **identify what God is a blessing, do that more, and teach others to do it as well.** We learn what God blesses through the Word.

IT WILL ALWAYS CONTRADICT CULTURE

- We must understand that **Jesus and the Word will always be counter-cultural and offensive to the world.**
- The source of the offense is that the Bible commands a submission to God's standards and principles that often fly in the face of our selfish ambitions and feelings.

IF APPLIED, THE BIBLE WORKS

- Anyone willing to see the truth can see that the "wisdom of the world" isn't working.
- In contrast, God's wisdom - delivered to us by **the Bible** and His Spirit and encouraged by conviction - **is logical, reasonable, loving, and it works in our daily lives if we submit to it.**

THE MEASURE AND SOURCE OF SUCCESS

- First, **we must define success in biblical terms.** There is nothing wrong with affluence, influence or achievement, but these are secondary to our relationship with God and other people.
- We must also remember that **any good thing we produce is only by God's grace and provision.**

IDENTIFY AND INTENSIFY TO FIND SECURITY

- Yes, all of our blessings come from God. But, **we would be wise to identify what we are doing that God is blessing, do it more, and teach others to do it as well.**
- If we will make a relationship with Jesus a priority, read the Bible, and apply its teachings and principles to our daily lives, **we can live in confidence and security.**