

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 9TH, 2022 // BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

WISDOM OF GOD (1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-25)

WISDOM OF MAN

Paul described in v.17 how the cross of Christ could be made of no effect if preached in a way that was dependent on worldly wisdom and eloquent speech.

- Paul now describes how being dependent on the wisdom of man will cause a person to miss what God is trying to accomplish and view the the cross as foolishness.

TO THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING

In the 1st Century, the message of the cross would have been foolishness to those who are perishing because they could not see past the cruel, humiliating, unrelenting instrument of death being used.

- Today it would be like saying salvation is obtained through the work of a man in an electric chair, but worse!

TO THOSE WHO ARE BEING SAVED

With human understanding, the message of the cross and the Gospel (the good news) seem like opposing ideas, however they are the same.

- **The message of the cross is good news because in God's infinite wisdom he displayed his power to save us from the penalty of sin.**

MAKING THE DISTINCTION

Paul shows the distinction in how those who are perishing (the world) and those who are being saved, view the cross.

- The cross is the dividing line between those who are perishing and view the cross as foolishness and those who are being saved to whom the cross is wisdom and power.

MAKING A POINT

Paul quotes Isaiah, where the prophet rebuked Israel for challenging God by relying on "the wisdom of the wise" and "the intelligence of the intelligent."

- He used this OT scripture to show the Corinthians the opposition that exists between the true wisdom of God and earthly wisdom of man.

RHETORICAL QUESTIONS

Paul continues by asking questions that are like ones asked by Isaiah, where he mocked the Egyptian wise men who could not comprehend the ways of God and where he ridiculed the Assyrians, for believing they could defeat the God of Israel.

- The point is this: **There is not a wise man, scribe, or debater who can do what Christ has done!**

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION

In response to the previous questions Paul asks, "Hasn't God made the world's wisdom foolish?"

- Paul expected a positive response to the question because God had in fact made the world's wisdom look foolish with the Egyptians and the Assyrians and now God was doing it through the cross!

HE MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN

Paul says, "the world did not know God through wisdom" meaning that God is not known through worldly wisdom but only through direct revelation.

- **God reveals himself through nature** (creation), **conscience** (written on our hearts), **the person Jesus Christ**, and **his word**.

GOD WAS PLEASED

When Paul says, "God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of what is preached," he is not saying that the message of the cross was foolish. He is describing them as they appear to the world.

- This means it pleased God to accomplish our salvation through a way that confounds the highest of human wisdom.

"JEWS ASK FOR SIGNS"

Israel looked back at the signs God displayed to free them in Egypt so they expected the same powerful signs from the Messiah, who they believed would rescue them from Roman oppression.

- Jesus did not perform the signs they requested, and was eventually crucified, so the message of the cross became a stumbling block.

"GREEKS SEEK WISDOM"

Greek culture was one that marveled at their own wisdom. With many great philosophers coming out of this region, they sought after wisdom that paralleled the Greek philosophers of their time.

- Their elevation of earthly wisdom devalued heavenly wisdom and they viewed the message of the cross as foolishness.

"BUT WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED"

Paul was unwilling to reduce the Christian message to something more acceptable to Jews and Greeks.

- Regardless of popular opinion, offense, or opposition we cannot be willing to compromise the Word of God to make it more palatable to culture. **There is one way, and it is Christ crucified!**

GOD'S WISDOM

Paul says, "God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom." He is not saying that God is foolish or does things that are foolish.

- His point is that God's plan for redemption, even if viewed as foolishness through the lens of human wisdom, is far beyond anything a man could ever dream up.

GOD'S STRENGTH

Speaking to the view of God being weak in allowing his son to be crucified, Paul says, "God's weakness is stronger than human strength."

- What can be viewed as a weakness is ironically the strength of God that surpasses all earthly strengths.

BOASTING IN THE LORD (1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-31)

"CONSIDER YOUR CALLING"

Paul tells the Corinthians, "consider your calling," none of them were, according to the world's standards, "wise, powerful, or of noble birth."

- God does not operate according to the world's standards. **He called them and gave them his wisdom, his power, and a noble bloodline through Jesus Christ.**

"GOD HAS CHOSEN WHAT IS FOOLISH"

Paul tells the Corinthians, "they are not among the wise, powerful, or noble of this world." Instead, they are among the foolish of this world.

- **They have been called not because they are so great, but because God is so great!** God can use the things the world views as foolish to accomplish his good and perfect will.

"TO SHAME THE WISE"

God will rebuke the idolatry of human wisdom by calling and using the foolish thing of this world.

- Paul, who was highly educated, is not saying that it is better to be foolish or uneducated. The point is that **all the world's wisdom and education will not save us!**

"NO FLESH SHALL GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE"

We will be unable boast in self when we stand before God. We were called. This means we did not find God since he was never lost.

- **He revealed Himself to us and found value in us**, though the world saw none. Then, **He executed a perfect work using faulty tools to do so.**

"JESUS, WHO BECAME WISDOM FOR US"

Jesus perfectly modeled God's wisdom for us through his teaching and life. God's wisdom is often in contradiction to the world's expectation and understanding of wisdom.

- **God's wisdom is not something we achieve or obtain with more education or knowledge. It is received in and through the person of Jesus Christ.**

HE BECAME EVERYTHING FOR US!

Jesus is not only the source of God's wisdom, but **he is also the source for righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.**

- Through Jesus's completed work on the cross, God communicates these things, which are otherwise unattainable to us through human effort.

HE BECAME OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Righteousness is "the condition of being acceptable to God as made possible by God." Simply put, **because the righteous deeds and character of Jesus are accredited to us, we are right with God.**

- **We do not become righteous through our own merits, but Jesus became righteousness for us.**

HE BECAME OUR SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification speaks of our behavior and how we are to be separate from the world and unto God.

It is the process of us being set apart for the purposes of God.

- **We do not grow in this process of sanctification through our own effort, but Jesus became sanctification for us.**

HE BECAME OUR REDEMPTION

Redemption is the idea that **we have been bought at a price and given permanent freedom.**

- **We could not pay the price required for permanent freedom, so Jesus became redemption for us.** God has orchestrated everything in a way that he gets the glory so we may only "boast in the Lord."

INVENTORY

- There are only two groups! Those who are perishing are those who are being saved. The verb tense shows a work in progress, and we are moving in one of those two **directions!**
- **What stumbling block or foolishness is stopping us from experiencing the power and wisdom of God?**

VIEWS OF THE CROSS

- The Jews stumbled at the "weakness" of the cross. They looked for signs of power and glory.
- **Do we view the cross as too weak to save us?**
- **Are we constantly seeking signs?**
- The Greeks laughed at the cross because they looked for an elevated human wisdom.
- **Do we reject the message of the cross because it does not meet our standards and expectations?**
- **Some believe and experience the wisdom and power of God!**