

1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-31 Christ the Power and Wisdom of God; Glory Only in the Lord!

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Latest Studies” on the right side. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Christ the Power and Wisdom of God;!

1Co 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

1Co 1:18 For the message of the cross (the gospel) is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved (from the power and condemnation of sin) it is the power of God.

THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS IS FOOLISHNESS TO THE CORINTHIANS:

v. 17 The Corinthians were much into philosophy and philosophers. They were impressed by orators. But here Paul is telling them, that he is not delivering the message with wisdom of words, lest the human vessel is drawing so much attention to himself that his message is scarcely noticed, producing unnecessary competition to the message of the cross.

v. 18 The message of the cross is the gospel. Jesus died on the cross for our sins. He was buried and rose again the third day. And by trusting in that gospel, in that Savior and in that salvation; repenting, turning from my sin, turning to God, trusting in that Savior and in that salvation, that I will be born again, I'll have the capacity for a relationship with God and I will inherit everlasting life! To the world, the gospel is foolishness. It always has been, is now and always will be. It is **foolishness to the philosophical mind** and to the so called intellectual mind **by design!**

There are no intellectuals in God's presence. They don't exist. When the world looks at what you believe in, it is foolishness to them. How in the world could a Savior that **couldn't protect Himself from dying on a cross, provide me with forgiveness of sins and give me victory over sin and over death?** Paul says the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. But to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Who cares what any one of us think? It doesn't matter what we think about God's plan of salvation or His Savior. All that matters about salvation is, **who is the Savior? what is the plan of salvation?** One day when everyone stands before Almighty God, it won't matter what your college professor, parents, or what I thought. All that matters at that moment is **what He thinks and what pleases Him**. All of us, one day, will stand before God, either as a saved person or as one who will enter into eternal torment. It is the power of God. He is **far less interested in titillating the intellect of man and far more interested in providing a gospel and salvation that has the power to saved us**. It takes a lot of power to pull spiritually dead men and women out of that spiritually dead condition and to raise them up out of that, not only into an abundant life, but to an everlasting life and to be blessed the way we are as Christians!

1 CORINTHIANS: 1:17-31

Brief Outline- (adapted from Dextor Sammons)

INTRODUCTION (1:1-9)

1. PROBLEMS REPORTED BY THE HOUSE OF CHLOE (1:10-6:20)

- A. FACTIONS IN THE CHURCH (1:1-4:21)
- B. SEXUAL IMMORALITY (5:1-13)
- C. LAWSUITS AMONG BRETHREN (6:1-11)
- D. MORAL DEFILEMENTS (6:12-20)

2. PROBLEMS MENTIONED IN THE LETTER FROM CORINTH (7:1-16:9)

- A. MARRIAGE & CELIBACY (7:1-40)
- B. EATING MEATS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS (8:1-11:1)
- C. WOMEN PRAYING AND PROPHECYING WITH HEADS UNCOVERED (11:2-16)
- D. THE LORD'S SUPPER (11:17-34)
- E. SPIRITUAL GIFTS (12:1-14:40)
- F. RESURRECTION (15:1-58)
- G. COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS (16:1-4)

CONCLUDING REMARKS, INSTRUCTIONS, AND BLESSING (16:5-24)

v. 17 Paul was sent to preach the gospel, simply, without words of wisdom, lest the message of the cross be minimized. Where and why has God sent you? **How faithful to that calling are you? Am I?**

v. 18 **How strong is your belief** that the message of the cross is **the power of God to you?** Is there anything at all in the message of the cross that has even a hint of foolishness in it?

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1Co 1:19 For it is written: "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND BRING TO NOTHING THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRUDENT."

1Co 1:20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

1Co 1:21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom (used 8 X) did not know (ginosko – knowledge by experience) God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

v. 19 Paul quoted *Isa 29:14* in *1Co 1:19*, proving that God has written a big failure over the wisdom of men. In his address on Mars' Hill, Paul dared to tell the philosophers that Greek and Roman history were but “times of this ignorance” (*Act 17:30*). He was not suggesting that they knew nothing, because Paul knew too well that the Greek thinkers had made some achievements. However, **their wisdom did not enable them to find God and experience salvation.** **Is. 29:14** – Israel was destroyed because they elevated their own wisdom over trusting in God!

v. 20 Paul called on three men to bear witness: the wise (the expert), the scribe (the interpreter and writer), and the disputer (the philosopher and debater). He asked them one question: Through your studies into man's wisdom, have you come to know God in a personal way? They all must answer no! The fact that they laugh at the cross and consider it foolishness is evidence that they are perishing. We can either become depressed over the foolish political and judicial decisions of our leaders—or we can realize they are exactly what God planned to do all along. We won't be upset if we realize that even the foolishness of the world is part of God's plan.

1 Cor. 1:21 “it pleased God”

v. 21 Nobody, through their own intellect, their own wisdom, can ever come into a personal, experiential relationship with God! All that matters is what pleases God!! All the rest you can pile in a heap and burn it. The only thing that matter is the gospel message – Jesus died on the cross for our sins. He was buried and rose again on the third day. And if you turn from your sins ***For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know*** (ginosko – knowledge by experience) ***God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.***

All that matter as it relates to man's salvation is what pleases God. All the rest means nothing. And it has pleased God to save man this way. By declaring a message to sinful man, that Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins. He was buried and rose again on the third day. And if you'll turn from your sin, ask God for forgiveness, and trust in His Savior, and in His salvation, you can have the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life! That is the lone message that pleases Him! ***“it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.”***

v. 19 Note the emphatic promise of God that He will destroy the wisdom of the wise and being to nothing the understanding of the prudent! **How well do we understand this? How important is your wisdom and your understanding?**

v. 20 Can you think that there is any instance that man's wisdom can bring to know God in a personal way?

v. 21 How important it is for you to please God? Do you see how God uses the foolishness of the message of the cross to save those who believe and that is what pleased God?

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1Co 1:22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;

1Co 1:23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness (it was an affront to them because it was so simple),

1Co 1:24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1Co 1:25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

God has chosen to save mankind through a very simple message. A message that seems foolish to people. But when the message is delivered, God will be faithful to say, Yea and Amen to the gospel. God is saying, would you quit worrying about the world thinks you're smart or not – just deliver the message – **IT'S SIMPLE BY DESIGN!** Don't try to impress! Don't worry about whether the world thinks you're of high intellect, just deliver the message.

v. 22 For whereas the Jews demand of the apostles, as they did of their Lord, more signs still, after all they have seen already; and the Greeks, or gentiles, seek wisdom - The depths of philosophy, and the charms of eloquence..

v. 23 Some stumble at the cross (*1Co 1:23*). Some laugh at the cross (*1Co 1:23*). Some believe and experience the power and the wisdom of the cross (*1Co 1:24*).

We go on to preach, in a plain and historical, not rhetorical or philosophical, manner, Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block - Just opposite to the "signs" they demand. And to the Greeks foolishness - A silly tale, just opposite to the wisdom they seek.

v. 24 But to them that are called - And obey the heavenly calling. Christ - With his cross, his death, his life, his kingdom. And they experience, first, that he is the power, then, that he is the wisdom, of God. If the Jews and Greeks would just believe in God, they would have all the wisdom, miracles and signs that they could every want! They would have the power of God to live an entirely different life!

v. 25 Because the foolishness of God - The gospel scheme, which the world judge to be mere foolishness, is wiser than the wisdom of men; and, weak as they account it, stronger than all the strength of men. God's way of salvation is a humbling experience. Not based on our intellect and our worldly wisdom. God has purposely chosen to save mankind in a way, to the natural man, that is an insult to their intellect. He has chosen a way to save mankind that is very, very simple, that seem foolish to man. But when the message is delivered. Some folk like to give emphasis to the prominent folk who have accepted Christ—the entertainment greats, the leaders in industry, and the prominent in government. But God majors in average people. He is calling simple folk like you and me.

v. 22 In their pride, the Jews were stuck in their superiority of being the chosen ones under Old Covenant. How much should we rely on signs and miracles in our faith? The Greeks were all into wisdom. **How much importance do you attach to the worldly wisdom of messengers of the gospel?**

v. 23 Are you adding anything to your gospel message other than preaching Christ crucified?

v. 24 Are you in agreement that Christ must be preached to all that the gospel of Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God?

v. 25 How would you explain the fact that *the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men*

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Glory Only in the Lord

1Co 1:26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

(My Salvation rests upon one letter the letter M — not many noble are called. Did it read any noble, my case would have been hopeless."— Lady Huntington.)

vs. 26-29 “God has chosen” And then you see that God has chosen simple messengers as well! Notice these three words – ***God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; [28] and the base (insignificant) things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, [29] that no flesh should glory in His presence.*** God has chosen by design, simple, simple messengers! It’s not that He doesn’t have other choices. He does, but He has prefers to use this kind of person so that when He used this kind of person, when people see anything good come out of it, they recognize that it must be God! **He wants a simple message to be delivered by a simple messenger!** So if God has chosen you to do anything for Him, it’s because in that area, He **couldn’t find anything more base or more simple or more not noble, nor more weak, nor more despised!** If we forget that, then He will use someone else! He does it this way so when He uses us and He will use us, He will receive all the glory! That no flesh should glory in His presence. He is just looking for simple messengers. **The greatest teachers, the greatest messengers through the ages have been simple men who simply just delivered the simple message for God.** I always assume the listener is motivated. And if not, what can the messenger do? Why do you come? Because by the Spirit of God, He’s given me a hunger to be around God’s people and to hear the Word of God again. And the great challenge that God finds in His servant is that we will accept that about Him. That He will produce the hunger in people’s lives for these things and then He will confirm these things to be the truth in peoples’ lives, it doesn’t depend on us, He can do His job. So stay with the simple message. Just deliver that message. Don’t worry about what you are and what you aren’t. He knew what He was getting when He got you. And knew if He used you, it must be God. When you understand this, there is nothing to live up to. Then if the simple message of the Word of God, delivered by a simple messenger, isn’t good enough for people, then you just fold up your tent and go home. But it will always be good enough for people, because God will always put that hunger in our lives for the things of Him.

v. 26 How do you see your calling as it relates to *not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called?* Why does God do that?

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1Co 1:27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

1Co 1:28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,

1Co 1:29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

v. 27 In **But God has chosen the foolish things of the world:** Looking again at the Corinthians, Paul can say “you aren’t wise according to the world, you aren’t mighty, you aren’t noble - but you are among **the foolish things of the world.**” No doubt, many of the Corinthian Christians were beginning to think of themselves in high terms. They have not been chosen because they are so great, but because *God* is so great. **To put to shame the wise:** This explains part of the *pleasure* of God described in 1Co 1:21. God loves to rebuke the idolatry of human wisdom, and He often does it by choosing and using the **foolish things of the world.**

v. 28 God has called the weak and ignorant *first*, but not exclusively; shepherds first, then wise men; fishermen first, then the educated (like Paul, who was himself an educated man).

v. 29 The end result is plain: ***That no flesh should glory in His presence.*** God’s ways are greater and higher, and nothing of the *flesh* will ***glory in His presence***

vs. 27-29 Notice these three words – ***God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; [28] and the base (insignificant) things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, [29] that no flesh should glory in His presence.*** God has chosen by design, simple, simple messengers! He prefers to use this kind of person so that when He used this kind of person, when people see anything good come out of it, they recognize that it must be God! He wants a simple message to be delivered by a simple messenger! If God has chosen you to do anything for Him, it’s because in that area, He couldn’t find anything more base or more simple or more not noble, nor more weak, nor more despised! If we forget that, then He will use someone else! He does it this way so when He uses us and He will use us, He will receive all the glory! That no flesh should glory in His presence. He is just looking for simple messengers. The greatest teachers, the greatest messengers through the ages have been simple men who simply just delivered the simple message for God.

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1Co 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—

1Co 1:31 that, as it is written, "HE WHO GLORIES, LET HIM GLORY IN THE LORD."

vs. 30-31 Here we have the description of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Only the gospel of Jesus Christ can supply what is needed for mankind. No philosopher can provide for mankind, What do we have in Jesus Christ? Here's what we have. True wisdom belongs to the believing. ***Jesus, who became for us wisdom:*** Jesus perfectly shows us, in His teaching and life, God's wisdom. This wisdom is often in contradiction to man's expectation. God's wisdom is received in and through the person of Jesus. Jesus is not only ***wisdom*** for us; He is also ***righteousness and sanctification and redemption***. In His work, He communicates three things to those who are ***in Christ Jesus***. ***Righteousness*** (right standing) means that we are legally declared not only "not guilty," but to have a *positive* righteousness. It means that the righteous deeds and character of Jesus are accounted to us. We don't become righteous by focusing on ourselves, because Jesus ***became for us . . . righteousness!*** ***Sanctification*** speaks of our behavior, and how the believers is to be separate *from* the world and *unto* God. We don't grow in ***sanctification*** by focusing on ourselves, but on Jesus, because Jesus ***became for us . . . sanctification!*** ***Redemption*** (liberated from slavery) The idea is that we have been purchased to permanent freedom. We don't find freedom by focusing on ourselves, because ***Jesus became for us . . . redemption!*** ***He who glories, let him glory in the LORD:*** Paul uses this reference to [Jer 9:23-24](#) to show that God did it all this way so that God would get the glory. The *path* for God's glory is Christ crucified; the *evidence* of God's glory is His choice of the lowly.

v. 30 How real is Christ Jesus your wisdom? Your righteousness? Your sanctification? Your redemption?

v. 31 Jer 9:23 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; [24] But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.

In whom or in what do you glory?

WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS – Billy Graham Crusade Choir

*When I survey the wondrous cross On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss, And pour contempt on all my pride.*

*Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood.*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all ...
Thou hast my soul, my life, my all.*