

The Wisdom Of God Is Foolishness To Man

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

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November 4, 2018

Teaching Aim: To understand 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. To realize Christ's death on the cross opens the only possible way for fallen men and women to be reconciled to a holy God. To recognize it pleases God through the foolishness of the gospel message to save those who believe.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD'S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing (vv. 18-20)

1. To the Greeks, the gospel message was "*moronic*" (vs. 18). Why do you think so many people have such a hard time believing the gospel message today? (See **2 Cor. 4:3-4**; **Eph. 2:1-5**) What was your response the first time you heard the gospel message?
2. The gospel message can be summed up in the following Bible verses: **1 Cor. 15:3-4**; **John 3:16**; **Acts 16:31**. Why is this message offensive to many people in the world today? (See **Rom. 3:23**) According to **Rom. 5:8-9**, what did Christ do for us? Who and what did Jesus come to save us from?
3. In your own words, what does the cross mean to you (vs. 18)? Why? (See **Gal. 6:14**; **Phil 2:8-11**; **Col. 1:19-20**; **2:13-15**) According to **Rom. 1:16**, how powerful is the gospel message? Do you struggle in sharing the gospel with others? If so, why?
4. In **verse 19**, Paul quotes **Isa. 29:14** to show the foolishness of man's wisdom. In this passage God denounces the wise men of Judah for seeking an alliance with Egypt to protect them from King Sennacherib and the Assyrian army rather than turning to God for help. How does this illustration relate to our lives today? Is God your first choice or last resort in times of need?

5. What are some ways “*the wisdom of the world*” is different from “*the wisdom of God*” (**vs. 20**)? (See **1 Sam. 16:7**) Do you see our culture moving further and further away from God today? Why? How do you see this change affecting society?

Part II: The message of the cross is life to those who believe (vv. 21-25)

1. Does “*the wisdom of the world*” lead people to faith in Christ (**vs. 21**)? According to **verse 21**, how does the vast majority of the world view the gospel message? The Greeks thought only “*morons*” would believe the message of the cross. Do many university professors today still look down on Christians and speak harshly of them to their students? Why is college a particularly dangerous time for young Christian students?
2. The Greeks looked for wisdom, they loved intellectualism. What did the Jews request to see (**vs. 22**)? What kind of signs had already been given to the Jews through Jesus? (See **Isa. 7:14; John 2:1-11; 6:1-14; 6:15-21; 9:1-7; 11:43-44**) Did the Jews receive these signs? What is the only sign Jesus promised to give the Jews when they pressed Him for yet another sign? (See **Matt. 12:38-40**) What did the sign of the prophet Jonah point towards? (See **Luke 24:1-6**)
3. Paul remained faithful to preaching Christ crucified in spite of the unpopularity of the message (**vs. 23**). What danger do modern churches face today when they soften the gospel message? Why are so many churches turning to the “*seeker sensitive*” model today? (See **Rom. 3:10-11**) What is “*the seeker sensitive*” model? Is this model biblical? (See **Eph. 4:11-14**) How did the gospel message affect the unbelieving Jews (**vs. 23**)? What did the Greeks think of the gospel message?

4. Who are *“the called”* in **verse 24**? Does God’s effectual call go out to the Jews only, or does it also go out to the Gentiles? What is God’s *“effectual call?”* (Hint: Google it!) According to **verse 24**, what is Christ to those who believe? How?

5. Many people disagree with God’s providence and want to do things their way. People often second guess God thinking they know better than He does. What can we learn from **verse 25**? Where does the believer often find God’s power? (See **2 Cor. 12:9**) Why? Is this the kind of wisdom and power the world is looking for? What weakness in your life has forced you to lean on God?

Part III: He who glories, let him glory in the Lord (vv. 26-31)

1. Why do you think we don’t find more *“well off”* people in our churches (**vs. 26**)? (Notice Paul didn’t say *“any”*, but *“many”*.) Is there a danger in being wealthy and self-sufficient? How can this kind of social status affect our view of God?

2. Have you ever been in a church where wealthy individuals were favored? Why were they favored? Does God show favoritism to the wealthy? (See **Gal. 2:6; Jam. 2:1-7**) Should we? Why or why not? Why has Shoreline’s church leadership decided that nobody but the church bookkeeper and money counters are to know what people give?

3. According to **verse 27** *“God has chosen ‘the foolish things’ of the world to put to shame the wise,”* and *“the weak things’ of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty”*. Why? How does **verse 27** relate to the Jewish and Greek view of Christ?

4. Why would God's choosing of the "*base things*" (or lowly things) of the world and the things that are despised be an encouragement to the many slaves in Corinth and the surrounding region (**vs. 28**)? Why should this truth be an encouragement to us today?

5. According to **verse 29**, how many unregenerate (or spiritually dead) people will glory in the presence of God? All the spiritual blessings we need to be saved are found in Christ. What four attributes of Christ are highlighted in **verse 30**? How do each of these attributes relate to our salvation?

6. Question 1 in the Westminster Confession of Faith Shorter Catechism states:
Question: What is the chief end of man?
Answer: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever."

What are some practical ways that you can glorify God today (**vs. 31**)? What affect can a lifestyle of glorifying God have on your own spiritual walk? What kind of effect can it have on others watching you?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- The cross of Christ is a paradox. On the one hand it is the most ghastly act humanity has ever done in crucifying the sinless Son of God. On the other hand, it is the most beautiful, unselfish act of love ever performed as Christ in His human nature laid down His life on the cross so that our sin can be forgiven and we can spend eternity in heaven with Him!
- 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!
- Paul preached "*Christ crucified*;" he did not alter the gospel message in order to make it more palatable for unbelievers!
- When going through the difficulties of life, we should ask ourselves, "*What is God teaching me through my circumstances?*" "*What can I learn from this experience?*" "*How can I use what I am going through to glorify God?*"
- Salvation is a free gift from God (though it cost Him greatly). If we glory in anything, let us glory in the Lord and what Jesus did for us at Calvary!

