

Why the World Mocks Christians, Part 4 - 1 Corinthians 1:22-25 – March 23rd, 2014

- Today's teaching will be part four of a series I've titled, "Why the World Mocks Christians."
- Personally, I've been blessed in teaching this particular passage for a number of reasons not the least of which are two truths found in it.
- The first truth is the world hates me because I believe in and follow Jesus and secondly it says more about the world than it says about me.

1. They are perishing (Verse 18)

-v18 Paul says that 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.

2. Their human wisdom is brought to naught (Verse 19)

-v19 Paul quotes Isaiah 29:14 which says that God will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and He will frustrate the intelligence of the intelligent.

3. They are blinded by their own pride (Verses 20-21)

-v20-21 Paul rhetorically asks them several questions all of which made foolish the pride of their scholars, philosopher's and wisdom of man.

4. They have rejected a crucified Christ (Verses 22-25)

(22) Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, (23) but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, (24) but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

(25) For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

-v22-23 Paul says preaching Christ crucified stumbles Jews who demand miraculous signs, and it's foolish to Greeks who look for wisdom.

-v24 He goes on to say Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God to those whom God has called, whether they are Jews or Greeks.

-v25 Paul tells them the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of man and the weakness of God is stronger than the strength of man.

- In order to better understand what Paul is saying here, we first have to know a little bit more about the cultural dynamics back in that day.
- More specifically that of the Jews and Greeks such that, the Jews demanded a Messiah who would prove himself with signs supernaturally.
- And, conversely, for the Greeks, they demanded a Messiah who would prove himself with wisdom intellectually, both of which were unmet.

- This because, God would choose to use a crucified Messiah Who would prove Himself on a Roman cross, which was seen as humiliating.
- It's for this reason Christ crucified had become a stumbling block that had in effect, jammed both their supernatural and intellectual gears.
- In other words, their demands for a messiah would derail them from accepting the Messiah, because He wasn't who they were looking for.

- By that I mean the Greeks were looking for the perfect man to meet their intellectual and philosophical demands by their human standards.
- However, the Jews were looking for the perfect man to meet their miraculous and supernatural demands for deliverance from the Romans.
- The reason why they would ultimately reject the perfect man when He did come is because it would be in a way that they could not accept.

One commentator said it best this way, "Instead of giving the Jews and Greeks what they demanded in deliverance and wisdom, God gave them something unexpected: a crucified Messiah. Christ (Messiah) meant power, splendor, and triumph. Crucified meant weakness, defeat, and humiliation. Christ crucified was the ultimate oxymoron, and this was what Paul preached!"

- This explains why it is that Jesus responded to the Pharisees and Sadducees when they would demand to see a miraculous sign from Him.

Matthew 12:38-40 NIV Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you." (39) He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. (40) For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 16:1-4 NIV The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. (2) He replied, "When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' (3) and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. (4) A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went away.

Luke 11:29 NIV As the crowds increased, Jesus said, "This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.

Mark 8:11-13 NIV The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. (12) He sighed deeply and said, "Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it." (13) Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.

- Lest we be too hard on the Pharisees and Sadducees of that day, we would do well to understand how they are alive and well in our day.
- Let me explain, if the truth be made known, we're just as prone to either demand the Lord be to our liking, and or cater to those who do.
- Perhaps better said, we can be guilty of placing our demands on the Lord, or even acquiescing to those not looking for a crucified Lord.

I'll close with a most insightful quote from Charles Spurgeon, who I think hits the proverbial nail on the head as it relates to the danger of catering to the worlds demand for a user friendly Jesus who will be more compatible with what they're looking for. Here's what he had to say, "Those who thus veil an unwelcome truth imagine that they make disciples, whereas they are only paying homage to unbelief, and comforting men in their rejection of divine propitiation for sin. Whatever the preacher may mean in his heart, he will be guilty of the blood of souls if he does not clearly proclaim a real sacrifice for sin." ... "Certain divines tell us that they must adapt truth to the advance of the age, which means that they must murder it and fling its dead body to the dogs . . . which simply means that a popular lie shall take the place of an offensive truth."