

Why the World Mocks Christians, Part 3 - 1 Corinthians 1:20-21 – March 16th, 2014

- Today's teaching will be part three of a series we began, commencing in verse eighteen that I've titled, "Why the World Mocks Christians."
- Here-to-fore, the Apostle Paul has, by the Holy Spirit, risen from the pages of our Bibles and put his finger on why the world hates us so.
- And, in so doing, what's becoming very clear is that the world's ridiculing hatred of us as Christians, says more about them than it does us.

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)

(20) Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? (21) For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

- v20 Paul asks where's the wise man and scholar, where's the philosopher of this age, has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?
- v21 Paul goes on to say since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know God, which is why it became foolishness.
- This is also why God would become pleased that through the foolishness of the preaching of the Gospel He would save those who believe.

- It's important to note that Corinth's carnal culture saw the wise scholar and philosopher of their day as the world sees rock stars in our day.
- It's for this reason that the Apostle Paul is confronting this faulty and foolish mindset and hitting it head on so as to dismantle and destroy it.
- By the way, this also explains the reason Paul confronts their carnality of esteeming one rock star teacher over the other in verses 12-17.

- This is where he addresses how some were saying they followed him, others Apollos, or Cephas, and still others who followed only Christ.
- The point being is they'd acquiesced to the carnality of Corinth's culture by elevating the philosopher, the scholar, and the wisdom of man.
- The problem is that they were advocating a cultural worldview contrary to the Biblical worldview, which is foolish in the eyes of the world.

- The question becomes, why does God make foolish and destroy the wisdom of the world, and frustrate the intelligence of the intelligent?
- The answer in a word is, "pride!" Man's pride is the common denominator with both the scholar of the world and the philosopher of the age.
- The pages of Holy Writ are replete with passage after passage declaring how that God resists the proud and knows the proud from afar off.

Charles Spurgeon - "Fine preaching feeds man's pride, plain [humble] preaching brings glory to God and benefit to men."

- Be that as it may, let me hasten to say, that there is nothing wrong with a Christian who academically possesses the intellect of a scholar.
- It's not what degrees you possess academically, or accomplishments you possess intellectually, rather, its do they possess you spiritually.
- Let me explain, it's not a matter of what we have, it's what has us in the sense of does the possession become the obsession of our lives?

- Here's the litmus test to know whether or not what I have, actually has me, it will become the focal point of my life, evidenced by my pride.
- In other words, what I accomplish and possess becomes the identity of who I am, such that I'm defined by it, and full of pride because of it.
- When this happens, one's net worth becomes synonymous with ones self worth and as such; I'm defined both by who I am and what I do.

- However, as a Christian, I'm not defined by who I am or what I do rather, I'm defined by Who Jesus Christ is as the, I AM and what He did.
- While this may explain "why it is" that God makes the wisdom of the world foolish, it has yet to explain, "how it is" that God makes it foolish.
- Actually, when we have an understanding of why it can become a catalyst of sorts to knowing how by virtue of pride coming before the fall.

Proverbs 16:18 NKJV Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

- Simply put, the wisdom of the wise is destroyed vis-à-vis man's pride going before the destruction, as will his haughty spirit before the fall.
- To me, one of the most humorous yet serious examples of this is found in 1st Samuel, which is the book we're studying through Thursday's.
- The account is found in chapter five when the Philistines captured the ark of God and brought it into the house of Dagon who was their god.

- What's interesting about this particular Dagon god is that the Assyrian's, also known as the Ninevites, also worshipped this pagan deity.
- The reason I point this out is because of the way God would use a man and a fish to reach the Ninevites to bring them to repentance.
- I suppose you could say that God knew it would take a fish barfing out a man to turn them from their half man half fish god to the true God.

1 Samuel 5:3-4 (3) And when the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and set it in its place again. (4) And when they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands were broken off on the threshold; only Dagon's torso was left of it.

- You'll forgive my humor but when they see their god on it's face as if to worship before the Ark of the Lord, you'd know something is fishy.
- Doesn't the worship of a fish seem foolish? And they think we're foolish. Well, the foolish fish you worship fell before the true God I worship.
- If that weren't foolish enough, are you so foolish as to believe that if your god falls and is broken he can help when you fall and are broken?

- Furthermore to the foolish wisdom of man I ask, isn't it foolish to believe that a god who can't take care of himself would take care of you?
- Just as the Ark of God can make the Dagon god foolishly fall when it's brought in so too can the Word of God make any god foolish as well.
- Perhaps you'll indulge me in closing as I share with you a story told in varying forms, one of which may be true from back in the 1920's.

There was a professor of philosophy there who was a deeply committed atheist. His primary goal for one required class was to spend the entire semester attempting to prove that God couldn't exist. His students were always afraid to argue with him because of his impeccable intellect. For twenty years he had taught this class and NO ONE had ever had the courage to go against him. This because of what he was known to do. At the end of every semester, he would say to the class of 300 students, "If there is anyone here who still believes in God, stand up!" In twenty years, nobody ever stood up. They knew what he was going to do next. He would say, "Anyone who believes in God is a fool because if God existed, he could stop this piece of chalk from hitting the ground and breaking. Such a simple task to prove he is God, and yet he can't do it." And every year he would drop the chalk onto the tile floor of the classroom and it would shatter into a hundred pieces. All the students could do nothing but stop and stare and as such, most of them would become convinced that God didn't exist. For 20 years all of his students, even the Christians, had been too afraid to stand up. That is until a particular freshman happened to enroll in the class. He was a Christian, and had heard the stories about this professor. He had to take the class because it was one of the required classes for his major. Though he too was afraid, he prayed that every morning he would have the courage to stand up no matter what the professor said or what his classmates thought. Finally, the day came. The professor said, "If there is anyone here who still believes in God, stand up!" Much to shock of the professor, and the class of 300, he stood up. The professor condescendingly shouted, "YOU FOOL! If nothing I have said all semester has convinced you that God doesn't exist, then, you are a fool! If God existed, he could keep this piece of chalk from breaking when it hit the ground!" He proceeded to drop the chalk, but as he did, it slipped out of his fingers, off his shirt cuff, onto the pleats of his pants, and off his shoe. And as it hit the ground, it simply rolled away, UNBROKEN. The professor's jaw dropped as he stared at the chalk. He looked up at the young man and then ran out of the lecture hall. The young man who had stood up proceeded to walk to the front of the room and share his faith in Jesus Christ for the next half hour. 300 students stayed and listened as he told of God's love for them and of salvation through Jesus Christ.