

Foolishness of the Cross

Intro

Today we are going to be in the book of 1 Corinthians.

If you want to learn how to live in holiness in godless culture this is the book for you. No book in the New Testament gives us a more practical picture of applying the Christian faith to day-to-day issues.

Corinth was a thriving, prosperous, and strategically located city. Because of it was such a strategic location and being as Roman Colony it was primarily populated by Roman, Greek and Jewish Businessman but drew merchants from every corner of the Earth.

Corinth was known by the pagan world for its moral corruption. It was also home to the famous **Temple of Aphrodite**. The goddess of love and fertility. There were over a thousand temple slaves which led to **many who had been guilty of practicing these sins, and some still were as they infiltrated the Church.**

Paul founded this church on his second missionary journey. In **Acts 18:11** after about a year and a half he left the church to Apollos an eloquent Jewish convert from Alexandria.

After some time, the believers developed a special loyalty to him. Even though Apollos was "Mighty in the Scripture" according to **Acts 18:24**, he had some doctrinal **deficiencies**, along with serious problems in the church. So, Paul wrote this letter because just like today the Christians of Corinth had a **great difficulty in mimicking the corrupt society around them**. They wanted to be in God's Kingdom while keeping **one foot in the kingdom** of this world.

This letter starts by reminding them of the church 1st **they were called to be saints** 2nd **The benefits of being a saint** and then in **vs 10** Paul starts addressing the **splits and quarrels** in the church. Paul ends in **vs 17** Saying that an impressive delivery overshadows the preaching of the Gospel and empties it of its power. The Power of Salvation is never in the messenger, the Power of Salvation is in the message, The Cross of Christ. Amen!

All right, let's go home. Just kidding let's look at verse 18-25 The Foolishness of the Cross

Read and Pray

1. Vs 18 The Foolishness of the cross separates the Saints from the Aints.

A. Its Foolishness to the Aints

Vs 18 starts with the word "**For**" = which could mean Since or Because. Since or Because man wants to exalt human wisdom & human power. We see this in so many churches today. Let us make church and the message attractive to the world and people will come. Let us preach to emotions to entice an emotional response.

We see today human wisdom and power are at odds with God's plan of Salvation. **If it is not thru human wisdom, then how?** Paul says thru vs 18 "**The Preaching**" which is to = **lay forth the word**, Paul says of the Cross. Which is foolishness to Perishing.

Let me ask you a Question if the Cross is not enough and we need to add more, then we need to question are they trying to save the perishing or are they the Perishing?

Perish means "To Destroy Fully". Those who are in a state of decay see this message of the cross as Foolishness. **Foolishness** the root word is **Mystery** means dull, stupid, silliness. The Aints simply cannot believe the cross is the way of Salvation.

B. It is the Power of God to the Saved

Paul says "**But**" Here we see a transition on the other hand to those that are **saved** or '**Being Saved**' it is the Power of God.

We know that the Cross is the Great Divider.

The Cross delivers us from the **penalty of past sin**

The Cross delivers us from the **present power of sin**

The Cross delivers us in the **future from the presence of sin**

The Cross is the Great Divider, to the Saints its **Power** to the Aints its **weakness**

To the Saints its **Wisdom** to the Aints its **Foolishness**

To the Saints its **redemption** To the Aints its **Slavery**

To the Saints its **Heaven** to the Aints its **Hell**

The Saints boast in the Cross; the Aints Boast in themselves.

Listen if your lost loved one cannot see the same things, you can; it is by no surprise.

2. The Foolishness of the Cross spot lights the Foolishness of Worldly Wisdom

- A. In Verses 19-20 Paul is revealing the lack of power, strength, and effectiveness of prideful humankind.

Vs 19 "For it is Written" (Ben and I had a bible study) where is it written **Isaiah 29:14**

This quote from Isaiah was prophesized; The King of Assyria planned to conquer Judah. The Lord told his prophet not to worry Judah would be saved solely by God's Power, With no human help (Sound familiar). We see in **Isaiah 37:36** 185,000 Assyrian Soldiers destroyed by one Angel.

We want to fight in our own power but all we do is get in God's way.

We have been learning a lot on Wednesday nights about wisdom. The Bible does not disapprove of wisdom, and I do not want to get ahead of myself but is the wisdom you are accepting the right wisdom. **Turn James 3:17** tells us that True Wisdom comes from above, **read vs 17** but vs 14-15 warns of a worldly Wisdom that does not **Read vs 14-15.**

Vs 20 As we identify this historical reference, we see who Paul is talking about here.

Paul starts with "The Wise" Where are they Paul's says. Paraphrasing Isaiah 19:12 referring to the wise men of Egypt who always promised but never delivered. (Sounds like the politicians of today. Isaiah said that they led Egypt astray in all they did, As drunken a man staggers in vomit.

Next The Scribe – Most think Paul is referring to the Assyrians who sent Scribes to record what was taken in battle. But God saw to it that they had nothing to record.

Then the Disputer of this World= This is a Greek word referring to Arguing about Philosophy. The Jewish reader would have picked up right away to Paul's references to Assyria and Egypt. But just in case you cannot how about the Disputer of this world, you know them. Paul's is sarcastically asking where has all the clever arguments and impressive speech got you. Are you better off because of them? Nothing really changes; life has the same problems.

Could there be a more appropriate word for us in our own day? Where have the Thinkers, Philosophers, Sociologists, Psychologists, Economists, Scientists, and Politicians brought us?

Modern and ancient human wisdom has failed. **It may see the immediate cause of the problem, but it does not see the root, which is always sin.**

He who sees the cross as foolishness is doomed to their own foolishness.

2. The Foolishness of the Cross spot lights the Foolishness of Worldly Wisdom

B. It Reveals the Insufficiency of Prideful ideas

Vs 21 Notice that it is not foolish Preaching but the foolishness of Preaching.

Paul's says **in the wisdom of God** – With all your wisdom you will never be able to know God, man cannot know him by the wisdom of the world. Even if human wisdom could recognize the problem, it does not have the power to change it.

Preaching here could be translated **The message Preached** but it actually comes from the Greek word "**Proclamation**". It is not about declaring a message but the content of the message which vs 18 says is "The Cross" and "The Power of God".

3. The Foolishness of the Cross is a hindrance to the Aints but the power of God to the Saints.

A. Vs 22-23 tells us The Aints will reject & ridicule the cross

Vs 22 The Jews require a sign –Jesus talked about this **John 4:48** unless you see sign and wonders, ye will not believe. **Luke 11:29** They seek a sign, and there shall no sign be given it. I'm sure none if you have done this, but I remember asking the lord to reveal himself to me. I remember on my knees praying and saying if you are real, move this chair next to me. The chair never moved. I remember praying to the Lord if you are real remove this thing from my life, help me in some way. Not coming to the Lord for what he had done but for what he could do for me.

But the Greeks or gentiles wanted proof by means of **human wisdom or reason**. I did this, too. I research **historical, geographical, all the biblical information** I could find honestly hoping to disprove God. I loved my sin and I could disprove God I could move on with my life. **But we do not come to the Lord through information or proof; we come by faith. Amen.**

Vs 23 Most of the Jews of Paul's day and today cannot accept the idea of a crucified messiah. Even though Psalms 22 and Isaiah 53 are clear teachings, they were ignored or explained away. To the Jews Paul says the Cross is a cause of Offense.

And unto the Greeks Foolishness the Greeks did not want eternal truth but they loved arguing innovative ideas. The Wisdom they sought was not a divine truth but intellectual. This mystery to them was dull, stupid, and silly. There had to be more

The only message a Christian has to tell is the Message of the Cross. God becoming man dying to pay the penalty for sins and being raised from death in order to raise us to life.

Vs 24-25 Tells us B. The Saints receive and rejoice in the cross

Vs 24 Paul makes clear he had been using the term Jews and Greeks Representing the perishing, **the spiritually lost**. I love this word BUT in **vs 24 But he calls both, Call- mean to invite**. The Lord is calling, inviting us to see what is a stumbling block to the unbelieving Jew, **Is savor to the believing**. What is Foolishness to the unbelieving gentile is **redeemer to the Believing**. Jesus is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.

To those who have received the call, Jesus is a Divine Power and a Divine Philosophy.

The preaching of the Cross changes people, **calls them to faith, and this is God's plan**. Man with his highest achievements, cannot find God, or even begin to understand this powerful message of the cross that has been given to every generation.

Vs 25 Because from an unbeliever's point of view what seems most ridiculous and useless is actually his greatest power and greatest wisdom!

Paul is telling us if God could possess any sort of foolishness, it would be wiser than man's greatest wisdom.

And if God were able to have any weakness, it would be stronger than the greatest strength men could produce.

Man, often views something that God does as foolish or weak because he is too frail, Wyclif would say "feeble" to understand God, too weak to see the power of His purpose. The Lord's work is something greater than men can grasp with their limited perception. So, in pride and weakness they reject God.

The Cross is what all who are being saved rejoice and boast in.

We need nothing else. We want nothing more. It is all we need today and forever, Amen.

We must grasp the glory of the cross, without a biblical understanding of the Cross there is no authentic Christianity.