



1st Chattanoogaans

A STUDY IN 1 CORINTHIANS

The Folly and Power of the Cross

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In last week's message (1:10-17), we were introduced to one of the major issues of the church in Corinth. It was a seriously divided church. This lack of unity was negatively impacted their spiritual vitality.

In the passage we are looking at today, Paul is going to take the Corinthian believers to the cross and show them that the cross, not personalities, is the basis of our unity. Here Paul will answer the question, "Why does God use the foolish message of the cross?"



GOD PRONOUNCED THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE CROSS

1 Corinthians 1:18-20, For 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. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? NIV

Paul makes it clear that there are only two categories of people: the "perishing" and the "saved."

The perishing consider the message of the cross to be **foolishness**.

Greek word for foolishness is **moria**.

ridiculous ... ignorant ... stupid ... contemptible ... silly

The believers see it was the **power of God**.

Paul calls forth the perceived professional experts, and he “fools” them and us to show himself powerful and wise.

None of us would have ever come up with the plan of salvation that God did.

GOD PLANNED THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE CROSS

1 Corinthians 1:21-25, 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. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. NIV

The cross is a **radical** message.

It is contrary to the wisdom of the world.

These verses provide three different responses to the cross of Christ.

1. Many people **stumble** over the cross. (Jews)

They were looking for a political Messiah.

They wanted a “sign” before they would believe.

They could not believe a crucified Messiah.

2. Many people **laugh** at the cross. (Greeks)

They wanted God to fit into their minds before they would allow him into their lives.

The notion of a man hanging on a cross to save the world was nonsense.

3. Some **believe** the message of the cross and follow the crucified Christ.

They discover the power of God.

God "**fools**" us to show himself wise and powerful.