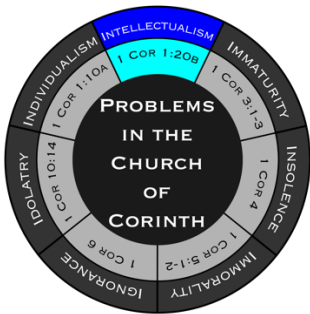


Activating Our Position in Christ
1 Corinthians 1:17-31
The Message of the Cross

We began our study of First Corinthians by looking at the overall focus of the Letter...

We saw where there were several problems in the church that were causing serious issues...

Today we are looking at the second of these “problems”



1 Corinthians 1:20 (NLT) — So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world’s brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish.

ONE THING

Because the message of the Cross is NOT from this WORLD, any attempt to PROCLAIM it,

UNDERSTAND it, RECEIVE it, or LIVE it by strictly HUMAN measures is FUTILE.

1 Corinthians 1:17–31 (ESV) — 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” 20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

1. Our PROCLAIMING of the Message

➤ **The FOCUS is the Cross**

1 Corinthians 1:17 (ESV) — For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

A first-century orator or public speaker was expected to produce carefully crafted speeches which drew attention to his skillful use of rhetorical conventions.

Oratory was called ‘magic’ because it was seen to bewitch the hearers.

The content of the speech was immaterial, only the performance mattered.

They spoke to gain the applause and praise of their audiences.

Paul used none of the orator’s tricks of the trade, for he did not preach with words of human wisdom, lit. ‘by means of the wisdom of rhetoric’.

Preaching must focus on clarity of the message rather than praise for the messenger!

➤ **The FOOLISHNESS of the Cross**

1 Corinthians 1:18–25 (ESV) — For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” 20 Where is the one who is wise?

Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Because the message of the Cross is not from this world, any attempt to proclaim it, understand it, receive it, or live it by human measures is futile.

Galatians 1:11–12 (ESV) — For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

In the next chapter Paul gives more clarity as to why this message of the Cross cannot be proclaimed nor understood by human measures...

1 Corinthians 2:14 (ESV) — The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

1. Our PROCLAIMING of the Message

2. Our POSTURE for the Message

1 Corinthians 1:26–29 (ESV) — For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

- **Our POSITION in LIFE must not determine our POSTURE before the LORD!**

Notice our position...

**... not many were wise...
... not many were powerful...
... not many were of noble birth...**

I read this verse this morning...

Ecclesiastes 5:19b (NLT) — ... To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life—this is indeed a gift from God.

Notice our posture...

**... God chose what is foolish in the world...
... God chose what is weak in the world...
... God chose what is low and disdained in the world...**

- **We were not chosen because of the POSITION of our CONDITION, but because of the POSTURE of our CONTRITION!**

Contrition

Remember what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount...

Matthew 5:3–5 (ESV) — “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

The Beggar...

The Broken...

The Bridled...

Because the message of the Cross is not from this world, any attempt to proclaim it, understand it, receive it, or live it by human measures is futile.

- 1. Our PROCLAIMING of the Message**
- 2. Our POSTURE for the Message**

3. Our POWER from the Message

1 Corinthians 1:30–31 (ESV) — And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

- **Jesus is the WISDOM from GOD**

1 Corinthians 1:30a (ESV) — And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God,

- **Jesus is the TOTALITY of SALVATION**

1 Corinthians 1:30b (ESV) — ... righteousness and sanctification and redemption

Righteousness – Justification

Romans 5:1 (ESV) — Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sanctification

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (ESV) — Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Redemption – Glorification

Ephesians 4:30 (ESV) — And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Because the message of the Cross is not from this world, any attempt to proclaim it, understand it, receive it, or live it by human measures is futile.

**Activating Our Position in Christ
1 Corinthians 1:17-31
The Message of the Cross**

Because the message of the Cross is _____ from this _____,
any attempt to _____ it, _____ it,
_____ it, or _____ it by strictly _____
measures is _____.

1. Our _____ of the Message

- The _____ is the Cross
- The _____ of the Cross

2. Our _____ for the Message

- Our _____ in _____ must not determine our
_____ before the _____!
- We were not chosen because of the _____ of our
_____, but because of the _____ of our
_____!

3. Our _____ from the Message

- Jesus is the _____ from _____
- Jesus is the _____ of _____