



CROSS CHURCH

DISPLAY THE BEAUTY OF THE GOSPEL

Scripture | 1 Corinthians 1.18-2.5

The key thought in these verses which we want to apply is this. His cross changes everything, including and especially the church. Verse 17 warned us of emptying the cross of its power. Now, in verses 1.18-2.5, Paul explains why. Paul made himself clear. Man should not be praised for salvation. Clever speech was unnecessary and unhelpful. Mankind from the brightest intellect to the beggar on the street searches for meaning. Introduced with the message of cross, he may reject it because it seems foolish and does not fit his expectations. Still a number of others receive it with joy and give thanks to the Lord for what he has done. Once we see how weak and foolish we really are, then we lift our eyes heavenward to declare, 'His cross changed me.'

Observation

READ 1 Cor 1.18-25 | God's wisdom looks foolish to the perishing but is powerful to save.

How did Paul conclude his thought in 1:17? What was he concerned NOT to do? Why might eloquent words have interfered with the power of the cross of Christ?

How does Paul continue his description of the cross of Christ in 1:18? What is the "word of the cross?"

How does Paul set up a contrast in v.18? Who is contrasted? What is contrasted? How does their take on the word of the cross display which group they fall into?

Which group is Paul referring to in v19? How is his quote from Isa 29:14 (13-24) about the Lord turning upside down the sinful world of His people a perfect description of what the word of the cross does?

How do Paul's questions in v20 show that the cross changes everything? What fails to know God and bring rescue to the world?

What did Paul and his companions preach/ proclaim? Why does he call it folly? (v21) Why does God's wisdom in the cross appear foolish?

How do the terms "Jew" and "Greek" encompass all people? How are the demand for signs and the demand for wisdom two big categories for how humans attempt to set God's agenda for Him?

How did Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection confuse/ thwart those demanding that God play by their rules and answer to their demands? How is the cross both God's wisdom and God's power?

How are God's wisdom and power not merely an appearance of wisdom and power in contrast to what appears foolish? Why is the wisdom of the world truly foolish even though it appears wise?

Why is v25 an important principle to remember? When might it come in "handy?"

How does God's wisdom look foolish when it is actually powerful to save?



How does the cross turn upside down appearance and reality when it comes to God?

READ 1 Cor 1.26-31 | Our foolishness and weakness by worldly standards is what enables us to boast in Christ.

What is Paul's assessment of the Corinthian believers? How is he accurate?

Why is Paul making this assessment after vv18-25? How are the Corinthian believers an illustration of the truth of God's wisdom and power?

What word does Paul repeat in vv27-28? What does that mean for followers of Christ who might be tempted to boast of their own wisdom, strength, or reputation?

What is the effect of God's choice of foolish, weak, despised people to be in Christ? In what sense are the wise and strong in the world "shamed" by God's wisdom and choices? (Ps 35;26-27)

What does it mean for believers to be "in Christ Jesus?" How does that occur?

How, for a believer, is Christ wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption? How are all of those aspects of a single thing?

Why would we boast in the Lord? (Jer 9:23-24)

How does the following quote from Celsus, a second century opponent of Christianity, sound like Paul's words? Is Celsus right or wrong? If right how does that prove Paul's point?

"Their injunctions are like this. "Let no one educated, no one wise, no one sensible draw near. For these abilities are thought by us to be evils. But as for anyone ignorant, anyone stupid, anyone uneducated, anyone who is a child, let him come boldly." By the fact that they themselves admit that these people are worthy of their God, they show that they want and are able to convince only the foolish, dishonourable and stupid, and only slaves, women, and children."

How does the cross turn upside down our foolishness and or boast?

READ 1 Cor 2.1-5 | God's power is demonstrated in our message, not our cleverness.

What foolish things has God chosen? How are his people foolish? How is the cross foolish? How is His messenger foolish in v1?

What does it mean that Paul decided to know nothing among them but Christ crucified? What are the focusing so centrally on Christ crucified?

How do vv1-2 impact a church's approach to ministry? How does viewing "church" through the cross impact its practice?

Why is the unembellished gospel message to be central for FMFB? Why is the undiluted gospel message to be central for FMFB?

Why would Paul have had weakness, fear, trembling? How did Paul embody exactly the realities of vv18-25 and vv 26-31?

What was the effect of Paul's weakness, fear, and trembling? Why is God's power demonstrated in our message and not our cleverness?

Why are Paul's words not an endorsement of intellectual sloth or neglect of skill in communication? What are they endorsing? How does the cross turn upside down our thoughts about being effective in making disciples?

Observation

1. What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text? How did the Spirit move you to respond?
2. What are the most popular or recognizable brands that you can think of? Has the cross symbolized? What are some ways it has been used in the past? How is it used today?
3. What sets the gospel message apart from every other message of salvation? How does his cross change how we know God?
4. What pictures come to mind when you think about powerful, successful people? How do those images sometimes conflict with following Christ?
5. What are some contemporary excuses that people use to reject the message of the cross? What were your excuses or "demands" before the Holy Spirit worked in your heart?
6. How has the cross changed what we are? How have you experienced this change in your own life, home, actions, etc? What happens if we and/or others do not see a change?
7. How has your understanding of the cross changed from before you were a Christian to today?
8. Are there still people today who consider Christianity a message for the foolish and the weak? In what ways are they right? In what ways are they wrong?
9. How does the truth of the gospel defuse your tendency to focus on yourself? How can you keep that truth central this week?
10. Is there anything you might be doing subconsciously as a way to earn righteousness? What do you need to do differently to approach that area of your life appropriately?
11. Does our world value and encourage personal boasting like Corinth? If we really understand that Christ experienced the agony that we deserved to suffer, how can we possibly exalt ourselves or any other human leaders?
12. How can you be purposeful about boasting in the cross this week? How does the cross shape your everyday decisions?

Prayer

- Thank Jesus for meeting our need and taking upon Himself the penalty and punishment for our sins. Pray that God will give us such understanding and humble appreciation for His gospel that we will be compelled to share it with others.
- Pray that our church body would become more united around the word of the cross. Pray that such unity will drive us to uphold, care, strengthen, depend, and trust one another more.
- Thank God for the gift of life. On this Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, we mourn that many of your precious sons and daughters have lost their lives too soon. Help us to highlight the worth and dignity of human life.

Observations & Prayer Requests

- **MY THOUGHTS** | Record insights and questions from the group experience.

- **MY RESPONSE** | Note specific ways you'll put into practice the truth explored this week.


- **MY PRAYERS** | List specific prayer needs and answers to remember this week.



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