



The Foolish Cross

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5

February 12, 2017

1 Corinthians 1:18 – 2:5 - 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 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. 31 Therefore, as it is written, "**Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.**"

2:1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 **For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.** 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 **that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.**

A Quick Review

- **Division was the problem – unity was desired – repentance the goal**
- Corinth Worldview – Man at the center, God at the margins
- An inflated view of “speech and knowledge”

Paul’s response:

1. The cross is folly (1:18)
2. Preach Christ crucified (1:20,25)
3. Regular people (1:26-31)
4. Regular Preacher – (2:1-5)

The Cross is Divisive!

Weakness/Foolishness

Power/Wisdom

1. A Great Reversal: Wisdom is Foolishness

1:18-21 – 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.

- **The “word of the cross” is the only means of salvation for the coming age.**

2. A Great Reversal: Foolishness is Wisdom

- 1:22 – 25 - 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.
- **Paul is opposed to the wisdom of the world where man tries to figure out God by himself and find God by man's wisdom.**

- “On the one hand, we must declare that Jesus is the Christ, but that he is the Christ who was crucified. But on the other hand, in declaring his crucifixion for our justification, we must not separate this blessing from the person who was crucified. **There must be neither a cross-less Christ nor a Christ-less cross.**” Paul Barnett

Why is Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God?

1. Forgiveness of sin
2. Righteousness from God
3. We can know God
4. Reconciliation with God

The “foolishness” and “weakness” of God is “wiser” and “stronger” than men, because in that foolishness and weakness, **human salvation was won** for those who will receive it.

3. A Great Reversal: Nobodies Redeemed!

- 1:26–31 - 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 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. 31 Therefore, as it is written, "**Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.**"

4. A Regular Preacher (2:1-5)

- 2:1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I **decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.** 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 **that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.**
- **Are you listening to yourself, or preaching the message of the cross to yourself?**

The Power of God in Salvation

- God is our God. He chose us, in due time he called us, and made a covenant with us to be our God. He loves us, and preserves us. He delights in us, and we delight in him. We are familiar with him, love him, and trust in him in all our needs. When God said, “You are mine,” our soul said, “And you are mine, and shall always be mine!” This is the everlasting covenant of salvation. Our salvation is like God, from everlasting to everlasting, from election to glory. We must trust and wait upon God for he is our God and salvation.

