

God's Wisdom in an Age of Confusion
1 Corinthians 1:18-31
God's Way of Saving the World

Introduction

Good morning!

Human intoxication with power (movies, politicians, strength)...

God's power works differently than our conceptions of it...

Let's pray...

Background to Corinth: The "Warrior" and the "Sage"

"Icons of Corinth"...(sage, warrior – power, beauty)...

How did Roman propaganda work for "salvation" of the people?

Paul's way: a crucified king, a crucified anointed one.

This passage breaks into three units, each dealing with a different aspect of how God turns the "wisdom" of human power on its head.

Exposition of 1 Corinthians 1:18-26

Turning human "wisdom" on its head: how God saves

1 Cor. 1:18-19

God chooses to save through the cross, that is through a crucified king (shame? Weakness? Foolishness?). Paul says this is in line with God's character from Isaiah 29:14 (God is going to show that the strength and wisdom of men is worth nothing!).

Turning human "wisdom" on its head: why God saves

1 Cor. 1:20-25

God delights in saving through the cross because it's nothing that human beings can congratulate themselves about. Think about this, friends: throughout the entire Bible we find God's people (and human beings in general) constantly questioning His plans, His ways, His power, His character, His goodness, His warnings. Now, at last, God shows the ultimate "wisdom" of His actions in disclosing the ultimate act of salvation, the ultimate act of love, wisdom, justice, and mercy all rolled into one!

So, in verse 25 when Paul calls God "foolish" and "weak", he is speaking in hyperbole, not literal. He is using the Corinthians own terminology against them in giving a subtle rebuke for their obsessions with human power.

But Paul is still not done yet...let's see *who* God saves...

Turning human "wisdom" on its head: who God saves

1 Cor. 1:26-29

Paul now addresses their own situation and says to them, “Take a long, hard look in the mirror, Corinthian church. Are you all that impressive by Greek standards? No, not really. In fact, you are all quite ordinary – nothing special about you. So why are you acting and boasting as if you bring something to the table and have something to contribute to yourself?”

God’s wisdom: the Lord Jesus Christ!

1 Cor. 1:30-31

Here Paul redefines what “wisdom” really is for God – it’s Christ and the salvation He has brought to us through fellowship with Himself.

Christ as God’s “wisdom”:

Righteousness (justified; law-court)

Holiness (purity; temple)

Redemption (free/liberated; slave-market)

Underneath all of Paul’s sarcasm and irony, a note of joy, confidence, and assurance rings through...do you hear it?

God is very pleased with His plan; meaning, God loves to save this way (cross of His Son), God loves to show up in unexpected places through unexpected people and do unexpected things.

Main Idea:

God’s method of saving the world confounds the “wisdom” of human ways of thinking while giving assurance and hope to those who are being saved

Application: Becoming more “foolish” about Jesus

What if what Paul says is really true?

If God is delighted to save the world through the “foolishness” of the cross of Jesus Christ, then we should become “fools” ourselves by simplifying our lives to be simply *all about pleasing Him*.