

# 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 - Consider Your Calling

## The cross - folly or power

1Co 1:17-31 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**. 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.

- The **cross is the most important event** in human history - where you stand will determine your eternal destiny (PERISH, or ETERNAL LIFE)
- His concern was that eloquent wisdom (maybe they kind that flourished in Corinth) would **empty** the cross of its power (*to make empty, neutralize, to make of no effect*)

## God determined to do some things about this eloquent wisdom

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.

### **I will destroy the wisdom of the wise**

- Destroy - same word as perish

### **I will thwart the discernment of the discerning**

- Thwart - to set aside, that is, (by implication) to disesteem, neutralize or violate

### **He made foolish the wisdom of the world**

- Made Foolish - same word that is used Luk 14:34 ESV "Salt is good, but **if salt has lost its taste**, how shall its saltiness be restored?"

### **In his wisdom he determined the world would not know him through wisdom**

- Read some excerpts

## God determined the nature of the message that saves man

21(b) 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.

### **Though the message we preach may seem like folly - what else can we preach?**

- It pleased God to save people through this message that seems like folly to them

### **What do people demand and seek today? - Our message cannot change**

- We cannot water down the message of the gospel, we cannot preach to the demands of men

**Why would you continue to preach what is considered a stumbling block to some and folly to others?**

- It is because Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God
- No other message has the power to save and to set men free
- Picture a well-respected American businessman, a banker, lawyer, doctor, well dressed, well groomed, being taken out the gate of the city to the garbage dump and being stood in front of a post with a naked man hanging by the nails driven through his wrists, covered with blood, gasping for his last breaths, and being told, "This, sir, is wisdom -- this is power. Will you kneel down here and cast yourself on him for mercy?" (John Piper)

**It pleased God to save others through the "FOLLY" of what we preach**

- But to those who have heard the message of the cross, and have received Christ, they have discovered the POWER of God and the WISDOM of God - and eternal salvation
- Vs 30 **Christ became to us wisdom from God, and sanctification and redemption**
- I am glad that someone who told me about Jesus didn't water the message down - I'm glad they didn't argue with me about abortion or Viet Nam or creation (which were hot topics then) they told me what Jesus did for me by dying on the cross.

**He determined the kind of people he would call**

1Co 1:26-31 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. 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

**Consider your calling**

- Not many wise, powerful or of noble birth (yet these are the things we esteem and pursue)
- BUT God CHOSE the foolish -- [*GK Blockhead*]
- God CHOSE the weak - [*strengthless*]
- God CHOSE what is low (low class) and despised [*without kin - or nobility - a NOBODY*]

**It always seemed amazing to me that God would choose people like this to do His work**

- Mat 28:16-17 ESV Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, **but some doubted.**

**Peter and John - they were uneducated, common men**

- Act 4:13-14 ESV Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that **they were uneducated, common men**, they were **astonished**. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. 14 But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition.

**Moses**, a run away murderer - but led a nation to freedom

**Joshua**, a slave leads Israel to victory in the promised land

**Joseph** - a young dreamer, falsely accused and spent years in prison saves the world from hunger

**David** - a young shepherd boy kills giant goliath and becomes king of israel

**Daniel** - a teenager - carried away captive to an enemy land -- changed the national religion

**Josiah** - an 8 year old boy leads a nation to revival

**Jeremiah** thought he was too young

**Amos** - was a farmer, called to prophesy

### So that no human would boast in the presence of God

1Co 1:29 **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,** and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, "**Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.**"

### If we are going to boast -- then boast in the LORD

Jer 9:23-24 ESV Thus says the LORD: "Let not the **wise man boast in his wisdom**, let not the mighty man **boast in his might**, let not the rich man **boast in his riches**, 24 but **let him who boasts boast** in this, that **he understands and knows me**, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. **For in these things I delight**, declares the LORD."

### Your purpose and calling in life has little to do with you and everything to do with God

- I never had a formal education to be a pastor, but **God called the weak and the foolish**
- Many of you have a similar testimony
- Yet **God wants to do some mighty things** through this group of people, and we have to **stop looking at our weakness** or our **foolishness** in the eyes of the world, or our **lack of pedigree** and realize that ***God CHOSE you for those reasons*** so that HE WOULD BE GLORIFIED
- The very things we see as disqualifying - are the very reasons God says **we are the best people for the job**