

The Wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:18-25)

1 Cor 1:18-20, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate. Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?'"

Verse 22. "The Jews demand miraculous signs & Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews & foolishness to Greeks, But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, & the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength."

From this passage we find 3 groups of people with 3 different views about the cross of Jesus. Which one are we?

I. THE JEWS

For the Jews, the cross was a stumbling block because Jesus was not the kind of Messiah they were looking for.

When Jesus finally arrives, John 1:11 says, "He came to His own but His own did not receive Him."

1 Cor 1:22 says "The Jews demanded miraculous signs."

Why then did the Jews demand signs? They wanted Jesus to be a performer.

In Matt 12:18 and in Matt 16:1, the religious leaders asked Jesus to show them a sign and Jesus responded with the same answer. "No sign shall be given except for the sign of the prophet Jonah."

Have you ever heard someone say, "I will not believe unless...?"

I will not believe unless God, "Gives me good health... unless you fix my marriage... unless you get me out of debt. I will not believe unless you do something for me, then I will follow you." That is exactly how the Jews treated Jesus. They wanted Jesus to meet their demands before becoming His followers. That is one reason why the cross was foolishness to them. Jesus did not meet their expectations.

Another reason why the cross was a stumbling block is because Jesus was not the King they wanted. In Mark 15:2 Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you King of the Jews? Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world. If it were my servants would fight and prevent my arrest."

II. THE GREEKS

Paul writes in verse 22, "The Greeks look for wisdom."

In Acts chapter 17, Paul arrives in Athens. Luke says that they "spent their time doing nothing but talking & listening to the latest ideas" (Acts 17:21).

One day Paul went up on Mars Hill & started telling them about a God who was unknown to them. This God came to earth, walked among them, died on the cross, & rose again. That message was foolishness to them.

In Acts 26, Paul was on trial before a Roman governor named, Festus, and Paul tells him about Christ. Do you remember his reaction? Festus cries out, "Paul you are out of your mind, your great learning is driving you mad."

The message of the cross was foolishness to him and for many Romans like him. What does the cross mean to you?

III. TO THOSE WHO ARE CALLED: Verse 24

"For the Jews, the cross was a stumbling block. For the Greeks, the cross was foolishness. But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Verse 25, "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

God makes our wisdom look like foolishness. The cross demonstrates the wisdom of God.

1 Cor 2:7-8, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

Heb 2:14, "Through death, Jesus destroyed him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."

Close:

The world looks at the cross as foolishness, but for us are being saved, it is the power of God. Paul says, even though the message of the cross is foolishness, it's God's foolishness, and therefore wiser than man's wisdom.

1 Cor 1:25 says, "the message of the cross may seem weak but since it's God's weakness it is stronger than man's strength."