

Church Purity in a Polluted Culture - Part 2

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5



"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing..."

The Corinthians carried much of their philosophical factionalism into the church. They believed that Philosophy ("love of wisdom") with its views invented by man, was all-important. Paul uses this section with its stark contrasts to drive home the idea that no man-made philosophy could ever lead us to God!

Worldly Wisdom Cannot Instruct Us (1:18-25)

"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? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.'" (1 Cor 1:18-25 NIV)

- Paul sets up a focal point and calls it the _____ of the cross, which means something different depending on your current eternal state.
 - Those _____ = utter foolishness
 - Those _____ = power [dunimas] of God
- "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him" = no attempt to know God through man's philosophy has ever been successful!
 - **know** [ginosko] = not just the collection of facts [gnosis] about something, but a deep experiential knowledge reserved for _____ relationships.
- Jews and Greeks wanted proof:
 - Jews = _____ proof
 - Greeks = _____ proof

Desire for proof most often is an evasion, or _____ for not believing...

Worldly Power Cannot Enable Us (1:26-31)

"Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: 'Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.'" (1 Corinthians 1:26-31 NIV)

- There were no shining stars, or nothing outstanding about any of them/us.
- God chooses the foolish, weak, and lowly, to _____ out all human effectiveness.
- They/we now have become _____ of righteousness, holiness and redemption for God's glory, pointing solely to Him for what He has accomplished!

Worldly Speech Cannot Save Us (2:1-5)

"When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.'" (1 Corinthians 2:1-5 NIV)

- Paul said that he proclaimed to you the testimony about God.
 - **Testimony** [marturion] = "a testimony or witness" - A witness can only testify to what he himself has _____, _____, or _____.
- Human words of wisdom no matter how persuasive or impressive, will _____ the gospel of its power.

Summary

1. Do I understand that the preaching of the cross will be considered foolishness and offensive to those who are perishing?
2. Am I willing to present myself though weak and insignificant to God for His use, no matter what that may be so He is glorified?
3. Do I understand that it's not my words, no matter how persuasive, that draw people to faith, but it is the power of God working in their hearts?

Remember, "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."