



SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 17, 2026 | PASTOR JONATHAN BARBER

MESSAGE TITLE: THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING

MESSAGE SERIES/OCCASION: 1 CORINTHIANS: THE GOSPEL FOR A MESSY CHURCH

MESSAGE TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18

1 Corinthians 1:17-31 ¹⁷For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. ³⁰But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: ³¹That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Gospel advance is destroyed when divisions become greater than the preaching of the cross of Christ.

The cure for church division is a renewed focus on the cross of Christ.

1. God has provided a “foolish” message over wise words

1 Corinthians 1:17-31 ¹⁷For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. ¹⁸For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding

of the prudent. ²⁰Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ²¹For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. ²²For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: ²³But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; ²⁴But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. ²⁵Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men;

2. God has chosen feeble messengers over mighty men

²⁵Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. ²⁶For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: ²⁷But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; ²⁸And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: ²⁹That no flesh should glory in his presence.

3. We must embrace a more fitting motivation over lesser loyalties

³⁰But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: ³¹That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Conclusion:

God will not share His glory with anyone.

- When people divide over human loyalties, it hurts the gospel advance and detracts from the glory of God.
- When people refuse to embrace the simple, “foolish” message, it hurts the gospel advance and detracts from the glory of God.

- When you hide behind your “weakness” and perceived inability, it hurts the gospel advance and detracts from the glory of God.

Prayer Requests:

ADULT BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Verse 18 says the message of the cross is “foolishness” to those who are perishing, but “the power of God” to those who are being saved. Why do you think the world often views the gospel as foolish? What makes the cross seem offensive or unreasonable to human thinking?

2. Paul contrasts human wisdom with God’s wisdom throughout this passage. What are some ways people today still try to solve spiritual problems through human wisdom alone, and why?

3. In verses 22-23, Paul says the Jews sought signs and the Greeks sought wisdom, but Paul preached Christ crucified. What kinds of “signs” or “proofs” do people demand from God today before they are willing to believe Him?

4. Verse 25 says, “the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” How has this verse played out and demonstrated itself to be true, and why is this important?

5. Paul reminds the Corinthians in verses 26-29 that not many mighty, noble, or wise were called. Why does God often choose ordinary and seemingly weak people to accomplish His work?

6. Verse 29 says, “That no flesh should glory in his presence.” Why is this such a focus of this passage? How does having a “foolish” message through “feeble” messengers accomplish this?

7. Verse 30 teaches that Christ has become for us “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” What does each of those words reveal about what Jesus provides for believers?

8. Paul's emphasis is not on self-improvement but on Christ Himself. How can Christians subtly drift into trusting their own morality, intellect, ability, or performance instead of fully depending on Christ?

9. Verse 31 concludes: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." How does this contrast with the Corinthians problem addressed earlier in this passage?

10. After studying this passage, what stands out most to you about the preaching of the cross? How should this passage shape the way we think about ourselves, the church, and the world around us?
