

1 Corinthians 1

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Tape #8136
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Let's pray. Thank You, Father, for this privilege and opportunity of being with Your people. What a blessing, Lord, the family of God, as we gather together in the unity of the love of Jesus Christ. To spend time, Lord, worshipping You, learning more about Your plan and Your purpose for our lives, so Lord, while we wait upon You tonight, we ask that You would move by Your Spirit in each of our hearts. Open up our hearts to receive, Lord, from You tonight, those things that You would have us to know and to understand and guide us in those things that You would have us to do. Lord, it is our desire that our lives would be pleasing unto You in all things. So we commit now ourselves, this service, this time. May You use it, Lord, to enrich us in our walk in Jesus Christ. In His name we pray. Amen.

Now to 1 Corinthians, chapter one, as we continue our "through the Bible" study. In the eighteenth chapter of Acts, we find the story of the founding of the church in Corinth by Paul. We are told there in chapter eighteen, that one of the chief men of the synagogue, Crispus, believed and his family. We are also told concerning another ruler of the synagogue in Corinth, whose name was Sosthenes, that he brought a complaint before the court against Paul and how that Galileo, the Roman judge, dismissed the complaint. He said if it were a matter of Roman law or whatever, I would listen to you. But it is just an argument over words and religious concepts and you know, this is no place for that, so Sosthenes, the ruler of the Synagogue who brought the charges, was beaten by the crowd. Galileo, the Roman judge, didn't care anything about that. He was interested in Roman justice. So the origin of the church. Now Paul remained there in Corinth for a period of time, establishing the church, because the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision and said I have many people in this city.

Paul went from Corinth to Ephesus. There he found certain brethren. He shared with them more fully the gospel of Jesus Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul stayed in Ephesus for three years, establishing the church in Ephesus. It was toward the end of Paul's three years in Ephesus that he wrote this letter to the church in Corinth, because Paul had received word of some of the problems that had developed in the church in Corinth after he left. There were factions that had developed. Paul wrote to them about these, separating yourself, and dividing the body of Christ into different factions. There were problems with immorality. There were problems with the way that they celebrated the Lord's Supper. There were problems with in their exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in the public assemblies. There were problems in their theology concerning their resurrection from the dead. So, Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians, basically as a corrective epistle, to correct some of the problems that existed in the church of Corinth that had come to his attention.

So here in the first chapter as Paul writes to the church, we have two names that appear in Acts, chapter eighteen. The first one appears in the first verse and that is the name of Sosthenes, who we are told in Acts, was the name of the chief ruler of the synagogue, who brought the charges against Paul before Galileo. Whether or not it is the same Sosthenes, is a matter of conjecture. We don't know for certain, but there is no reason to believe that it wasn't. And if it is indeed the same Sosthenes, how beautiful, that once as Paul the apostle, an enemy of the gospel, is now a companion with Paul. The Lord does wonderful things like that. He takes people who are at odds with each other and He unites them together as brothers in Jesus Christ. The bond that He creates. People who come from opposite ends of the spectrum many times, but brings them together, unifies them together in the love of Jesus Christ.

Now in writing letters in those days, the letters usually began with the person who was writing the letter, then those to whom the letter was written, and then a salutation, then usually followed by a thanksgiving. These were the four elements by which most of the letters written in those days began. Who is writing it. To whom it is written. Words of greetings and then words of thanksgiving. So we find Paul following this typical style of letter writing from that age.

Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, (Paul, so often introduced himself as one who was called to be an apostle by the will of God. The Bible tells us to make our calling and our election sure.

Now if you were writing to the church of Corinth, in your introduction of who is the one, writing, take out the name Paul. Put in your name. Then what are you, by the will of God? Do you know what God has called you to be? Do you know your calling? And Paul knows that he is called to be an apostle. That is God's will for my life. But what is God's will for your life? Now don't scratch your head and say, well I don't know. Because you should! Make your calling and election sure. You see, you have only one life and it will soon be past. Only what you do for Christ is going to last. It's important that you know what you are by the will of God. Or that you know what God's will is for your life. Nothing else is as important as fulfilling the will and purpose of God for your life!

So Paul, called an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God *and Sosthenes our brother*, As I said if it was the same Sosthenes, there is something quite beautiful here, once an enemy, now a brother. Notice in the first ten verses how that Paul uses the name and refers to Him over and over again. In every verse except verse five, Paul makes mention of the name of Jesus Christ. And in verse five, he speaks of being enriched by Him. He doesn't call Him by name, but enriched by Him. So here in the basic introduction, Paul manifests how completely centered his life was in Jesus Christ. No wonder he wrote and said, "And when Christ, who is our life, shall appear." Christ was his life. And so Paul makes mention of Him over and over again, calling Him Jesus Christ, calling Him Christ Jesus, calling Him Jesus Christ our Lord, calling Him the Lord Jesus Christ and over and over, making mention of Him in the opening ten verses.

²*To the church of God, (So the one now being addressed, the church of God.) which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, (the word saints in *hagios*, which means holy. We have been called to live a holy life.) with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Jesus Christ our Lord, their Lord, our Lord.* So Paul to the church in Corinth, who are sanctified or that is set apart.

Now in the Old Testament the vessels that were used in the temple, as a part of the temple worship, the vessels were all sanctified. That is, they were set apart for the exclusive use in the temple. You could not use them for any other purposes than in the temple as instruments to worship God. They weren't to be used any place else. They were set apart exclusively for God's use. That is pretty much what the word, sanctified, means. To be set apart for the exclusive use.

God has set apart His church for His exclusive purposes. We belong to Him. We are to live for Him. We are to use our talents for Him. Sanctified, set apart, for God's exclusive use. Sanctified in Christ Jesus, and then called to be saints. So, I asked a moment ago what God has called you to be. Well, I can tell you, He's called you to be a saint.

It's sort of unfortunate that the Catholic Church has set up a rigorous kind of requirement for sainthood. You've got to live an extraordinary life and then after your death, you've got to be able to perform miracles for people who pray to you. People come and attest that they've prayed to you after you were dead. You answered their prayers and all, so if you get enough testimonies and all then they will bring you before the body and announce sainthood for you. By looking at you I can tell that none of you would ever make it in that realm. But don't worry, God calls you a saint and that's good enough for me! Whether or not the church ever does, it doesn't matter to me. The fact that God looks at me as a saint is all right! I'll accept that. So, we've been called to be saints. He is addressing all those in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now the typical, ³*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* Grace was the word that the Greeks used in greeting each other. It's a word of beauty. It's a very beautiful word itself. The word, peace, is the Hebrew greeting, *shalom*. And so he combines the Greek common greeting of grace, with the Hebrew common greeting of *shalom*. It's interesting that throughout Paul's letters, he usually does begin his letters with this salutation, "Grace and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ", but always these two words, the grace and the peace. It's interesting that not once does he say, peace and grace be unto you. But it's always, grace and peace. The reason being is that you will never know the peace of God in your life until you understand the grace of God towards you.

There were years of my Christian experience when I didn't really fully understand nor appreciate the grace of God concerning me. And thus I really never had the peace of God in my heart. My Christian life was a struggle. It was an effort. Always struggling to try to please God. Never knowing if I was measuring up to it or not. I was

always trying by works to be righteous, to be holy and always aware of my shortcomings. And thus it was a struggle until I discovered the grace of God. Once having discovered the grace of God, I then experienced the peace of God. I was no longer trusting in my righteousness, but I was resting now in the finished work of Jesus Christ. I wasn't trying any longer to work hard, to be accepted by God. I realized that I was accepted in grace. As a result the wonderful peace of God. I have enjoyed it ever since.

Grace unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Now that isn't His first, middle and last name. So many times we sort of think of it as such. Lord, is His title, not His name. That is His title. When I say, Lord, I'm signifying that I am His servant. He is my Master. It's a title.

Jesus is His name. When Joseph was hesitant about taking Mary as his wife because she was pregnant and he knew that he wasn't responsible, the angel came to him and said, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. You shall call His name, Jesus, *Yehowshuwa*, one of the compound name of Jehovah. Jehovah is salvation. *Yehowshuwa*, you will call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins. That is why His name, *Yehowshuwa*, (Jehovah is salvation), for He will save His people from their sins.

He is the Messiah, the promised Messiah. The Greek word, *Christos*, is anointed. The Hebrew word, *Mashiyach*, is anointed. So it is the Greek for the Hebrew, *Mashiyach*, the Anointed One. It is in reference to the anointing of the king. You remember when Samuel went down to the house of Jesse, poured the oil over David's head, he anointed him as king over Israel, the anointed one. So God promised that there would rise from David's seed, one who would sit upon the throne, the *Mashiyach*, the anointed one. And so it is the acknowledgment that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the *Christos*, the Anointed One. So the Lord, (our relationship to Him), Jesus, (His name, Jehovah is salvation) and *Mashiyach*, His title as the Messiah.

⁴*I thank my God always concerning you* (Now the fourth part of an opening of a letter was thanksgiving. So Paul now is giving thanksgiving. I thank my God always concerning you.)

First of all, *for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus*, Thank God for that grace that God has given to you by Jesus Christ! The blessings of God and the gift of God are all bestowed on us in and through the person of Jesus Christ, the grace of God by Jesus Christ, eternal life through Jesus Christ. This is the record, God has given to us eternal life. This life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life. It's all in Christ. So I thank God for the grace, given to you in Jesus Christ.

⁵*that you were enriched in everything by Him* (Oh, as I look at my life, I realize how true that is! It's everything! I've been enriched, oh, my life is so rich, all because of Him!)

In everything we've been enriched by Him, *in all utterance and all knowledge*, ⁶*even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you*, In you, not by you, but was confirmed in you. That is, the witness of the Holy Spirit, concerning the truth of Jesus Christ, was confirmed in you by God's Holy Spirit. His Spirit bears witness with our Spirit that we are the Sons of God. He bears witness with us concerning Jesus Christ. Jesus said when the Holy Spirit has come He will testify of sin of righteousness and of judgment. Of sin because they don't believe in Me, of righteousness, because I ascend to the Father, and of judgment because the prince of this world is judged. The witness of the Spirit confirms in us the truth of Jesus Christ.

⁷*so that you come short in no gift*, (The church in Corinth was a church that had many of the gifts of the Spirit in operation in that church. Unfortunately, there was an abuse of the gifts of the Spirit. I say, unfortunately, but maybe fortunately because if there had not been an abuse, Paul probably wouldn't have written about it, and we wouldn't know the proper use of the gifts of the Spirit. So you know, God worked it out so that Paul wrote to correct the abuses so that we know the proper use of the gifts of the Spirit. As we get to chapters twelve and fourteen, we'll look at that as Paul deals in that particular section with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.)

eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, But they didn't come behind in any gift, they had the gifts of the Spirit in operation there in their church as they were waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was a church that was living in anticipation and waiting for the return of Jesus Christ. As I've said before, I believe that it is the intent and purpose of God that every church throughout the ages should live in anticipation of the immediacy of the return of Jesus Christ. I think that's God's design, that the church always lives in expectation of the Lord's return at any time. This was true of the early church. They were living in

expectation of the Lord's return at any moment. So in Corinth they were waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ for His coming.

⁸*who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.* That is the day when the Lord comes that you may be blameless. The Scripture speaks about not being ashamed at His coming. We are to live in such a way that if the Lord should come when we least expect it, we're still ready. We're still waiting. We're still in anticipation and we're not doing something that would be inconsistent with our Christian faith. So He will confirm you unto the end, this is until the time that He returns, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, that at that time you might be blameless.

⁹*God is faithful, (I like that!) by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.* The faithfulness of God, He has called you into the fellowship of His Son. When John wrote his first letter, he said that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that you may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

The word fellowship, is an interesting Greek word, *koinoaia*, which cannot really be translated into the English language. We do not have an English word that is an exact equivalent to the Greek *koinoaia*. It is deeper than the normal relationship that we experience in a friendship type of relationship. It goes deeper than that. It is sometimes translated communion. It is often times translated, fellowship. It is sometimes translated as one. It is all of that. It is a unity. It is a oneness. It is a communion. It is a fellowship. It's a part of each other, the body of Christ. Realizing that we are part of each other, one with each other in Christ Jesus. God is faithful. He calls you into this fellowship of His Son. Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Now, you see, we fellowship and that's great. The idea of the fellowship is the sharing, the common-ness. They had all things in common, *koinoaia*. So we have the common-ness, but to say that I have fellowship with God and His Son, Jesus Christ, that's absolutely amazing! That we can come into this communion with God, into this oneness with Him, into the *koinoaia* with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, that indeed is a glorious, glorious, truth!

That is Paul's opening, his naming of himself, those that he is writing to, the greeting and then the thanksgiving, now Paul starts to get to the issues that prompted the letter.

¹⁰*Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.* His plea for unity.

Divisions had developed in the church at Corinth. So Paul is writing to them, begging them, to come together, not to have these divisions, not to have these factions that had developed there in Corinth. A little further down, Paul is going to tell them that these factions are a mark of carnality. They are aspects of the flesh life, not the life of the Spirit. The Spirit unifies us but our flesh can get in the way.

We want people to see it our way. If they don't see it our way, then we are ready to you know, get into a big argument and excommunicate them because they don't believe it the way I believe it and everybody ought to believe it the way I believe it or you are just a heretic. And these kind of things where people have a view and they insist on everyone agreeing with their point of view. Surely within the body of Christ, made up of many members, there is room for disagreement in certain areas of belief. We are to have the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, until we all come to the unity of the faith. Now there are basics, basic foundational, doctrinal, positions that are essential for salvation. On those, we do not waiver. On those we do not compromise for we have the clear and distinct, teaching of the Scriptures, but there are other areas that involve conjecture, that involve opinion. In those areas that involve conjecture and opinion, there is room for differences.

I have a very dear, close friend who has a tendency to see things in the Scriptures that aren't that distinct or clear. And he comes up with some of these things. I just smile. He wants to know if you know, if this is right. Well, I don't know. That's an opinion. It call's for an opinion. And my opinion is really not worth much. You stick with what we know. The clear teaching of the Word and you are all right. If you get over in the area of conjecture, just say, well, this is conjecture.

Even Paul, the apostle, in writing some of the things, he said, this I write. This is my opinion. He is acknowledging that it isn't necessarily inspired, but this is the way I feel on it. And he is careful to let you know. He is expressing his own feelings. That is good. It's good to have your own ideas and your own thoughts on

certain issues. But let them be just that, your ideas and your thoughts. Don't try to press them on everybody. Don't try and make everybody to agree with your position.

So Paul is calling, begging them really, I plead or beseech with you, in the name of our Lord that you not have these divisions, ¹¹*For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, (Now some of the family of Chloe told Paul of some of these divisions that had developed in the church in Corinth.) that there are contentions* (That is where it becomes wrong. When it becomes an issue of contention, you start to really argue over these things. There are contentions *among you*. ¹²*Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."* So these were the divisions that were being made. They said, I am of Paul. I agree with Paul. Well, I agree with Peter. I agree with Apollos. Well, I'm of Christ, the self righteous ones. They were dividing into these factions. I'm a Methodist. I'm a Presbyterian. I'm an Episcopalian. I'm a Baptist. So they began the developing of the denominations there in Corinth and they began to divide.

Now, let me say this. I think that denominations have a place in the body of Christ. I think that is good that we have Episcopalians and Presbyterians and Baptists and Methodists and Nazarenes and the Church of God and the Church of Christ, I'm not opposed. The only problem is that when we start to build up walls between us, we make these then, barriers. Because you are not a Lutheran, then you really, somehow, are not fully into the body of Christ. The fact that we start separating and we see ourselves as segments rather than seeing ourselves as the whole body of Christ.

So as God begins to bless the Baptist church there is a revival that takes place, many people are being saved, that we sort of say, well you know, they are Baptists and they don't believe this. And we, rather than rejoicing, saying, "Praise the Lord", the body of Christ is being expanded, people are coming to Jesus as the Kingdom of God. It's sad that we've built up walls. We sort of try to keep people out and worse than that, we often try to keep people in. You know, to many times the wall is too well defined so that man, you know, is always coming in towards the center. Anytime a person starts to go out, then oh, man then left the Lord. They've backslidden. They're going to the Episcopalian church, my terrible! What a shame, you know. We have these defining walls. That should not be. Paul is seeking to correct that in the church of Corinth. These are the beginning stages which later turned into denominationalism. And Paul is writing to correct it.

He asks the question, ¹³*Is Christ divided?* We are his body! If we are divided, then we are dividing Jesus. Is Christ divided?

He said, *Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*

Then he said, ¹⁴*I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,* ¹⁵*lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name.* ¹⁶*Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.* ¹⁷*For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.* I often have people come up to me and they say, why don't you baptize people as soon as they accept Jesus Christ? Immediately I know that I am dealing with a person of the Church of Christ, who keeps the baptismal warm. In case someone comes to Christ, they baptize them immediately because there is a belief of baptismal regeneration. That is, that they are not really saved until they are baptized. And I know that they are really not interested in the answer that I will give to them, because if you don't baptize immediately, you are wrong. There is no way you can justify not baptizing a person immediately, in their mind. But I will usually point them to this passage of Scripture that Paul wrote to the Corinthians, where Paul actually thanks God that he didn't baptize any of them but Crispus and Gaius and the household of Stephanas. And if there are any others, he doesn't remember because he said Christ did not call me baptize but to preach the gospel. Now if baptism is necessary for regeneration, then Paul is guilty of utmost blasphemy in making such a statement.

So it is, well, they are never satisfied and they never will be. Now I see the place of denominations, I really do, and I feel that they ordained of God, so that people can gather with people of like mind and like persuasions. And God knows that some people can only relate to Him in a very formal, ritualistic way. They need a liturgy and all, so God has the liturgical churches where people can go and worship God and feel near to God, and inspired by God through the liturgy. God knows that some people have that kind of personality and makeup and

they need that kind of service, so God has that kind of liturgical churches. God knows that there are some people who are very emotional. They can only relate to God in a highly emotional setting. There has got to be a lot of shouting and screaming. And that's really the only way these people can relate to God. And God knows that and God loves these people. So there are those charismatic, Pentecostal, kind of churches where these people can go and they can have their emotional experiences and touch God and be blessed of God in the release of their emotions. God loves those people. He understands that. He has provided a place for them. God knows there are some people that feel you've got to be baptized by full immersion, that sprinkling won't do. So you've got the Baptist churches. God knows there are some people who love to argue and have to always be right so you have the Church of Christ for these people to all get together. There's a place for us all in the broadness of God. That's good. Paul said, God called me to preach the gospel, not with the wisdom of words, less the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

¹⁸*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing,* (Not the wisdom of this world, the preaching or the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. Later on he tells us to the Greeks it was foolishness, the Greeks with their philosophical minds. The idea that one could bring life by His death, the idea was foolish to the Greek mind. The idea that a God would love man so much that He would come and die for man's sins to redeem him, that was foolishness in the minds of the Greeks. The preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing.)

but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. God's power to redeem us from our sins, comes through the provision that He made on the cross of Jesus Christ. For as Paul describes the gospel that he preached in the fifteenth chapter, he said the gospel that I preached unto you, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. He was buried and he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures, the gospel that Paul preached. The gospel that was preached throughout the New Testament, Christ died for our sins.

¹⁹*For it is written:*

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

²⁰*Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?* Paul writing to the Romans, said, professing themselves to be wise they became fools because they began to worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator. That is true of so many people today.

They take a rose. They look at it. They see it's beautiful deep color. They hold it to their nose and they take a deep breath as they smell the fragrance. They see the beautiful design, the symmetry of the petals. They say, oh, that's God! No, that's stupid. That's not God! That's a rose! God created it. But you see, people stop short. They worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator. It's irrational to look at the creation and worship the creation. That's irrational. That's foolish. To look at the creation and to worship the Creator, that is rational!

So God said He would destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of the world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

Do you know how it is that you can see? You say, well, God created our eyes, the optic nerve. They are able to take eighteen impressions per second. They are able to project them into this vitreous kind of a jelly, that creates vibrations, goes up into your brain and you get this sense of movement and all because of the eighteen frames per second that are coming into the brain. You can discern the colors and you can see. It's a brilliant design, infinite wisdom. He set them in a socket, put little ten thumbs so they can move back and forth and up and down. They track together.

Now, those who say there is no God, that man is the result of millions upon millions of years of fortuitous occurrences of accidental circumstances. You know how he explains how you got your eyes? One day when the worm emerged out of the ooze and came into the sunlight, it developed a freckle on the top of his front part, it wasn't yet a head. And through mutations of that freckle, gradually over a long period time, it mutated into an eye. Scraping across the coral and the barnacles and all, created abrasions on the lower part that turned into sort of warts or calluses, that ultimately became legs, the salamander was able to now see and walk. Where is the

wise? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? I don't read comic books anymore. I read evolution books.

²¹*For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God,* Job's friends asked him who by searching can understand God to perfection? One of the problems with man's religions is that it starts with an earth base and attempts to reach infinity, the infinite God. The infinite God cannot be comprehended by the mind of man. Who by searching can understand God to perfection? The world by its wisdom did not know God. God is revealed. Finite man can never reach and touch the infinite God. That's an impossibility, but the infinite God can easily touch man. The difference between Christianity and every other and world religion is that the religions of the world have finite man reaching out for God, whereas in Christianity you have the infinite God reaching down to finite man and touching man. So the world by wisdom did not know God.

it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. Not the preaching of foolishness but by the foolishness of the message preached, that man should come to faith in God. So Paul said how shall they call on Him, we know that whoever calls on the Lord will be saved, but how can they call on Him of whom they have not heard? How can they hear without a preacher? And how can they preach unless they have been sent? So God has chosen by the foolishness of preaching that God's plan of redemption should be revealed to man. And by the preaching of the cross of Jesus Christ, God's plan of redemption, God plants faith. Faith comes by hearing. Hearing by the Word of God. And God plants faith in a person's heart. They receive the witness. They receive the salvation that God has offered through Jesus Christ. So though man by wisdom, by searching cannot discover God to perfection, yet God has chosen by the foolishness of preaching to save those that believe, to plant faith in the hearts of people.

²²*For Jews request a sign,* (You remember, they were asking Jesus, show us a sign. They require a sign.)

and Greeks seek after wisdom; ²³*but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block* Because in the Old Testament there were many promises of the Messiah, of the seed of David, that would come and establish a righteous rule over the whole earth. He would sit upon the throne of David forever. He would order the world and establish it in righteousness and in judgment from henceforth even forever. During His reign there would be no more physical impairments. The deaf would hear. The mute would be singing praises and the lame would be leaping and walking. During His reign, they would beat their swords into plow shares and their spears into pruning hooks and they would study war no more. It would be an ideal world under the reign of the Messiah. And that's the Messiah they were looking for. And that is the Messiah they are still looking for today.

But there were other Scriptures concerning the Messiah. He would be despised and rejected by men. He would be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He would be wounded for our transgressions. He would be bruised for our iniquities. He would be numbered with the transgressors in His death. God would lay upon Him the iniquities of us all. He would be smitten. They would pierce His hands and His feet. He would make His soul an offering for sin.

Now these were such divergent prophecies, the Jews in their mind could not reconcile the differences. So what they did was they spiritualized all of the prophecies of the Messiah that spoke of His being despised, rejected, His death, His suffering and all, they spiritualized those only holding on to those that spoke of His glorious eternal kingdom and reign. When Jesus came and was refused by the builder, was despised and rejected, was hung upon a cross to preach that though the cross there is forgiveness of sin, that through the cross God has a righteous basis to forgive your sins because God laid on Him the iniquities of us all and on the cross He died for you, that was a stumbling block to the Jew. They couldn't handle that. The Messiah is supposed to reign as king and so the thought of the cross, the rejections by man, that was a stumbling block to the Jews.

and to the Greeks foolishness, It was just absolutely foolish to think of someone dying for someone else, to think of God dying for man! That was so far from their concept of selfish, self centered, egotistic, lustful gods that the idea of God loving man and dying for man, was so much foolishness.

²⁴*but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.* The power of God unto redemption. We can see the wisdom of God in this glorious plan of redemption. As you begin to understand what it's all about. Oh, you see such wisdom in God's plan of redemption through Jesus Christ.

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

²⁶*For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, (We don't have too many college professors here.) not many mighty, not many noble, are called. (You don't see Clinton here.)* ²⁷*But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;* The wisdom of God, He chooses simple people to bestow His love and His grace upon them. It is so simple that a child can grasp it. A child can believe and can come into a beautiful relationship with God.

Sometimes I envy my grandchildren's relationship with the Lord because they can accept so simply without all of the conflicts that we have mentally, the truth of God. They can come into a deep and meaningful relationship with the Lord. Simple. God has chosen the simple things of the world to confound the things of the wise.

²⁸*and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,* God's interesting plan, using just simple people.

But what is the purpose of this? Why did God do this? ²⁹*that no flesh should glory in His presence.* That's why God chooses just plain, simple people. You see if I was some kind of a great scholar with Ph.D.'s and L.L.D.'s and bvd's, oh, I have that! Then when people would come and see the marvelous work that God has done, they would say, oh, but don't you know he's a Harvard Ph.D.? Oh, my, yes. Harvard is nice. Oh, yes, post graduate work at Oxford, oh yes, well, my, marvelous man, isn't he, brilliant? But God wouldn't be getting the glory. You see, man would be getting the glory. That is why God has chosen the simple things that no flesh should glory in His presence. To God be the glory, great things he has done!

When Peter and John had gone back fishing, when they sort of got tired of waiting for Jesus up in the Galilee, and they went out all night and caught nothing. In the morning as Jesus was standing on the shore and He called out, did you catch anything? They answered in the negative, no! Why don't you cast your net on the other side? Immediately, it was filled with great fish. So heavy was the net they couldn't draw it into the boat. When John saw that they could not draw in the net because of the multitude of the fish, he said, "It's the Lord!" When you see God's work, and the net is so full, you know there is only one reason. It's not the brilliance of man. It's not the abilities of man, not, the skills of man. The thing that always amazes those brilliant people who come to study this, is the simplicity of the whole thing. And they can't understand that! But what they don't understand, it's the Lord! To God be the glory, great things He has done!

³⁰*But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—*Jesus is everything! He is wisdom! He is righteousness! He is sanctification! He is redemption! So we give glory to Him. We worship Him. We praise Him for what He has done and what He is doing.

³¹*that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."* To God be the glory! Later on Paul will write to the Galatians and say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ." If you are going to glory, let's glory in the Lord! To God be the glory for the work that He had done!

Father, we do stand in amazement at the work that You have done and that You are doing. Lord, how marvelous are Your works and that my soul knows right well. Lord, we worship You and we praise You and we give You glory for the great things that You have done in our midst. And Lord, may we always take care to acknowledge You and to give You the glory. In Jesus' name we pray.