

# GOD'S FOOLISH IDEA

## 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:9

*"The word of the cross is folly to those who're perishing, but to us being saved it's the power of God."*

C. S. Lewis: Gospel ***"is not the sort of thing anyone would have made up."***

**Divided church**; each follows favorite teacher

4 chs: => Paul appeals to us: **don't have divisions!**

–be united in mind & thought

Divisions are based on **2 mistaken concepts**:

...about ***our message***     ...about ***our ministry***

**False concept of message 1:18-3:4**

Views Christianity as philosophy based on human wisdom

If gospel is *human* philosophy, find best teacher & follow him

**Message isn't based on human wisdom**

**2 contrasts:** {repeated through passage}

**POWER vs weakness; WISDOM vs foolishness**

**24 Christ is the power & wisdom of God,**

**< people see him as weak & foolish!**

God's way of thinking isn't the same as the world's

**7 truths concerning our message:**

1<sup>st</sup> 3 contrast: **God's power & human weakness**

**1. => Summary of the contrast: 18 "The**

*word of the cross is folly to those who're perishing, but to us who're being saved it's the power of God."*

**The message of the cross:**

**...is foolishness to those perishing**

**...is God's power to those being saved**

Gospel isn't result of human opinion polls.

If we'd invented it, we'd include works-earn way!

**2. Human wisdom is foolishness in God's sight 19-20**

*"It is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, & the discernment of the discerning I'll thwart.'* <sup>20</sup>*Where's the one who's wise? Where's the scribe? Where's the debater of this age? Hasn't God made foolish the wisdom of the world?*

Our way doesn't fit God's program; nor His, ours.

**3. Human wisdom will never lead people to God**

**21-25** *"Since, in the wisdom of God, the world didn't know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs; Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews & folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who're called, both Jews & Greeks, Christ the power of God & the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, & the weakness of God is stronger than men."*

To Jews this is a stumbling block

They expect powerful, conquering king

Jesus *dies*; that's not in *their* plan!

To Greeks this is foolishness

It doesn't *make* sense! *Why* would a **god die**?

God doesn't offer what *we*'re seeking

God's way of doing things is different.

Problem isn't Christ—it's a *crucified* Christ.

That doesn't make sense! —to ***our*** way of thinking

#### 4. God chooses insignificant people

**& saves them, so he receives glory 26-31** *“Consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup>God chose what’s foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what’s weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup>God chose what’s low & despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup>so no human might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup>Because of him you’re in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification & redemption, <sup>31</sup>so, as it’s written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”*

#### **God chooses foolish, simple people**

Majority *don't* have educational, social credentials

**God’s purpose is NOT for HIS church to stand out because of cultural elitism!**

*He did this so no one can boast before God.*

**Gospel’s different than OUR logic! 2:1-4** *“I, when I came to you, brothers, didn’t come proclaiming the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. <sup>2</sup>For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ & him crucified. <sup>3</sup>I was with you in weakness, in fear & much trembling, <sup>4</sup>My speech & my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit & power”*

#### 5. Message of Christ isn’t a philosophy

Barclay: "Greeks were intoxicated with fine words; to them the Christian preacher with his blunt message seemed crude & uncultured."

Scholars still see things that way!

If we boil message down to simple explanation *any one* can understand, we aren't really "scholarly." The more complicated our message sounds, the more people are impressed!

Paul's message is clear & simple,  
He's concerned *few* be transformed,  
*NOT* that *crowds* be impressed

## 6. Message of Christ is based on God's

power 2:5 "So your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."

Our faith is based on God's power; *NOT* our words

God convinces people of the truth (H.S.)

## 7. Message of Christ is based on God's

wisdom [man can't understand] 6-9 "Among the mature we impart wisdom, although it's not wisdom of this age or of rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. <sup>7</sup>We impart a secret & hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. <sup>8</sup>None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup>But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"

Logic of God's wisdom seems to make no sense. Man would never create such a plan.

## Truth about the message of the cross:

1. Logic will never lead people to Christ.
2. Gospel doesn't make sense to unbelievers
3. Our message is based on what God has already done; NOT on what we can do.

4. God's plan designed so He gets glory.

5. We have nothing to brag about.

*If gospel isn't human message, we've no reason to cling to human teacher!*

*We cling to God who designed the message—all others are his servants!*

*How should these principles affect us?*

*We're **not** saved through human logic*

No man came up with this idea.

*We're **not** saved due to our importance:*

God chose *insignificant* people—**NOT** great ones!

God **gave** us—by grace => we give *Him* glory.

*We **ARE** saved by God's grace.*

We didn't design it—We don't deserve it!

It's **NOT** about US! It's about **GOD'S GRACE!**

=> God deserves the glory.

So we come this a.m. to remember what God has done—how Jesus died for us—because of His grace.