

When Church Becomes Messy: First Corinthians

4 – THE FOOLISHNESS OF GOD (1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-2:5)

I. The Wisdom of the Cross (1 Corinthians 1:18-25)

A. The Reception of Gospel (1 Corinthians 1:18)

1. To Those Who are Perishing (1 Corinthians 1:18a)

- The gospel is utter foolishness to those who are perishing.

2. To Those Who are Being Saved (1 Corinthians 1:18b)

- The gospel is the power to save to those who believe.

B. The Emptiness of Human Wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:19-22)

1. God's View of Human Wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:19)

- Paul quotes Isaiah to show that God sees human wisdom as nothing.

2. God's Rejection of Human Wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:20)

- God has disregarded human wisdom and shown it to be foolish.

3. The Limits of Human Wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:21-22)

- Human wisdom cannot understand God and bring salvation.
- God used what was foolish to bring salvation.
- Jews wanted practical evidence.
- Gentiles insisted on wisdom and knowledge.

C. The Nature of the Cross (1 Corinthians 1:23-24)

- The crucified Messiah is a stumbling block to the Jews.
- It is utter foolishness to the Gentiles.
- The cross is God's wisdom and His power for salvation.

D. The Greatness of God's Wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:25)

- The "foolishness and weakness" of God is greater than man's wisdom.

II. The Corinthians Believers (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

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A. Their State (1 Corinthians 1:26)

- Paul calls them to take notice of the kind of people they are.

B. God's Purpose in Choosing Them (1 Corinthians 1:27-28)

- God purposely saved the insignificant to shame the wise and strong of this world.

C. The Reason (1 Corinthians 1:29)

- God's purpose is that no one can boast in His presence.

D. True Wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30)

- Christ alone personified the wisdom from God, which they had experienced.

E. The Issue of Glory (1 Corinthians 1:31)

- True boasting is centered on the work and person of Jesus Christ.

III. Paul's Example (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

A. Paul's Manner in Coming to Them (1 Corinthians 2:1)

- Paul did not proclaim the gospel with clever speech and wisdom.

B. Paul's Mindset (1 Corinthians 2:2)

- Paul purposely chose to focus on the cross of Christ.

C. Paul's Disposition (1 Corinthians 2:3)

- Paul's general disposition was one of fear and weakness.

D. Paul's Speech (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)

- He purposely chose not to speak with human wisdom.
- He wanted their faith to be rooted in the power of the cross, not human wisdom.