The Foolishness of God

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

**18**The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God. **19**As the Scriptures say,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise  
    and discard the intelligence of the intelligent.”

**20**So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world’s brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish. **21**Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe. **22**It is foolish to the Jews, who ask for signs from heaven. And it is foolish to the Greeks, who seek human wisdom. **23**So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it’s all nonsense.

**24**But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. **25**This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God’s weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength.

Spit on the ground made mud (Jesus)

Strike the rock (Moses)

Speak to the rock (Moses)

Pour water over the altar (Elijah)

Built an Ark for a flood, though none had seen rain (Noah)

Use your last oil and flour to feed someone else (Widow of Zarephath)

Wash in the Jordan River seven times (Naaman)

March around Jericho (Israelites/Joshua)

Don’t cut your hair (Samson)

Circumcision (Abraham/Moses)

Testing fleece (Gideon)

Send some of your warriors home (Gideon)

A boy against a giant (David)

Come out on to the water (Peter)

Pour water into wine barrels so that Jesus could make wine

Stay in Prison even though the doors were open (Paul and Silas)

Pray from an open window and get sent to the lions’ den (Daniel)

Be baptized in the River (Christians)

Sell your possessions and give to the poor (Rich young ruler said, “No way.”)

Gave half of all of his possessions to the poor (Zacchaeus)

Dies by stoning and asks for his attackers forgiveness (Stephen)

Dies on a cross without using His power to prevail over His captors (Jesus)

What are some of the “foolish” ways of a Christian today?

Love one another no matter what.

Honor **others above** yourself.

Live in harmony with one another (The world says win which requires some type of disharmony)

Don’t slander one another.

Don’t pass judgment.

Serve each other

Live like you owe love like a debt to be paid back! (Romans 13:8)

Accept one another.

Be humble, gentle, patient and bear with each other.

Confess your sins to one another (What? The world says if you sin, at least in certain ways, you will be cancelled forever)

The things the world values are opposite to the things Jesus values. As I have shared with you once before, former pastor Josh Harris wrote…

Jesus says…3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The world says…Blessed are **the self-confident** because they rule the world.

Jesus says…“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

The world says…Blessed are **positive-thinkers** because they don’t need anybody’s comfort.

Jesus says…“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

The world says…Blessed are**the cocky and assertive** because they get what they want.

God says…“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

The world says…Blessed are those who hunger for fame because they get reality TV shows.

Jesus says… “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

A man centered worldview says…Blessed are **the vengeful** because they get respect.

The scriptures affirm…“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

The Men’s and Women’s magazines of the world say…Blessed are**the impure**, pleasure-seekers because they see a good time.

God says…“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons[a] of God.

“Powerful” people say…Blessed are **those who beat their opponents** because the victors write the history books.

Countless stories throughout history confirm…“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

But those who do not trust God say…Blessed are **the popular** because everybody loves them.

Paul is trying to help the church in Corinth understand that having success the way the world defines success, was actually going to leave them empty. It is actually possible to “Gain the whole world and forfeit your soul.”

This should lead us to ask ourselves what our own philosophy is.

Seriously. What are you looking to get out of life?

Financial security? (Trust in God’s provision not your own) Power? (He who is the greatest is the servant) Influence? Autonomy? (Depend on God’s leadership like a little child depends on a parent) Popularity? (Don’t do your good deeds looking for recognition) The Good life? (Persecution is sometimes a sign of blessing?)

The Bible actually encourages us to embrace the opposite kinds of things, and the world thinks we are foolish.

As written in the gospel of Matthew, Jesus said:

**24**“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.

**25**“That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? **26**Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? **27**Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

**28**“And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, **29**yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. **30**And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

**31**“So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ **32**These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. **33**Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

**34**“So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

This is not a popular philosophy in the world. In fact, I don’t even think it is very popular in Christianity. This scripture isn’t saying that it is wrong to save and be wise with the proceeds that God has given us. Jesus is reminding us that we should not put our confidence in such things and we should not let our desire for the gains of the world dominate our lives.

Ultimately, Christians, like Christ are to make their life about what they can give instead of what they can get.

Remember Jesus said…

“**39**If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.”

This is foolish to those who don’t love God. Worldly gain is absolutely what dominates their lives. Paul goes on to say to the Corinthians…

**26**Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world’s eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. **27**Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. **28**God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. **29**As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.

Think about it, while the whole world is chasing after money, power, influence and autonomy…Christians are supposed to be aimed at providing charity, serving others, sharing Christ as the only one true good influencer and all the while declaring their allegiance to God’s directives not their own.

Jesus, when He rode into Jerusalem, rode in on a donkey instead of a war horse. He was and is King of the cosmos, but many people don’t want that kind of king. So it goes to show that in order to get started on a life journey like this the first step would be putting your faith in a King who died in order to overcome the world. Remember we started out today with Paul saying…

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As enjoyable as the good things of this world are, they will never make your soul feel 100% at rest. Dirt biking brings rest to my soul, a peanut butter and jelly smoothy brings me comfort, steak and mashed potatoes warm me up, but none of these things can make me feel right with my Creator. With God all of these things are awesome! Without Him the best pleasures become the very things that lead us away from wholeness of soul and spirit.

If you want to have it all, then you have to believe in the foolishness of God. As C.S. Lewis once wrote:

“Aim at Heaven and you will get Earth 'thrown in': aim at Earth and you will get neither.”

Trusting in Jesus is the wise choice! And Paul was trying to encourage the church members at Corinth to stick with the wisdom of God, because the wisdom of the world seemed to be enticing many of them to boast in their own wisdom and their own righteousness instead of Jesus’ wisdom and God’s righteousness. He finishes out this portion of scripture by writing…

**30**God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin. **31**Therefore, as the Scriptures say, “If you want to boast, boast only about the Lord.”

Most all of you know how much I love supercross and motocross and it is super cool when during an after race interview one of the riders boasts about Jesus…

Why do they do that?

Do you think other riders and fans think that they are foolish?

They do it because they have come to know the one and only truly wise King Jesus and they find their rest, their strength and their reason for celebration in Him!

What seems wise to you?

Who seems wise to you?

Whose philosophies do you put your trust in?

I’m going to offer a suggestion and I will leave it up to you to decide whether it is foolish or not.

Chasing after the gains of this world leaves you run ragged, empty, and discontent.

Following after Jesus truly brings freedom and the abundant life.