

October 8, 2017

1 Corinthians 1:17-31

Wisdom, Power and the Foolishness of Preaching

Vs. 17- why would Paul say he was sent to preach and *not* to baptize.

- I would expect Paul to say he was sent to preach *and* to baptize
 - Matthew 28:19 - Jesus commands the disciples to “make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”
 - 1 Cor 1:13 implies that the Corinthian believers had been baptized
 - And it’s clear that Paul did baptize some people because he says it plainly in verses 14, 16
- I believe the reason Paul did not make a practice of baptizing all or who believed as a result of his teaching was because he was evading the the pitfall alluded to in the last part of vs. 13 -- being baptized into the name of Paul
 - Paul understood the propensity of the human condition
 - That is our natural bent toward works
 - The idea that what I do will produce righteousness
 - If I get baptized by the right apostle then I will be on the inside
 - And baptism is an external act it is by definition a *work*
 - Righteousness based on work says “if I just do the right thing, if I’m just in the right group then I’ll be good enough”
 - The tendency would have been to say that “it was being baptized by Paul that saved me. That where the real power is.”
- So Paul emphasized preaching the message of the cross so that there could be no mistaking who was the Author of salvation

What is the Gospel Message mentioned in vs 17?

- Cross of Christ vs 17
- Word of the Cross vs 18
- Christ Crucified vs 23
- In Jesus vs 30
 - These are summary statements of the Gospel message which Paul knew the Corinthians were familiar with -- because he had shared it with them
 - Implied in these statements are all the historical facts about and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth recorded in the first 4 books of the New Testament that we call “the Gospels”
 - All of which culminate with Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection from the dead
 - The Gospel, in a nutshell, is that the Son of God came to earth, born as a baby to virgin. He was given the name Jesus (the Greek form of the Hebrew Name Joshua) meaning “God is Salvation” because he was God (according to John 1, 1 John 1, Colossians 2, and many other passages) and he would save his people from their sins. He saved them by living a perfect life according to the Law of God given to the Jews. He was sinless

and perfect. This made him eligible to be the atoning or covering sacrifice of all humanity for just as sin came through one man, Adam, life and righteousness are offered through one man, Jesus Christ (Romans 5). So Jesus, the perfect "Lamb of God," was willingly executed on a cross amid the scorn of Jews and a condescending sneer of Gentiles. He was buried and three days later he was raised to life by the power of God the Holy Spirit. God then is satisfied to accept the death of His Son who did not deserve to die as sufficient payment for anyone who would believe in Jesus' sacrifice.

- The gospel is the Power and wisdom of God on Full display

Why is the Gospel foolish?

- To Jews
 - Because it means that the messiah was a suffering servant and that was not the "sign" they were looking for
 - They sought a political victor, a conquering king
 - Because It means they rejected and murdered the Messiah
 - Mk 12:10; Mt 21:42; Lk 20:17; 1 Pt 2
 - And God uses great men to do great things like David, or Moses or Elijah
- To Gentiles
 - Because no god ever comes to earth to die so humans can be saved.
 - No Son of God would be crucified as a condemned criminal
 - gods rule with iron fists and lord it over their human subjects
 - And when gods interact with men those men become great like Cesar
 - To be favored by the gods was to prosper

How is God's wisdom displayed?

- By doing exactly the opposite of human logic would call wise
- By choosing those who from a human perspective should not be chosen
 - Not many of you were wise, powerful, of noble birth vs 26
- The result is that **only** God can receive the credit.
 - Vs 29-30, it is because of Him, that you are righteous, sanctified (set apart, chosen) redeemed in Christ.

Application:

- Don't trust in your wisdom to save you
 - Perhaps you walked forward at an evangelistic service or raised your hand or filled out a card -- maybe you even prayed a prayer
 - None of these things are bad, but none of them of themselves save you
 - Don't let it be said of you what God said in Isaiah 29:13
 - And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their

hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,

- Perhaps you came from a tradition where you were baptized as a baby and you find yourself trusting in that baptism to save you
- Perhaps you were baptized as a young person or adult, able to believe in Jesus but your faith was in the act of baptism not in the Savior who died so that you might live.
- Perhaps you have done wonderful things in the name of Jesus like prophesying, or casting out demons, or working some kind of supernatural miracle (Mt 7:21-23)
 - Yet His response for many who say such things will be “I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.”
- “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord”

Discussion Questions

- What was the potential pitfall Paul faced with baptism? Does that pitfall exist today?
- Do you honestly think you are “unworthy?” Are you chosen?
- Has the wisdom of God ever seemed foolish to you? Were you looking for a sign? What has changed in your thinking because of Jesus Christ?