

The Foolishness And Weakness Of God

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Pastor John Miller

This evening, we are going to look at verses 18 to 31.

We finish up chapter 1 of 1 Corinthians and we are going to talk about the Foolishness and the Weakness of God.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You for this time to study Your Word tonight and thank You for bringing us together here. And we thank You for Your Word, and we pray that as we open Your Word, You will speak to us. That we would be changed and transformed by the power of Your Word. And we will give You thanks, and we will give You praise. We ask it in Jesus' name, and everyone agrees and says, Amen.

J. Vernon McGee, years ago on the radio, used to say that when Satan fell from

heaven, he landed in the church choir loft. And the reason he said that was because so many churches had divisions in the choir department. "I want to sing the solo. No, I want to sing the solo. No, I sing better than you do," and they were fighting among themselves. Now, I don't know if the church at Corinth had a choir, and I don't know if their division started in the choir loft, but the church at Corinth had division, as many churches do today. Now, the reason the church at Corinth had division, it was a divided church, was that they were a carnal church.

Look at Chapter 3, verse 1, for just a moment. Paul says, "And I, brethren, cannot speak unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." So, their carnality, and by the way that carnality, we get our word carnivorous and means flesh, it means that they were being controlled or governed by the flesh, their sinful, fleshly, carnal appetites. It means it is talking about their sinful nature.

And then secondly, they were following personalities. Look at chapter 1, verse 12. "Now this I say every one of you says, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, and I am of Peter." And other groups said, "We are of Christ." So, they were in their personality cults. They were following a man. So, they were carnal, and thus they had gotten their eyes off Christ and on man. And they were focusing more on the style and the personality of the preacher rather than the content of the message. That is very popular today. People get attached to the preacher they like. They like the way either they deliver the message or they like their oratory skill and ability. They like their humor or if they are young and hip and cool, and you can relate to them. They have all these different things, but they don't really think about the message that the messenger is delivering and the content as to whether it is biblical or true. So, they were following personalities.

And then, thirdly, they loved philosophy. Notice chapter 1, verse 17. This introduces us to our section tonight. Paul said, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with the wisdom of words." And that is what they were into. They were into the "Sophia," the love of

words or the love of wisdom, the wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of no effect. Notice he mentions two things. He mentions the wisdom of words. They loved philosophy. And then Paul says, in contrast, God called me to preach the Cross of Christ. Now had they, and if we focus on Christ and His cross, then we will be united. We will not be divided. But if we focus on personalities and we focus on philosophies, guess what is going to happen? We will be divided. So let us as a church remember this. We need to focus on Christ and especially the Cross of Christ. This is why communion is such a wonderful thing. As we come back to the remembrance of what Christ did for us on the cross, we pray together, partake together, and we drink the cup together, and it brings that unity.

So, we need to come back to the cross and remember our position in Christ and what Christ has done for us and what we are in Christ.

It is interesting to see how Paul approached this problem of division in the church. First, he pointed to the unity of Christ and the fact that they had one Savior and that they were one body. Then he reminded them of their baptism as a picture of spiritual unity in the one body of Christ, and now He takes them to the Cross of Jesus Christ. I think, as Christians, we should never drift away from the cross. We should always remember the Cross of Jesus Christ.

So, verse 17 serves as a fitting introduction to this next section, beginning in chapter 1 verse 18, running all the way to chapter 2 verse 16. In verse 17 Paul referred to the wisdom of words which he now will contrast with the preaching of the cross or the word of the cross.

Notice verse 18. He says, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power or the "dunamis" of God," the dynamic of God. So, I believe that there is an intended contrast between verse 17, where he speaks of wisdom of words, and then in verse 18, where he says the preaching of the cross. The word preaching is a unique word in verse 18. It's actually the word "logos" of the cross and could be translated or rendered as the actual word of the cross. So, Paul says, God sent me to proclaim the word of the cross, the logos of the cross. The word of the cross is the message of the cross, and the gospel centers on the Cross of Jesus Christ. So, it's not the wisdom of words of the worldly philosophers, but it's the word, the logos of the Cross of Jesus Christ, where the wisdom of God is found. And so, if we focus on that cross, it will bring unity.

Ray Steadman said, "the word of the cross is the cure for all human division." I believe that. If you want to see a world united, we need to lift high the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Now, there are two divisions in our verses. We're going to cover it tonight, verses 18 to 31. In the first section, Paul wanted them to understand the difference between the wisdom of God seen on the cross and the wisdom of man. Two things, and he contrasted them. The wisdom of God is seen in the cross and the wisdom of man. The church is always in danger of buying into the philosophies of the world. And that's a dangerous thing. We need to think biblically. And so, he contrasts God's wisdom with man's wisdom, and God's wisdom is found in the Cross of Jesus Christ. Theologians speak of what's called the theater of the cross. That means when we

look at the cross, or we kind of examine the cross, we see the mercy of God and the love of God and the grace of God and the wisdom of God and the power of God. And really all of the attributes of God are displayed or demonstrated in the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Now, this first section runs from verses 18 to 25. Follow me as we read at beginning in verse 18. So, Paul says, "For..." So, it's really an explanation of what he just said in verse 17. He said, God sent me, and the Lord sent me to preach the Cross of Christ, not with the wisdom of words, lest it be made of none effect. "For reason, the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. But unto us which are saved, it is the power of God. For it is written..." Now he's quoting there from Isaiah 29 verse 14. Whenever you find a little phrase like that in the New Testament, for it is written or as it is written, there's an Old Testament reference, most likely that is being quoted by the apostle or the New Testament author. The quote here comes from Isaiah chapter 29, verse 14. "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and I will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise?" Verse 20. "Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them which believe. For the Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified under the Jews' stumbling block and under the Greeks' foolishness. But under them what you're called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God because the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men." Now, go back with me to verse 18.

Now, there are three things that I want you to notice. First of all, in Paul contrasting the wisdom of God with the wisdom of man, he points out in verses 18 to 20 that human wisdom is foolishness with God. That human wisdom, as far as God is concerned, is foolishness. You might say human wisdom is foolishness. So, there are two groups mentioned in verse 18. Those that perish and those that are saved. Now to those that perish, the preaching of the cross is foolishness, but unto us which are saved, it's the power of God. Now the word foolishness there in verse 18; we get our word "moron" from it. That doesn't mean you can call somebody a moron and it's a biblical term, okay? It just means it's moronic. The preaching of the cross is to them that perish, moronic, it's foolishness.

But unto us which are saved, it's the power, and the word power in Greek is "dunamis." We get the word dynamic or dynamite from it. Now, what I want you to notice is that there are two groups of people there. Those that perish and those that are saved. When God looks down on humanity, He sees everyone in those two groups. Those that are perishing and those that are saved. And the tense of the verb there that's used, they aren't going to perish, they are perishing. They're not going to be lost; they are lost. So, your family, your friends, your loved ones, your neighbors, your co-workers that are not saved, they're not believers, they're not born again. And they consider the cross foolishness. The Bible says they are perishing.

And then the next category is those that are saved. And those that have believed in the cross and put their faith in the cross and they've been born again or regenerated by the Holy Spirit, they've experienced the power of the cross and they've come to understand by the illuminating

work of the Holy Spirit, the wisdom that is found in the cross.

Now, Paul's speaking here about the cross because he wants them to be unified. And he wants them to understand you're not going to be unified if you are looking at men or if you're looking at the philosophy of the world; the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God. You don't ever have to be intimidated by worldly philosophy or worldly wisdom. If you know God, you know His Word, and you have the wisdom of God. The youngest child in our Sunday school who knows the Lord and knows their Bible knows more and has more wisdom than the greatest minds at our greatest universities. You take a little child, maybe a six, seven, or eight-year-old, and ask them what John 3.16 means, and they know the wisdom of God. You take some brainiac, you know, PhD that has all the degrees, you know, at our universities professing themselves to be wise, they become fools. Morons. I'm just quoting the Bible. I told you not to do it, and now I'm doing it, right? The Bible says they profess themselves to be wise, they become fools, they suppress the truth, and they resist the truth, and they end up with what Paul says in Romans to have reprobate minds. A reprobate mind is a mind that doesn't work. You ever watch these highly educated people, which by the way they're usually educated beyond their intelligence, and you think, this is unbelievable. I can't believe what they're saying, can't believe what they're doing. I can't believe it. Sometimes, even the leaders of our own nation are educated individuals, but because they don't have the wisdom of God and they don't understand God's wisdom, they suppress the truth and reject the truth; they've been given over to lies. So, Paul says that there's those that perish and there's those that are saved. The cross to those that are saved is the power of God.

Now the preaching of the cross, the preaching of the cross is good news, not good views. That's so important to remember. It's not a theory. It's not a philosophy. When a gospel preacher preaches the cross, he's not preaching theory, he's not preaching philosophy, he's preaching history. He's preaching historical facts. And the important point of that historical fact is the incarnation. God became a man. This isn't a Christian theory or philosophical concept or some esoteric kind of idea. This is a historic fact. God, in the person of Christ, became a man. It's called the incarnation. God took on flesh. And then that God-man was crucified. It's called the crucifixion. Had you been there when Jesus was crucified, had you touched the cross, you would have got a sliver in your hand. Jesus was actually crucified. And then He was resurrected. The actual dead body was placed in a tomb, and three days later, it physically, bodily, rose from the dead. It wasn't a spiritual resurrection; it wasn't kind of a cosmic resurrection. When He went back into the universe, He actually rose from the dead. And the stone was rolled away, and the disciples went running in, and they saw the body was gone. It's a historic fact. And then, for 40 days, Jesus appeared to His disciples and others and proved that He was alive. Luke says, "by many infallible proofs." And then we have the ascension. And that was a historic event. They were actually standing on the Mount of Olives. They were actually talking to Jesus, and they saw Jesus go right up into heaven. (whistle) I don't know if it sounded like that. It might have sounded like, I don't know what it sounded like, but He just went right back up into heaven. And that's called the ascension. And then, after the ascension, you have what's called the exaltation. And that means that he's seated at the right hand of the Father, God the Father in heaven. And that He is ruling and reigning right now from heaven.

Now, this isn't just hypothesis or theory or philosophers who love wisdom, and they get together and theorize and have their hypothesis. And if you've ever taken a philosophy class, too, they're searching for truth. If they ever found the truth, the class would be over. There wouldn't be any more classes, and you wouldn't have to take philosophy anymore. Someone said philosophy is a blind man looking for a black cat in a dark room that isn't there. Man's wisdom, man's philosophy. They just go around in circles.

But the wisdom of God, in as we study on Sunday morning in the book of Ephesians, God eternity past, chose us. In history, God the Son died for us. And in time and experience, the Holy Spirit regenerated us. And He connected us to salvation. It's a marvelous thing. All to the praise of the glory of His grace who first trusted in Christ. Now, as I pointed out there in verse 19, as it is written or for it is written, is a quotation from Isaiah 29:14. And this is what it says in Isaiah 49:14, "for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."

Let me give you the context of that Isaiah passage. Judah was under attack, or Israel which was this area of Judah, was under attack by the Assyrian Empire. Many of the leaders in Judah wanted to form an alliance with Egypt to protect against the Assyrians. So, Judah was going to be attacked by the Assyrian Empire.

And so, their wisdom and counsel was to make an alliance with Egypt. Isaiah, the prophet, told them that's not God's will. You shouldn't do that. And it's foolish. And they mocked Isaiah and they ridiculed Isaiah. And so, God comes on the scene and He speaks to them and He says, "their wisdom shall perish and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." So, he's telling them that these wise men are making a foolish decision. You shouldn't go into league with Egypt.

Now, Paul carries that quote over from Isaiah, and he uses it in its context of contrasting the wisdom of the world with the wisdom of the cross. Notice in verse 20, "where is the wise?" Now, what he's doing here in verse 20 is that he's asking these rhetorical questions in sarcasm. This is actually sarcasm on Paul's part. Paul's saying, "where is the wise?" Verse 20. "Where is the scribe?" The wise man would be the philosopher and the scribe would be the Jewish theologian transcribing scripture. And "where is the disputer?" That's the man who gets into debates about the logic of human wisdom. The Greeks focused on wisdom. And they loved to debate and to discuss. And up on the Areopagus and Athens and Mars Hill, they had their great, you know, Epicurians and the Stoic philosophers and they loved to have their debates going on like people do today. And so, he says, where are they? Where's the wisdom of the wise? And where is the disputer of this world? "hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" The answer is yes, he has. Notice in verse 21. "For if after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God."

Now, you ought to underline that phrase. The world by wisdom knew not God. No one in their natural wisdom, in their natural state, in their unregenerated state by their own intellect can come to know God. You can't think your way to God. You can't meditate your way to God. You

can't hyperventilate your way to God. You can't sit in a lotus and contemplate your navel and find God. We used to say you might find lint, but you won't find God. You can't punish yourself and find God. You can't be religious and find God. You can't read holy books, you know, and find God. God can only be found as He reveals himself. And two of the primary means of revelation of God are creation and the Bible and Jesus Christ, which is the living word. But if you reject creation as being the product of God's special design, which is what happened, they subdued that, and they worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, which is blessed forevermore. And this whole evolutionary concept is to get rid of a Creator. We just evolved by accident. Then you don't need a Creator. You don't need God. And you reject God's special revelation in the Bible. Where do you go? You go to your own intellect. Well, I reject Christianity because it's not intelligent. It doesn't make sense. And I can't believe a man dying gallantly 2,000 years ago on a cross, you know, by crucifixion, can save me from an eternal death. And they just think it's moronic. They think it's foolish. And they mock the concept of the death of Jesus Christ. You hear it all the time. It's the wisdom of man versus the foolishness of God, which is wiser than man. It's interesting, notice there in verse 20, he says, "hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" So true.

I want you to notice, secondly, in verse 21, we've already touched on it that human wisdom cannot save. Human wisdom cannot save. Verse 21 to 23, "for if after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching". That's not preaching foolishness; that's preaching the cross, but to the world, it is foolishness. So, if the message is the cross, then it is the preaching of foolishness as far as the world is concerned. But the foolishness of preaching to save them that what? Believe, right? Now that word believe is the same as "receive", it's the same as faith. So, it's the same as trusting Jesus, believing in Jesus, putting faith in Jesus. How are we saved? By believing in what Jesus did for us on the cross. Then, notice what he says. He says, "for the Jews require... verse 22 a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom." So, you have two groups of people: you have the Jews, and they want a sign. When Jesus was here, show us a sign, and we will believe you. And they were religious, and they wanted a sign. And then the Greeks, they want evidence. We have the same kind of people today. You know, if God's real, let Him prove Himself, and if God's real, then I want evidence for it. And the evidence that is there, they do not believe. So, Paul says, the Greeks seek after wisdom, but verse 23, "but we preach Christ crucified unto the Jews, it is a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks, it is foolishness." So that word stumbling block means "skandalon" in the Greek. We get our word scandal from it. And it was a trip stick for a trap, for somebody that would be like a hunter, or they would call them a fowler, they would catch birds with a trap. They would have a little trip stick. When I was a little boy, I used to put a box in the backyard, put bread under it, and just lean it up and put a stick on it and tie a string to it. And then go around behind the house and sit there and wait when a bird would go in to get the bread, pull the little stick, pop. And the box would come down and catch me a bird. I did that for weeks, you know, finally, I caught a big black bird in it once, and I didn't know what to do with the bird once I caught it. I'm freaking out, telling my mom, mom, mom, I caught a bird, I caught a bird, what do you I do? I don't know, it's in the box, I don't know what to do with it. It's like flopping around in the box, you know. Cool, I got a bird in the box, so what do you do? I don't know. It ate all my bread, and I let it go. But I caught it. But that little stick is a skandalon. And he

uses it as an image of stumbling. The Jews, they stumble. And for the Greeks, it's foolish, it's moronic. We can't believe that the death of Jesus Christ could have any effect to save us. Human wisdom cannot save them. Notice in verse 23, "we preach Christ crucified."

Now, the third point I want to make is verses 24 to 25: divine wisdom can save us. Divine wisdom can save us, verses 24 and 25, "but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks," what does he mean by that? He's talking about saved people. Unto those that are called both Jews and Greeks are a reference to Christians or believers who are one in Christ, "Christ the power of God and Christ the wisdom of God. And I love verse 25, "because the foolishness of God..." there it is, fool's wisdom. The foolishness of God is what? "...wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." Now, the foolishness of God is the Cross of Jesus Christ. And the weakness of God is the Cross of Jesus Christ. And the foolishness of God and the weakness of God is wiser and stronger than men. Don't you forget it. That's why the hymn writer said, "God forbid that I should glory saving the Cross of Jesus Christ, my Lord". And he wrote the hymn about glorying in the cross. "In the Cross of Christ, I glory, towering over the wrecks of time." And we worship a Christ who was crucified by the world's standards and the world's estimation. Think about how ludicrous that is. Put your faith in a Galilean peasant who lived 2,000 years ago and died a criminal's death on a cruel Roman cross. Trust Him for your eternity. And the world thinks, are you crazy? I want to use my intellect; I want to use my ability, and I want to trust in myself. But the wisdom that is in that is the wisdom of God. And the power that is in that is the power of God to save and transform a life, amen?

So don't be intimidated by the wisdom of the world. And don't be attracted to the wisdom of the world. Now the cross reference I would give for this whole section is Isaiah 55, 8 and 9. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither your ways My ways saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." God's ways are not our ways, and God's thoughts are beyond our thoughts.

The second thing he does in verse 26 to 31 is Paul wanted them to understand the nature of God's calling. So, he moves from focusing on the cross to God's calling in salvation. So, he reminds them of the wisdom of God in the cross and how the world thinks it's foolishness. So don't be attracted to the world's wisdom. And then he focuses on their calling. Verses 26 to 31. Follow with me as I read. He says, "For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many, noble are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. The base things of this world and the things which are despised have God chosen, yes, and the things which are not to bring to naught the things that are." Why? So "that no flesh should glory in His presence." God designed salvation so that no one would get any praise, no one would get any credit, no one would get any glory but Him alone. So, it's all to His praise and all to His glory.

Then he goes on to say, in verse 30, "But of him are you in Christ Jesus who have God has made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. That according as it is written..., and he's quoting from Jeremiah 9, verse 24, ...He that glories, let him glory... in

who? ...in the Lord." See, God has designed it so that He gets all the praise and He gets all the glory. Foolishness of God is wiser than man.

Now, Paul illustrates God's wisdom and power on the cross, and he does five things here about God's calling. I want you to write them down. Number one, our calling by God is not based on man's position. God is no respecter of persons. So, when God calls us to salvation, it's not based on man's position. Notice verse 26, "For you see your calling, brethren, how the not many wise men after the flesh, Not many mighty, not many noble, are called." Now, don't look around too much, but look around here tonight. Not many wise. You go speak for yourself, preach your boy. Not many mighty. Not many noble. Fool. I don't know how many are here tonight from nobility are called. God's called foolish things, weak things, base things, despise things. We're in the Bible. People wonder where they're at in the Bible. There you are in the Bible. Foolish, foolish thing. To confound the wise. God looked at you and said, I can get glory from that person. Change their life and work in their heart, and God will get glory in that person's life.

This reminds me of a little footnote. It is a dangerous thing when the church placates and elevates celebrities. You know that doesn't mean anything to God when a Hollywood actor gets saved. They're no more important than a hobo living under a bridge. Why is it the church, the moment the Hollywood actor gets saved, they put him in the front row, they put him on the stage, they all clap for him, they make him a star, and give him a ministry? You know, a football player, baseball player, billionaire. We got rich people in our church. Do they matter? The ground around the foot of the cross is all level. Don't ever forget that. And if somebody comes to this church and they're famous or they're wise, or they got the degrees, or they're rich or whatever, they're just a brother or sister in Christ like anybody else. They're no more important or less important than anyone else. You know, "I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, I'm of Peter." They had their little groups; Paul says, look it, don't get into your little personality cults and cliques. You see how God called you here in Corinth? And Paul was actually telling them, look around your congregation. Look at your calling. Weak things, base things, despise things, foolish things. As God shows, broken lives, ruined lives, shattered lives. We bring to Him a pile of ashes. And He forgives our sins and heals us, and puts us back together again. We have nothing to boast in. We have nothing to glory in.

I love these verses. "You see your calling," brother, and it's not based on man's ability or man's position. Jesus said that He was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor. In Acts 4, verse 13, the disciples were noted to be, by the leaders of the day, ignorant and unlearned men. When the famous Lady Huntington, who was of royal lineage, during the ministry of D.L. Moody, she came to Christ. She said that she was saved, or during this time, excuse me, of Charles Wesley. During the days of Wesley, she said she was saved by an "m" in the Bible. Had Paul written not "any" wise, not "any" mighty, then she said I wouldn't have been saved. But notice it doesn't say any; it says many, not many. There are some smart people, there are some rich people, there are some mighty people. There are people of nobility who are saved because of the grace of God. So, she used to say, I got into heaven with just an M. Had that just been any, I would have never gotten into heaven.

But notice secondly, that the salvation that God gives us and the nature of our calling manifest divine grace and love. This ties in with our study in the book of Ephesians. Notice verse 27, just the first phrase in that verse, "but God hath chosen," God hath chosen. Now, that word chosen is the very same word used in Ephesians 1:4. And it means that God chose us of His own interest by Himself for Himself. So, the fact that the choosing is God's divine, sovereign, elective purpose. Jesus prayed and said, I thank the O Father that Thou has hidden these things from the wise and the prudent and has revealed them unto babes. I know that you can't fathom it or understand it or comprehend it, but when the reality hits you that God chose you and that there's no reason why He should have chosen you, it's an unbelievable thing when the reality really grips your heart. When you realize there's no reason at all why God should have chosen me, and He chose me by His grace and love. So, it manifests the grace and love of God.

And then thirdly it is contrary to the expectations of man. It's contrary to what man does and how man operates. Notice verses 27 and 28, "but God's chosen foolish things..." Now, someone described this as God's tool chest. These are the tools that God chooses to work with. Foolish things of the world confound the wise, weak things to confound the things which are mighty, base things of the world, and the despised things and the things which are not. So, here's your calling. Foolish things, weak things, base things, despised things. And you trace it through the Bible, all through the Bible. This is how God works. God calls the humble and the lowly. And if He calls Moses, who's been in the palace of Pharaoh, what does He do with them? He sets them out into the backside of the desert Midian and humbles them for 40 years. Has to get them ready for ministry. Has to break Him. When God wants to use a person, guess what He has to do to that person. He has to break that person. And then He remakes that person into the image that He wants them to be made of.

I think of Gideon when God called Gideon. God called him a mighty man of valor, but you know, when Gideon was called, he was hiding in a cave trying to thresh wheat because he was so afraid. The Midianites were attacking Israel, and he was afraid. And how do you thresh wheat inside a cave? You need wind to separate the wheat from the chaff. You do it outside. He's in this cave. He's probably blowing on it. You know, he's hiding in a cave, and he's threshing his wheat. He's afraid of the Midianites. And God comes to Gideon, the mighty man of valor. Gideon's thinking, God, you got the wrong cave. You want the cave down on the corner down there. This is the wrong... You don't want me, Lord. He's like, man, who are you talking to, Lord? And then, when He calls Gideon to go against the Midianites, they have 135,000 guys. And He whittles Gideon's army down to 300. You talk about insane. He's going to go against the Midianites, 135,000 with 300 men. And you know why God said He's going to do it that way? So that Gideon won't take credit and no one will take credit. And everyone in the whole of Israel will know that it's God who did it, right? Can you imagine Gideon and the 300 coming back and saying, Man, you should have seen us lick the Midianites; man, we really, we really whipped them. They would have said, you guys are crazy. That was God all the way. Someone said, if you can explain it, God didn't do it. I like that. We're always trying to put God in a box and figure things out. God works in ways we can't figure out.

When David was called, he was the redhead, freckled little runt out watching the sheep that no

one wanted. Samuel said, "Do you have any sons?" He goes, well, I guess if you want to call them that, we got the runt. He's out watching the sheep, and he called them in, and God said, this is My man. Not the one that men would choose but the one that God had chosen.

I think of the American evangelist D.L. Moody; you've heard of D.L. Moody. Dwight Lehman Moody had an elementary school education. He dropped out of school to be a shoe salesman. He was famous for slaughtering the king's English. One preacher said, he's the only preacher that I know that can pronounce the word Jerusalem as one syllable. But there was a time when D.L. Moody went from America to Cambridge, England, to do an evangelistic campaign. Everyone at Cambridge was mocking the idea that Moody would come to Cambridge. The center of learning and education. And they were ready to really come to his meeting; they were going to mock him and throw tomatoes at him. You know, this guy, this farm boy from America, he's going to come here and preach to us. And they were mocking him. Do you know what Moody's first words were when he got up to preach at Cambridge? This is a quote he said, "Young gentleman, don't ever think God doesn't love you for He does." And he said it twice. He said, "Cambridge, don't ever think God doesn't love you for He does." And all these intellectuals are like, whoa, what did he just say? And they were so overwhelmed with the love of God that they all got saved or it was a big revival. And a revival started there in Cambridge. I mean, he slaughtered the king's English, but God anointed him in such a powerful way. God uses the foolish things of the world. And then one minister after this campaign of Moody's says, "is all I can do... is he goes, I can't explain... all I can say is that it had to be God". After studying D.O. Moody's preach for many, many nights, it has to be God. It certainly isn't him. And that's... would we have it any the other way? That's what we want, God, to get the glory.

Notice, fourthly, that God removes the basis for human boasting, verse 29. He says that "no flesh should glory in His presence." This is why God chooses weak things, base things, and despised things. So that no flesh will glory in His presence. For by grace are you saved through faith, not of yourself. It is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

And then lastly, fifthly, verses 30 and 31, it results in the glorification of God. "But of him are you in Christ, Jesus, who of God is made unto us... This is what we have in Christ. ...wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Again, what we have in Christ is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; "...that according as it is written..., he's quoting from Jeremiah chapter 9, verses 23 and 24. He that glories, let him glory in the Lord." Now, this is what Jeremiah's passage says. "Thus sayeth the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understands and knoweth me, That I am the Lord which executes loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things sayeth I delight, sayeth I the Lord." So, God's saying, if you're going to glory, if you're going to boast, boast in this that you understand and know me. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Now remember there are two groups: those that perish and those that are saved. So, my question to you tonight is, what group are you in? Are you in the group that's perishing or are

you the group that's saved? You're either in one or the other. Have you put your faith in Christ? Have you trusted Christ? Have you believed in Christ? You might go, well, I don't believe that, or it's foolishness. You know, it's a sign that you are perishing. You're lost. You think that the cross is foolishness. It's the wisdom of God. It's the power of God. And God has designed salvation in such a way that no one can ever get credit for it. That's why three times in Ephesians 1, Paul says, "to the praise of the glory of His grace." To the praise of the glory of His grace. To the praise of the glory of His grace. Now, you can either stumble at the cross, or you can mock the cross, laugh at the cross. Or you can bow your knee at the foot of the cross, and you can believe in Jesus Christ. You can trust in Him.

It's so simple that a little child can do that. You don't have to have a PhD to put your faith in Jesus Christ. He said that if you come to me, you must come as a little child. You must come humbly and dependently upon Him and put your faith in Him. And whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. If you haven't trusted Jesus tonight, you need to do that.

Let's bow our hearts and heads in a word of prayer.