



## First Corinthians 1:23 - 31



The Life and Ministry of the Apostle Paul			
Born A.D. 10. Birth Name was Saul.	As Jesus was working as a carpenter, Paul was attending School.	Born in Tarsus. A Jew in Family of Pharisees (Acts 21:39; 23:6)	Of the Tribe of Benjamin (perhaps named after King Saul, a Benjaminite)
Paul inherited Roman Citizenship from His Father	He Studied in Jerusalem under Gamaliel in the School of Hillel (Acts 22:3).	Wrote 13 (maybe 14) of our New Testament Books	Tentmaker by Trade (Acts 18:3)
Was a great persecutor of the New Christians (Acts 9:1)	Saw Jesus on the Road to Damascus and Believed (Acts 9:1-19)	Boldly Preached in the Name of the Lord (Acts 9:27)	His formal ministry began in the Church in Antioch
Three Missionary Journeys (maybe 4). Went to Corinth on 2nd Journey.	Wrote 1st Corinthians A.D. 59	Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 22:21; Romans 11:13)	Was Beheaded in Rome (circa A.D. 67)

### Verses 21-22 [In context from last week's Bible Study]

How is a person saved? Not by **signs** or **wisdom**, but by the **foolishness of preaching**. Here the word **preaching** is the Greek word *kerygma* which is *that which is proclaimed by a public crier*. In this case the proclamation is the *cross of Christ* (1:17).

The Gospel must be proclaimed! Man is saved by the clear revelation of God through the Gospel.

**The Jews require a sign...Greeks seek after wisdom.** People seek after signs today. Many churches work hard to appeal to emotionalism; even lighting in a church to help *set the mood* so people can be more easily *manipulated*. These are signs people seek today. Some large churches do more to produce a Broadway show than they do preaching the Gospel; *The Gospel is too simplistic--people won't come back if that's all we teach! We must give them signs!*

Churches today also try to provide wisdom: Financial seminars, how to lose weight classes, aerobics, on and on, trying to give their people wisdom. Often it is just the same wisdom of the world that can be found by *Googling* the subject. Everything is being taught *but* the Gospel.

Neither **signs** or **wisdom** will save.

**Verse 23 –**

Signs and wisdom of the world will not save. The cross of Christ is the theme of the Gospel. It is the heart of the Gospel. Rather than signs and wisdom, **We preach Christ crucified**, and this message is a **stumblingblock** for the **Jews**.

*How could the Messiah have been crucified?* It did not make sense to the Jews since they were expecting Messiah to be their King and release them from their bondage. *Jesus could not have been the Messiah if He was crucified.* The Jews simply did not get their theology right.

This idea of a **stumblingblock** was prophesied back in Isaiah 8:14.

Isaiah 8:14 (AV)

*<sup>14</sup>And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin (trap) and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*

1 Peter 2:8 (AV)

*<sup>8</sup>And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them that stumble at the word...*

Later, Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be a *suffering Servant*. They should have put the two things together; suffering Servant and King. Bad theology trips people up. This trips up the Jews.

From the Greek's standpoint it was silly. Someone who proclaimed to be a god...crucified? To them, this religion was simply folly.

Today, unbelievers are tripped up by the preaching of the Gospel, and claim it is foolishness.

**Verses 24-25 –**

**Unto them which are called.** Christians (the body of Christ). For them, **Christ is the power of God**. Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is **the power of God** unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The preaching of Christ crucified (vs. 23) is **power**.

It is also **wisdom of God**. Christ on the cross displays the wisdom of God. For it is through and by one sacrifice that all men are saved. To the Christian, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Therefore, signs (literally, *wonders. Something experiential*) of men, and wisdom of men do not save—only the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Greek: σοφία [sophia /sof-ee-ah/]. We get our word philosophy, and sophisticated.

**Foolishness of God.** Paul is making a point; God has no foolishness, and **Weakness**; God has no weakness. But even if God did have foolishness and weakness (which, again he does not), it would still be wiser and stronger than that of man.

So why would any Christian try to get wisdom or strength from the world? We get our wisdom and strength *only* from the preaching of the Gospel of the cross! For those attending churches where the wisdom of men is taught; e.g., how to manage money, how to

lose weight, how to keep your body in physical shape (and there is nothing wrong with any of those in and of themselves), if the Gospel is not first, then you may consider going somewhere else. Attend a Gospel teaching, Cross teaching, Bible teaching church.

That is power, and that is strength!

### Verse 26 –

Once I attended a church in which all of the leaders were powerful men. One was even a federal judge. They were looked upon in awe by the congregation. These men were critical of the pastor and did not walk humbly, although they had great worldly wisdom.

Oftentimes leaders are selected by the church because of their station (their rank or status) in society. The man on the assembly line or the garbage man is overlooked and never given a second thought. Yet, Paul tells the Corinthian church to look around. Those in the church were not **noble**, or **mighty**, or **wise** in the world's standards.

Men and women should not feel useless in the church because they have no education, or because they work in a minimum wage job. Maybe they never got good grades in school, or even finished school, but their heart is right with God and they have a desire to study God's word and rightly divide it, and preach the cross of Christ. That is our calling.

### Verses 27 - 31 –

The **foolish things...confound the wise** (1:27). The word **confound**, Greek: **καταισχύνω** [kataischuno /kat-ahēe·skhoo·no/] is translated clearly in the NKJV as **put to shame**. Literally, it means to *blush with shame*. This shame may not occur in this life, but there is coming a day when men will stand in shame before God; those who have rejected the Savior and were critical of the people God used for His service will be ashamed.

God wants to use those whom the world would consider **foolish**. He wants those who are humble and those who consider themselves **weak**. *God uses the exact opposite of what the world considers useful.* (See Acts 2:1-13; Galileans) God uses the foolish and weak to bring Himself **glory**, so that no one can boast in and of his own wisdom (1:29).

Believers are **in Christ Jesus** (vs. 30). He is our **wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption**.

**Sanctification:** A person who believes in Jesus Christ for everlasting life is at once sanctified. Sanctified means "holy". We are not progressively being sanctified. And while we are still "sinful" we are no longer called "sinners." We are not "sinners saved by grace". We are saved by grace, yet still sinful at times.

Paul addressed this letter to the **sanctified**. In 1 Corinthians 6:11 we see, not a progressive sanctifying, but a stated fact that you are, as a believer, **sanctified**.

1 Corinthians 6:11 (NKJV)

*<sup>11</sup> And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*

We cannot gain any of these things by other worldly means. Therefore, because we are **in Christ** and not in the world, we should only **glory in the Lord**, never in anything we have achieved on our own. That means we cannot achieve wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, or redemption. That is why we glory in him and not ourselves.

There is nothing wrong with leaders in the church who have world wisdom and knowledge, but only if their heart is right with God and they consider worldly knowledge as secondary. To God be the glory.

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Sound out the Greek (read like English, left to right): **καταισχύνο** [kataischuno /kat-ahee-**skhoo**-no/]

To confound, or shame

<b>κ = kappa</b>	<b>α = alpha</b>	<b>τ = tau</b>	<b>α = alpha</b>
<b>ι = iota</b>	<b>σ = sigma</b>	<b>χ = chi</b>	<b>ύ = upsilon</b>
<b>ν = nu</b>	<b>ω = omega</b>		