

1Corinthians – Week 7

I. Review (1Cor. 1:21-25)

A. Paul shared how the world, through its wisdom, did not know God

- i. The “wisdom” of the Gentiles produced a lifestyle plagued with shameful acts (Romans 1:18ff)
- ii. However, faith in the word of the cross leads to the knowledge of God and to salvation.
- iii. Those who consider the word of the cross “foolishness” refuse to believe unless:
 1. A sign was given them (Jews demanded signs)
 2. It sounded wise and made sense (Greeks sought wisdom)
- iv. We see this in the world today:
 1. People refuse to embrace the gospel because, to them, Christianity is unscientific, too primitive and too narrow-minded.
 2. At the same time, the same are quick to embrace human wisdom that comes from talk show hosts, self-help books or mystical teachings of eastern religions.
- v. But for those who believe, the crucified and resurrected Christ is the power and wisdom of God!

II. Continuation:

A. In verses 26, Paul strengthens his argument that the gospel he preached contradicted human expectations...

- i. 1Corinthians 1:26 (ESV), “*For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.*”
 1. The term “*consider*” means “*think about*” and the term “*calling*” refers to one’s position in the world
 - a. He tells the Corinthians to think about their status in life when God saved them...
 - b. Three rhetorical questions are implied here:
 - i. Were most of you well-educated when you heard, believed and obeyed the message of the cross?
 - ii. Did most of you hold prominent positions when you when you heard, believed and obeyed the message of the cross?
 - iii. Did most of you come from prominent families when you heard, believed and obeyed the message of the cross?
 2. Paul was not insulting the members, but rather, he was making a point that God chooses people that have nothing to brag about.
 - a. Those who were filled with their own wisdom and importance lacked the humility to receive God’s grace.
 - b. But God’s tendency is to save those considered to be the riff-raff of society! For this reason, Paul says...
- ii. 1Corinthians 1:27-29 (ESV), “*But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.*”
 1. When Hollywood throws a party, only the affluent are invited. Security guards are hired to keep the ordinary people out. It’s all about who shows up and who’s wearing what type of clothing, and who’s dating who, etc.
 2. But God does things differently: He invites those who would normally not be invited: People whom the world sees as foolish, weak, lowly and despised tend to be His invited guests.

3. God is known for using people or things that are insignificant to the world:
 - a. The Lord chose a nomadic people who were the smallest of all nations (Deut. 7:7-8).
 - b. The Lord used a small, insignificant tribe to bring forth the Ruler of Israel, that is, the Christ (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:5).
 - c. The Lord used trumpets to knock down the walls of Jericho (Joshua 6)
 - d. The Lord reduced Gideon's Army from 32,000 to 300 to defeat the Midianites (Judges 7).
 - e. The Lord enabled Samson to defeat a whole army with a jawbone of a donkey (Judges 15:15ff).
 - f. The Lord fed 5,000 people with nothing more than a few fish and loaves (Matt. 14).
 - g. The Lord used 12 ordinary men to turn the whole world upside down with the gospel!
4. God does this to humble mankind so that no one can take credit for anything!
 - a. No one will be able to stand before God and boast of himself!
5. Paul closes chapter 1 with these words...
 1. In other words, because of God, many of the Corinthians, who were viewed by the world as *“things that are not”* have become *things that are*, and this was all made possible by the Father, who draws men to Christ and places them into Christ at baptism (cf. John 6:44; Rom. 6:3)!
 2. And Christ, who, to us, is the wisdom from God, is ...
 - a. Our righteousness
 - i. Even though they weren't acting righteously, by virtue of Christ, they stood righteous before God (cf. 2Cor. 5:21).
 - b. Sanctification (holiness – cf. 1Cor. 1:2)
 - i. Even though they acted unholy, by virtue of Christ, they were made holy.
 - c. Redemption (salvation – cf. 1Cor. 1:4)
 - i. Even though they acted sinfully, the blood of Christ was continually cleansing them of sin (1John 1:7).
 - d. Therefore...
 3. 1Corinthians 1:30 (ESV), *“so that, as it is written, ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’*
 - a. Paul quotes a paraphrased, condensed version of Jeremiah 9:23-24.
 - b. Paul is basically saying here...
 - i. Since we consider Christ as wisdom from God, that is, ...
 - ii. Since He makes us right before God (and continues to do so)...
 - iii. And since He made us holy (and continues to do so)...
 - iv. And since He has freed us from sin (and continues to do so)...
 - v. We ought to boast in Him and what He has done, not in His servants and what they have done or how they speak!