

**The Foolishness of God, Part 1**

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:18-21

Code: 1813

If you will take your Bible and turn to 1 Corinthians Chapter 1. The book of 1 Corinthians is divided basically into Paul's discussion of the various problems that existed in the Corinthian church. The entire book beginning in verse 10 of Chapter 1 and going into Chapter 16 deals with the areas of problems in the assembly. But the first problem that confronted the apostle as he wrote was the problem of division. The church was divided into factions and parties. They were fighting against each other, quarreling. They had split, and this was a very, very grave problem. And so the apostle writes Chapter 1, verse 10 clear to the end of Chapter 3 to deal with the problem of division in the church.

Three chapters or parts of three chapters dealing with the problem of division. Now as we come to Chapter 1, verse 18 Paul is continuing to deal with this problem of division in the church. We're going to be looking at Chapter 1, verse 18 through Chapter 2, verse 8 as a unit. That portion of Scripture from 1:18 to 2:8 covers the subject matter of the foolishness of God, the foolishness of God. And we'll find that phrase used here and we'll explain it to you as we go.

This, I think, is one of the greatest sections in all of Scripture, because it gives a contrast, now mark this, it gives a contrast between the foolishness of men which they think is wisdom and the wisdom of God which they think is foolishness. It contrasts human wisdom with divine wisdom. Now you say, but John, how does that relate to the subject of division in the church? Well, let me tell you how. Now we all know that the Greeks were in love with philosophy. I remember in college taking a course I Greek philosophy and just about every philosophy of modern times goes back to a Greek origination.

The Greeks were the great philosophers. They would go around spouting various and sundry philosophies and attracting people to them and so the whole of Greek culture was philosophically divided into little groups. Now we have in America and have had for some years a political system that fairly well divides itself between the Republicans and the Democrats. There are also American independents, freedom party members, communists and socialists and so forth, but they are rather small minority. Dominantly, we are divided into two large parties.

Well, in Greece if you can imagine this, there may have been 50 dominating philosophies that divided the populous among those 50 different philosophies and so they were all factioned into groups that held varying philosophies, watch, regarding man's meaning and destiny. Now you can study the

philosophies of Plato and you can study the various other Greek philosophers and there are a myriad of them and you will find that for each philosopher there is a different philosophy. The word philosophy simply means man's wisdom. The word literally means in Greek the love of wisdom, sophia and phileo. To love wisdom. There were people who loved human wisdom and they developed little systems and people gravitated to those systems so there factions of philosophy adherence in Corinth.

Now when the church was born and all of these people were saved and they came together strange as it may seem, even though they were united in Christ and even though they identified commonly with the cross, they still held on to the varying philosophies that they originally had held to. So that the church also became split up into little groups each holding various philosophical view points. Or you would say that there were Christians of this philosophy, Christians of that philosophy, Christians of the other philosophy and this was cause for division in the church.

It would be as if our church was split between the Democrats and the Republicans and that we could never get together on things. That's how it was in Corinth. They were all split up into little philosophical factions because when they became Christians they still held on to their philosophy. Now let me tell you something about philosophy. I'm not much of a philosopher, which is good. It's very good. I'll tell you why. Philosophy is unnecessary, okay. It's absolutely unnecessary. You say why? Because when it's right it will agree with Scripture, right? So you don't need it. When it's wrong, it will disagree so you don't want it. Did you get that?

You say philosophy has nothing to offer you. You don't need a philosophy. It's unnecessary, because if it's right the Bible will tell you that. The Bible tells you what's right. If it's wrong you don't want it. So the point that Paul is making here is look, since you've become Christians and you're united around God's revelation as it peaks out in the cross forget the former philosophies. All they are doing is splitting you up into little groups. This shouldn't be. There are churches that are divided over philosophical viewpoints today. Did you know that? There are churches that are split over politics, economics, philosophies, education. It's very easy to happen.

Now, Paul is speaking here against divisions in verses 10-17. Look at it. He spoke against the divisions that occurred around personalities. "I'm of Paul," verse 12 says, "I'm of Apollos, I'm of Cephus, I'm of Christ." But he's still talking about division this time, however, it has to do with philosophy. And the typical Greek admiration for philosophy and rhetoric had caused some of the Corinthians to set too high a value on human philosophy. So high that they were actually, even though other people were Christians, they wouldn't cooperate with other people because they held a different world view. Now, I don't think that's too different from us. If you say that the Greeks had a problem with the love of philosophy and rhetoric, you've got to say the Americans do to.

I mean, if there is anything, anything that America has gone bananas on it's philosophy. Do you know what philosophy means? Human opinion, human wisdom. And there's no end to it. You listen to the news, you turn it on, somebody says so and so and so and so said, blah, blah, blah, blah. End quote. As if that means anything. Or when you don't really have a strong point, you quote somebody else even though they may be wrong too, at least they have some credibility. And we quote people. Or there's talk radio where anybody gets to offer any opinion.

There is no end to the mass of verbiage regarding human philosophy, philosophy of life, meaning of life, destiny of life, what life is all about. How we are to live. What we're for. What we're to do. Where we're going. Where we came from. It's on and on and we've made a god out of education and a god out of human opinion. So we're really not any different than the Greeks at all. Now I want you to notice that Paul here attacks this problem in Corinth beginning in verse 17. If you'll look at you'll see that.

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Now the gospel is the good news. And what is the good news? The good news is this book right here. The revelation of God that winds up in the redemptive act of Christ on the cross. "The gospel. Not with wisdom of words. Less the cross of Christ should be rendered void or null and void or made of no effect." Now here Paul introduces the basic contrast that's going to dominate his thinking to the end of Chapter 3. He sets human wisdom against the cross. "I came to preach the gospel not," not sophia legoin the Greek. Which means word wisdom or wisdom doctrine, human wisdom. "I came to preach the gospel not human wisdom."

The doctrines of human wisdom are opposite the truth of God. They are opposite the gospel. So Paul is saying to the Corinthians look don't split over human philosophy. The gospel, the revelation of God is all that is necessary. All the truth that God intends you to have is here. You do not need a human philosopher. The word of God stands alone. It needs no additions of worldly wisdom. So Paul sets human wisdom against the gospel.

Now that's his subject. In fact, through the rest of Chapter 1, he uses the word sophia 16 times. So this is what he's talking about. Now let me tell you, just to give you another angle on this, philosophy, mark this, has always been a threat to revelation. Philosophy has always been a threat to revelation. Philosophy has never helped God's revelation. You do not need to add human opinion to divine word. Do you understand that? You do not need to say and God said such and such and I would like to add personally. No. When God has said it, it is done being said.

There are no in addition to what God has said, I would like to add. No, no. Martin Lloyd Jones said this, "The whole drift toward modernism that has blighted the church of God and nearly destroyed its living gospel, may be traced to an hour when men began to turn from revelation to philosophy." Now you may not much about the history of doctrine or the history of the church, but that is a very accurate

statement. Let me tell you something else, whenever philosophy gets mixed with revelation, revelation loses.

Now we call that modernism, but it isn't. It's antiquism. Nothing modern about it. Let me give you a couple of illustrations of how philosophy messes up revelation. Now the Bible teaches simple things. The Bible teaches that the first five books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy were written by one man. Who was that man? Moses. They are, in fact, called by the Jews the law of Moses, the pentateuch which means five. The pentateuch, the law of Moses. Along came a group of men about a hundred years ago or more and they said well, we are the rationalists. And their criterion for truth was this. Our philosophy is that only that which is rational to the human intellect is true. If something cannot fit into our minds and be conceived by us to be true it is not true. And so they looked at the Old Testament, they said oh, oh, several things here we just can't understand.

One is we do not agree that Moses wrote the first five books. Why? Why Moses could not have known that much information that early. You see law didn't get developed. The evolution of law came a lot later. He could never have written the Ten Commandments that early. Oh no, no. So they said then, Moses did not write that. Who did? And they came along and said J, E, P and D did. You say who's that? They said every time the word Jehovah is there that's the Jehovah writer. Then there's the Elohim. When that's there it's the Elohim writer. Then there's the P for the priestly writer, and then there's the Deuteronomist who wrote Deuteronomy.

The only problem is you get sometimes you get the J, E, P and D thing in the same verse, then they've got problems. And then they say well a lot of redactors who came along and they edited it all and that's who really wrote. It isn't really written by Moses at all. Now, notice human philosophy was imposed on revelation in which lost? Revelation loses out. Let me give you another illustration. The Bible teaches a simple thing, incidentally, Moses did write those books. And those people who said they couldn't have had law had a real blow not too many years ago when somebody discovered the Code of Hammurabi, which was a very sophisticated legal system that predates Moses. So take that.

Second point, second point, take for example the Bible teaches that God created things, right? You read Genesis 1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." On the first day, the second day, the third day, the fourth day, the fifth day, the sixth day. God created. The seventh day God rested. Now the Bible is very explicit that God created this. Human philosophy says no actually the only explanation for the existence of things is evolution. Does the Bible say anything about evolution? Does the word evolution appear in the Bible? It does not.

The Bible doesn't talk about evolution, but human philosophy does. It all began from a primeval puddle. And in the primeval puddle was a one celled thing who really was very, very distressed about being a one celled thing. Wanted company so split and became two. And then, of course, everything went wild and here we are. And that in a nutshell and a very well limited scientific explanation is

evolution. I mean, I'll agree.

All right, so you have the Bible, which says God did it in six days. You have evolution which says it came out of a primeval puddle and took millions of years. And somebody comes along and says well, of course the Bible did emanate from God somehow, I do believe that. But I also believe in evolution. I know we'll come up with a theistic evolution. That is, we'll have a conglomerate of both. God made the puddle, then the thing evolved and when it got to the place of man, this is what's called progressive creationism, it got to the place of man, God zapped man with a soul so that God started it and God interjected the soul and the rest was an evolutionary process and you get progressive creationism or theistic evolution.

You know what happens again? Whenever philosophy is imposed on revelation, revelation gets confused and is the loser. We do not need evolution. God doesn't need it. Another illustration. And this gets a little more practical. We have today a science so-call that is anything but under the title of psychology. Now the Bible tells a lot about how to live doesn't it? The Bible tells an awful lot about how to get rid of guilt, confess your sin. I don't know of a better way. I never knew any therapy that could do as much as confession could do. I never knew of any psychiatrist who could deliver anybody from sin, but I know Christ can.

The Bible says a lot about that. It says a lot about counseling and exhortation, but what happens is that some people take the Bible and then they go off to the university and get 14 years of Freudian education and they impose the two and guess which loses? The Bible. The patterns of life and the Scripture do not need Freud to help them along. God did not need Freud. Freud needed God.

Now somebody else comes along and says I know the Bible teaches the gospel, but we must add to the gospel and so they create what is called the social gospel. You know what happens? Pretty soon the true gospel's lost. Philosophy never did any favors for revelation, ever. There was a guy who came along in Germany his name was Rudolph Bultmann. Now Bultmann said, "my philosophy is the philosophy of demythologizing." You say what's that? That means that we must take all the myths out of the Bible. You say what's a myth? Anything that I don't believe said Rudolph. Who then proceeded to wipe out the whole Bible. Bultmann's philosophy imposed upon revelation and revelation lost.

Listen people, revelation doesn't need philosophy. You don't need human wisdom. You don't need human philosophy. You need the word of God. If you know the word of God and you understand the word of God, you know the reason for everything. You understand what you need to know and you have solutions to your problems. You see there are only two views of anything, man's and God's. And this is how man's goes. Indulgent, shallow, short-sided, unrealistic, pandering to the flesh, elevating desires, supporting pride, advocating independence. Makes man the center. And who wants it?

Human philosophy really, I think, just fulfills Romans 1:25. It changes the truth of God into a lie and worships the creature more than the creator. That's what human philosophy does. You see he says in Romans 1, the knowledge of God was there. You had the knowledge of God, you had the revelation of God, it was all there, you imposed human philosophy on it and you turned the truth of God into a lie. Listen, all God wants is that we accept revelation. Not that we get split up into philosophical faction. You add human wisdom to divine truth and all you do is render, look at the end of verse 17, you render the cross null and void.

And so Paul with verse 17 launches into a lengthy contrast between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of men. Notice verse 18. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. But unto us who are saved it is the power of God." Now notice this verse carefully. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish." That is to those who are without God, those who are dying in sin, those who will spend eternity in hell, those who do not God, for whom God's heart is grieved and ours as well. But to them the preaching of the cross is foolishness. But to us who are saved, it is the power of God. And the reason it's foolishness to them is because they have elevated their own philosophy. And the cross looks so stupid to them so foolish. They have such complex philosophies that to come along and say I want to give you a simple message. God in human flesh died on the cross, paid the penalty for your sin, by faith in that act, and His resurrection you can be saved and your eternal destiny is secured in heaven forever. And they said oh ridiculous. How stupid did the death of the one man, on one hill, on one piece of wood, that one moment in history is the determining factor of destiny for every man whoever lived. Ridiculous. They couldn't buy it. Foolish.

The word foolishness, simple word, it's the word moron. From which we get the word moron. It's moronic, stupid, silly. Now you'll notice word preaching there. It's not really the word preaching in the Greek. It's the word. It's the word lagos. For the word of the cross. Now watch this, for the word of the cross. Now look back at verse 17. And here you have not the word of the cross, but the word of wisdom, human wisdom. And there's the contrast. He contrasts the word of wisdom with the word of the cross. Human wisdom is set against the cross. Now I want to mention one thing. The word of the cross here means all that is involved in the cross. The lagos the total revelation.

You say well, John, what is the word of the cross? See this book? I believe this whole book is the word of the cross. Do you know that everything before the cross pointed to it and everything after the cross explains the cross. This is the word of the cross, revelation. Revelation of God then which pinnacles and peaks in the cross is set against the wisdom of men. Paul says these two things are at each other. They are opposites. And so the people who hold to worldly wisdom think the cross is moronic. But we who are saved know it to be the power of God. And that's what he said in Romans 1, "I am not ashamed." Even though the world thinks I'm stupid and even though the philosophers think that I must have a small brain, that I'm uneducated, I still am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It may be moronic to them, but it is the power of God to them who believe.

So the word of the cross, which looks like foolishness to men, is really the power of God. You see men, because of their rationalism, because the elevation of the human ego, because they want their own philosophies can't stoop to something as simple as that. And it is simple, believe me. I mean, Jesus Himself said unless you become as a little child you can't enter the kingdom. It is simple. It is not a complex philosophy. Paul arrives in Corinth. He arrives in a maelstrom of philosophies, a melee of words flying all over Corinth. What are you going to do? Just offer another philosophy and get caught in the whirlwind? You know what he does when he gets there? Look at Chapter 2, verse 2.

"When I arrived in Corinth," in verse 1 he says, "I didn't come with excellency of speech and wisdom of words, but I came," and this is what he said, "I determine to know nothing among you except Christ and," what, "crucified." You know why he said that? Because it was already enough verbiage flying around. He wasn't about to offer them another philosophy. It just would have been another thing to hang on the wall. He wanted to give them something that would pound home something very opposite to what they held. Something very simple, not complex, something very historical, not ethereal, something very concrete and objective, not subjective and foggy and he gave them the cross and he kept it up and kept it up and kept it up in Corinth for at least 18 months. That's how long he stayed there.

You know, you study the human religions, but don't study them too long because you've got other things to do like mow the lawn and things like that. But study human philosophy for a few minutes and you know what you'll find? That every religion that man has ever developed and he's developed all of them except Christianity is complex. That appeals to his brain, to his ego, it's elaborate. Man won't crush his ego to come down to the level of the simplicity of the cross and the fact that he recognizes that it doesn't matter what he thinks and it doesn't matter how smart he is, but that you're saved not through your intellect, but through faith.

He doesn't like to come to that place. You see, he doesn't like the cross because if you come to the cross you have to admit that you're a sinner and he doesn't like that either. And that's the problem. The cross is still the issue. God's revelation peaks in the cross. But you know human philosophy doesn't understand it. To give you an illustration, you know Peter didn't even understand it. Peter had a philosophy. The word philosophy we could use the word opinion. Peter had an opinion. He thought the Messiah would come and set up his kingdom and everything would be just rosy.

Jesus said one day in Matthew 16, "I'm going to die." Remember how Peter reacted to that? "No, Lord you're not going to die." Oh is that right? One thing revelation doesn't need is Peter's opinion. But you see Peter's philosophy was at variance with the truth. And so Jesus said to him "get thee behind me Satan," you've got a satanic philosophy. Then they got in the Garden and the soldiers came to capture Christ in John 18, Peter took his sword out and tried to cut them up. And Jesus said,

will you put that thing away. Haven't you gotten the message yet? Finally after the cross, he understood.

In Acts 3, he's preaching there and he says "these things which God had before shown by the mouth of the prophets that Christ must suffer He hath so fulfilled." He sounds like a real expert. Wasn't til after the cross that he understood the cross. Later on when he wrote his letter 1 Peter 2:24 he says, "who in His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." You see Peter learned the meaning of the cross but at the beginning his philosophy was at odds with the cross. He couldn't see it. He couldn't understand it. You see he was like any other Jew. To him, look at it in verse 23. "Christ crucified is unto the Jews a," what, "a stumbling block. But unto the Gentiles or the Greeks it's foolishness." It doesn't fit into human reason. They can't rationalize it. As if the intellect was ultimate.

So the contrast is established then in verses 17 and 18. The cross is the power of God to salvation. It does save us. But to the world steeped in human wisdom it is moronic. Now with that as introduction from verse 19 through Chapter 2, verse 8 Paul gives five reason why he considers God's wisdom superior to man's. And these are really good. Five reason why Paul considers God's wisdom to be superior to man's wisdom. Reason number one, God's wisdom is permanent. It's permanence. Verses 19 and 20. Now this is most interesting. Here Paul uses an Old Testament passage to show that man's wisdom will be swept away. That it is very temporary. Look at verse 19.

And Paul quotes Isaiah 29:14, "For it is written," and it is in Isaiah 29:14, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." Now that's Isaiah 29:14. And let me hasten to help you to interpret that. That can have a very general, ultimate fulfillment. There's coming a day when all of the philosophies of men will be swept away, right? Christ will reign as King of Kings. When all of man's wisdom comes ashes. The tribulation period as we study it in the book of Revelation is the disintegration of all of man's wisdom, but it has more than just a future fulfillment. It had a very interesting meaning at the time that it was given like so many prophecies. It has an immediate fulfillment and a future fulfillment.

This is what was going on when Isaiah said that. There was a king. His name was Sennacherib, and you may have heard of him. He was a very mighty king and he was king over a nation called Assyria. And they wanted to conquer Judah, the land of Israel. And so they decided to attack Judah. God through the prophet Isaiah says to Judah, don't worry deliverance will come Sennacherib will fail in his conquering, but God said, it won't be because of your wise men. It won't be the strategy of the political advisers to king Hezekiah who was the king of Israel at the time or the king of Judah. It won't be because of the political cunning and the secret trickery of these wise advisers. Nope. You're not going to escape the hand of the Assyrians because of your wisdom. God says, I will do it myself because I want to demonstrate to you the impotence and the impermanence of human wisdom. When all of your wisdom has run the gamut I'll just destroy it all. I'll put it down to nothing and by



myself I will do what all your wisdom couldn't do.

Wow, that's quite a promise. Sennacherib had a huge army. You say if God's going to deal with Sennacherib, boy he's going to really have to get it together. He did. You know what he did? He just called over one angel. That's right. One angel. You say what happened? I'll read to you what happened. All those wise people in Israel. Oh, all those political advisers who had all the strategy, so smart, all the hosts of the army of Israel. God says say come here angel. The angel of the Lord went forth. That's him, by himself, and he smote in the camp of the Assyrians a 185,000. One angel slew 185,000 and then this is kind of interesting he says, "and when they arose early in the morning behold they were dead."

Terrific, they woke up and found out they were dead. No, some arose and found the 185,000 were dead. Now listen, you know what that says about angels? I think you do. Don't mess with them. What all of the political advisers of Israel couldn't do, what all of the wisdom and knowledge and acumen of the best of the people couldn't come up with, God did with one angel. And He says, I'll just wipe your wisdom out. I don't need it. God always did tell Israel I'll fight for you. You know, we have the wrong idea. You know, we want to solve everything by our own ingenuity rather than let God do it. So Paul uses that passage and it's a fantastic thing. Oh by the way, not only that but later on Sennacherib went back and dwelled at Nineveh, which was the capital of Assyria and it came to pass as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch, his god that Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons smote him with a sword, escaped into the land of Ararat and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead. So even he was killed by his own children.

You see God didn't need any of the wisdom of Israel. And that's the point, now you can go back to 1 Corinthians 1:19. Paul says, look you know the passage in Isaiah. God never did need human wisdom. God never did need human understanding. Proverbs puts it this way in 14:12, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death." You know, there's always people who want to give their opinion. Well, I think such and such. Well, I...and I think that one of the reasons that a lot of people won't come to the Bible or they won't come to church or they won't study Christianity is because their own philosophy is so shaky anyway, that they just don't think it could stand another blow. You know, they'd rather mask themselves, put their head in the sand and just be buried. Keeping their eternal fingers crossed.

Listen to Jeremiah 8:9, "The wise men are ashamed. They are dismayed and taken." Now listen to this. "Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord and what wisdom is in them?" Listen if you reject revelation, what wisdom is left? There isn't any. God is set against worldly wisdom. He set against worldly philosophy, even the philosophy of Israel, Judah. He destroys it. Man's wisdom is defined, I think, as well as anywhere in the Bible in James 3:15 in a most apt terms. It says this, and maybe you never thought of this definition. Listen to this, "This wisdom descends not from above." All right, we know which wisdom it is, right? It's not God's wisdom, it's man's. It doesn't come from above. It's

just plain old man's wisdom. Now listen, "It is earthly, sensual, and demonic." Human wisdom is one earthly. That is it never gets beyond the earth. It never really understands supernatural reality. It's earthly.

Two, sensual, it is based upon human desire and lust. Three, demonic, its source is Satan. That's human wisdom. Now that friends is set against the wisdom of God, wouldn't you agree? That's James 3:15. So he says, it's written. It's in permanence. God's wisdom is permanent. Verse 20, he asks some questions. Really, it's one question with three parts. "Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this age?" Where are all the smart people going to solve all the problems? Aren't we all yelling about that now?

I mean, we've talked so much about how great education is and how we've educated ourselves into problems that we can't solve. Of course, we never could solve them. You know, human wisdom never solved anything. All of our education never really solved anything. You say wait a minute, wait a minute, we used to be living in the boondocks out there in the bush and now we're in cities and homes. That's right. And we're just as rotten here as we were there. We haven't changed. We're just more comfortable. You know our immorality isn't committed out in the woods. It's committed in fancy hotels. It isn't any different. We just made our sinning a little more accommodated. Human wisdom throughout history, the history of man, has never solved any real problem, never.

It just makes us more comfortable with our problems, that's all. And so God says where are the wise people. Where are all these people? And he quotes here, Isaiah 19:12. And it's most interesting. Because in Isaiah 19, God was talking to Egypt. And He says, Egypt, you've had it. You've gone after false gods and you've worshipped false gods and you've denied my truth and you're going to be judged. And you remember those...that great prophecy against Egypt that the rivers would dry up and the sea wouldn't give them water any more. And all the reeds would be broken and Memphis would be destroyed, a great city the capital and all these things. And when that was all done, then Isaiah says now where are your wise men? Who's going to offer the solution to the destruction of God? The answer is there aren't any left.

And you know what he did it says in Isaiah 19? They went after the soothsayers and the mediums and the wizards and you know what answers they had? Zilch. None. There aren't any answers. Now where are the wise? And then in...he says the second question, "where is the scribe?" "Where is the scribe?" This is the writer. And, in fact, it's Isaiah 33:18 where you find that statement. And it had to do with the Assyrians again. The Assyrians when they sent their army down sent scribes along. You know the scribes were to do? They were to write out all of the things that they took when they took Israel.

They were to list all the booty and they were to record all of the tribute that was to be exacted. They were to write down everything that was taken in the victory. Do you know what happened? They

didn't take a victory. And the scribes had nothing to write. And so Isaiah says where are the scribes? There aren't any. Then he says, "where is the disputer of this age?" And this I don't think has an Old Testament counterpart. The word disputer here is the very Greek word used for arguing about philosophy. Where are your philosophical arguments now? Look where are the people versed in philosophy? Where are the people versed in literature, the scribes? Where are the people versed in rhetoric? Where are they when you need them?

All their wisdom is folly. You know, I get that feeling in the world today, don't you? Who knows any answer? Any of them. So to make clear the futility and fatality of human wisdom, Paul sarcastically says "where's the wise, where's the scribe, where's the disputer of this age?" You tell me what has human philosophy ever contributed to man? What has it ever done to make him nobler? To make him a better man in his heart? What has it ever done to lift him up? Nothing, nothing, nothing ever. The wisdom of the world is stupidity when it tries to redeem men, when it tries to transform sinners. It can't do it. It can't do it.

And so "hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world." God just made it look foolish. Philosophy is so foolish and I'm not knocking ethics and I'm knocking kindness and love. I'm just saying none of these human philosophies no matter how good they appear on the surface ever get to the real issue. That's a man's eternal soul. So God in wisdom allowed learned men of the world to seek by their worldly wisdom the solution to man's misery. To seek by their worldly wisdom the solution to man's suffering. And they saw it and they had philosophies and more philosophies and more philosophies and you know what? They never ever came to uncover the secret.

They never really got to the end of all human wisdom. They were left without the one thing they needed most and that was the knowledge of God. They never knew God, because it was only in God that these things could be found. Peace, joy, forgiveness, freedom from guilt, meaning the life, eternal hope, and all of human philosophy never met God. That's what Paul says. It all just came out moronic. They thought the cross was stupid. It was their philosophy that was stupid.

So God moves in to do what human wisdom could never do and that takes us to the second point and we'll just look at the first verse of the second point. Paul says, God's wisdom is superior to men's because of its permanence and secondly its power. It is able to do what man's wisdom never did. Look at verse 21. "For since," the word is since. "For since in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Now notice it, he says, the world with all of its wisdom never knew God. It never reached the ultimate goal of man to know God. And so since man's wisdom couldn't do it, God did it through the cross. The world of men with all their wisdom. Just think of it, we have had philosophers and sages for ages. What do they know and what have they offered? Wars increase, crime increases, injustice increases, hate, cruelty, problems, mental breakdowns, drugs, alcohol, problems, problems,

problems, problems, never ever change.

We haven't solved any problems, not with human philosophy. Because men cannot obtain salvation, they cannot have a transformed nature. They cannot know God by their own wisdom. And even religion doesn't make it. All the philosophy of the world comes up bankrupt. Now God says, it shall please me to do with something as basic and silly, stupid, and moronic in their sight as the death on the cross to accomplish what they couldn't accomplish with the complexities of their philosophies throughout the ages. Is that beautiful?

Simple. Chapter 3, verse 18 says the same thing. "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seems to be wise in this age," you think you really got your philosophy, "let him become a fool that he may be wise." You better come down to the level of the cross. You better really come off your high horse that you may truly be wise. "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." He takes the wise and their own craftiness. The next verse says, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, they are vanity."

Now you'll notice this interesting phrase at the beginning of verse 21. What does it say? "Since in the wisdom of God, the world," in other words, that this is the wise plan of God that He allowed the world to go on in its own wisdom. In the wisdom of God He permitted the world to follow its own path. Man exists surrounded by the wisdom of God. And in the midst of the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom what, knew not God. Here we are surrounded by God's wisdom and ignorant of it. To me that's Romans 1. "That which may be known of God is in them." Right? And it's around them. The invisible things of God can be seen by the creation. But men did not like to retain God in their knowledge. They turned from God, turned His truth into a lie, worshiped the creature more than the creator, began to worship images. Here is man surrounded by the wisdom of God. Every time he looks at a mountain, every time he looks at his hand he sees the wisdom of God. The stars, at the intricacies of nature, he sees God's wisdom. And he applies his own wisdom, rejects God's wisdom and never knows God.

You think about it. The astronomer looks through his telescope and sees stars, but no God. The natural scientist studies his biology and botany and whatever else, and he comes up with evolution without a source. Religion creates a god who is no god and then bows to the no god. You know, it's like the Greeks just sum it up. The Greek philosophy was centered in one great city. What was that city? Athens. The pinnacle of Athens was Areopagus, the great Mars Hill.

Paul walks up to Mars Hill where all the Greek philosophers gathered and there was a great altar there. He walked up to it. This is what it said. "To the unknown god." Isn't that interesting? With everything that they knew, the one thing they didn't know was the one thing that was the most obvious, God. "In the midst of the wisdom of God," verse 21, "the world by its own wisdom did not know God." They applied the wrong thing. Instead of accepting revelation, they took their own

wisdom and they didn't know God. Human wisdom doesn't make it. Oh I love this part. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believed."

You see God really...God just...that to me is the greatest possible blow against all the complexity of human wisdom. God just did something so simple and by the very simplest thing that God did, He accomplished what all of the philosophers and wise men of the ages never could do. Now that puts it in perspective doesn't it? The wisest of the wise men are stupid compared to the simplest of the wise God. The foolishness of preaching, the stupidity of karigmatos.

Now notice the word preaching. That's a poor translation. It isn't the word ulongoisoto preach the gospel in the Greek. It is the word karusoto proclaim. It is the word karigmatos. It has nothing to do with the act of preaching. But it is the content of the message. The karigma, the message. The content. What it's saying is this, it pleased God by the stupidity of the gospel. The content of the cross to save them that believed. Preaching isn't the...it isn't the idea that preaching is foolish. Some preaching is foolish, I would agree with that, but that's not the point. The point here is the foolishness of the gospel itself. Something so silly, something so low, something so uncomplicated, something so distasteful to the Jews a stumbling block. It's foolish. But it was that foolish thing, that simple thing, Jesus dying on a cross. You don't have to be smart. You just have to do what? Does it say at the end of verse 21? To save them that are intellects? Is that what it says? To save them that have a PhD? To save them that are wise? "To save them that," what, "believe." That's...I'm so glad, aren't you?

Wouldn't it be awful if only smart people got saved? Boy, I don't know who'd be here on Sunday morning. I don't know where I'd be. And God didn't save us because we were so smart. He made it so simple it doesn't matter how smart we are. We just need to believe. No, faith appropriates what God has done. That's why you can have a prayer meeting here at Grace Church. You can have a guy who's a college professor, a guy who has a medical doctorate. A guy over here who works with his hands. Somebody over here who maybe is somewhat retarded mentally and they're all meeting together and sharing together in the same common life and praying together to the same God and experiencing the same fellowship and the same salvation, because it has nothing to do with intellect.

In fact, if you go down and you want to know the truth folks, the reason I said it wouldn't be too many of us here, you just need to look at verse 26. "You look around you brethren," looking at your calling, check the people sitting by you, "how that not many wise men, not many mighty and not many noble are called, but God has chosen the foolish things." That's us. Really. Have you ever said, oh if only so and so would be a Christian. Oh if we could only win so and so. There are not many wise, there are not many mighty and there are not many noble. Most of us are just plain old common folk. And you know what? God did that purposely to stand as rebuke for all time against human wisdom. God never needed it in the past. He doesn't need it now. All He needs is the cross and those that believe in the cross are saved, that's all it takes. That's the message of salvation. Let's pray.

Thank You Father for our fellowship this morning, for the message so clear to us. We thank You that our confidence is not in human philosophy but in Thee. We give You praise for that. And Lord if there are some here this morning who do not know Thee yet, who are still holding to human philosophy, oh God I pray that the Spirit of God would break the bondage of that philosophy and free their heart to seek Christ. Those of us who are Christians help us never to muddle the revelation of God by mixing with it the words of men and the wisdom of men. Keep us pure. Give You praise in Christ's name. Amen.

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