

I Corinthians 5 - The Message of the Cross

I Cor. 1:17-24; Acts 17:22-23; 30-31

It's amazing how smart we are and technologically advanced, and yet how dumb we can be at the same time.

--It's amazing that with all of our education and advancements and accumulated knowledge that we are really no better than we ever have been.

--All of our technology and education and we just finished the most deadly century in human history! — We are just as corrupt as we ever were.

All of our wisdom hasn't solved any of our real problems.

1. The church at Corinth was a mess because they were carnal-acting and they were thinking like lost people.

--They had a four-party system: V. 12 – this was just like the world they had been saved from.

--We have a basically a two-party system in our politics here in the U.S. with the independents being a much smaller third party.

--The Greeks of Paul's day had over 50 parties! But they weren't political parties (imperial Rome held no elections); they were parties on philosophies of life.

--More than 50 perspectives/ways of thinking about how to live and what to do and what life would be like after death.

--Many were based on their beliefs in certain gods; some were based on ways of thinking according to their favorite philosophers like Aristotle or Plato or Pythagoras.

2. Into this melee of competing thoughts, the Apostle Paul wades with a message from the only true God. Acts 17:22-23; 30-31

--This was his practice and pattern—he was dependent on no one and nothing - only the power of that message to reach people.

--It wouldn't have worked unless it really was the words of God Himself who created everything with a word and was now recreating human beings with the same word.

--God was bringing the final word to silence all these vain philosophies.

--The Corinthians had believed that word, but they fell back to what they knew and began dividing up the church into parties.

--Paul takes on their party system by effectively saying, "There is no division here; there aren't 4 or even 2 ways to come at this—there is only one message and philosophy: **Jesus the crucified Savior.**"

VV. 17-18

--Not sent to baptize? Isn't baptism important? Sure it is! But it's not of ultimate importance.

--For Paul, it was bringing the message of our crucified Savior and for them it was believing that message.

--We can baptize you every week and it will be no use to you until you believe. Acts 16:31

--Baptism declares to world that you have been saved but it doesn't save you.

3. Not in cleverness of speech because it would void the message?

Why is that?

This is what God thinks of human cleverness: VV.19-20

--A simple message with no additives because humans have nothing to add and God needs no help.

--Gather up the smartest people, the most articulate, the best thinkers and communicators, and I will show you a gathering of fools.

--**V. 21** – For all our knowledge and calculations and broadness of thinking, we cannot know the one thing that's most obvious!

--We cannot even guarantee what's going to happen tomorrow of if we will even be here to see it.

--Yet somehow, we know how everything works and what it all means and where we are headed?

The actions of Corinthians betrayed the type of wisdom they were falling back on:

James 3:14-15

--This is what we've got in today's society because this is where it comes from.

Human wisdom has been proven void.

--What has it ever added to make us better? Where is the end of our selfishness, evil, destruction of human life?

--It has only made us more efficient in destroying ourselves.

Human wisdom voids the truth: V. 17 if we add it to God's wisdom it cancels the effect of His wisdom.

--When we add our \$.02 it erases what God has declared.

--It is either our wisdom or its God's -- We've got to pick one because they are mutually exclusive.

--**Romans 1:19-20** – the wisdom of God is surrounding us—every time we look at a mountain or the stars or nature in complete balance, it shouts that there is a God.

--If we inject any of our futile thinking into it, we will completely miss the most obvious thing.

Romans 1:21

--The world has voided creation of its entire message by just simply adding its ideas as if they had value.

--When that happens, this is always the result: Romans 1:25

The truth of humanity is that we don't listen:

The truth was that there was a flood coming and the world was going to be destroyed but the world decided it wasn't going to be that way.

--When the flood came, the Bible says they were marrying and being given in marriage; i.e. they were doing normal life; planning for a future that didn't exist; making deals over things that would soon fail.

--What happened to all their ideas and philosophies of what the world was really about, what happened to their plans?

--It all seemed real until it wasn't.

V. 17 --Since God's message is completely wise lacking nothing; adding to it destroys it.

"We preach Jesus but it has to be done right" "We preach Jesus but the person who does has to have credentials" "We preach Jesus but the setting has to right" These are all effectively saying, "this is missing something."

It's not the preacher it's the message, its not platform, it's the message; it's not the setting, it's the message; It's not even the preaching, it's the message!