

- I. Unity over Leadership (1 Cor 1-4)
  - A. The Foolishness of the Gospel
1. The “stupidity” of preaching Jesus saves us (1:18-25)
  - a. Paul speaks of the gospel as the “word of the cross.”
  - b. Those who are being destroyed (apollumi).
  - c. Those being saved (sozo).
  - d. The gospel appears to those who do not believe it as stupid (moria, where we get moron).
  - e. The wisdom (sophia) of the cross is demonstrated in its power (dunamis).
  - f. That is, God used a tool of Roman oppression, that which shamed condemned criminals as tool to save everyone. It made no sense to people but it made all the sense in the world to God.
  - g. Jews and Greeks perceived the gospel in different ways because of their religious beliefs. The Jews were looking for the Messiah but Jesus did not look the part nor sound like a Messiah. Greeks pursued wisdom. Philosophers (Greek for lover of wisdom) pursued wisdom and had schools and followers. They were often funded by wealthy patrons because they enjoyed the ideas they brought. Greeks saw a man on a cross as nonsense. Either way, the cross, the means of our salvation was the power of God because it demonstrated victory through sacrifice to God.
  - h. This mode of thinking is completely antithetical to the kind that led to disunity in the church based on personalities. Humility undermines clique based behavior.
  - i. But the proclamation of the gospel (kerygma) is the mechanism that brings true wisdom. People who hope through wisdom to save themselves are will be sorely disappointed.
2. “No flesh can glory in his presence” (1:26-29)
  - a. Paul reminds them that they are the called because of the caller. They were not wise, powerful, or nobly born (eugenes = good genes).
  - b. God’s choice determines the identity of the church. We, in ourselves, have nothing to do but to thank God for his goodness in allowing us to be here.
  - c. God’s foolishness is wiser than our intellect, God’s weakness is more powerful than our strength. Whatever God has is always better. God picks the things and people despised by the world and set aside by the world so that he might lift them up and embarrass the world.
  - d. We need to be careful that we do not exalt what the world exalts because the world does not place God first. The world rejects God. Therefore, God wants no flesh to take credit in his presence. No one shares in what belongs to God. That’s why he picks what the world hates.
3. We are in Christ Jesus who makes all of what we need possible. He is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and our redemption. (1:30-31).