

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** Fools: Wise or Otherwise?

**SERMON REFERENCE:** 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #1031

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) 1 Corinthians 1:18-25
- b) When we live for the Lord Jesus and believe the Gospel, we will be looked upon as fools by this world.
  - i) Because of this, some have tried to tone down the Gospel.
    - (1) They don't want to seem foolish and have tried to accommodate the Gospel to this world.
- c) The Gospel starts at a different source, it follows a different course and it ends at a different conclusion.
  - i) So, we don't need to make it compatible with this world.
  - ii) We need to make up our minds that if we live for the Lord Jesus Christ, then we are going to be thought of as fools by the people of this world.
    - (1) What God calls wisdom, the world calls foolishness.
    - (2) What the world calls wisdom, God calls foolishness.
- d) The measuring rod and standard by which we can see whether a person is a fool (wise or otherwise) is to see what his reaction is to the Gospel.
  - i) If we believe the cross and accept the cross, then the world will call us fools.
  - ii) The measure of a fool is the cross.
- e) How will we be able to tell who is a fool and who is not?
  - i) 1 Corinthians 1:18
    - (1) The "preaching of the cross" in this verse literally means "the word of the cross."
      - (a) That is, what the cross says to us, not what we say about the cross.
  - ii) Today's message will focus on three things concerning the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the measurement of a person's foolishness or wisdom according to how he relates to the cross.

2) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE CROSS (1 CORINTHIANS 1:22-24)

- a) God has revealed Himself and shown Himself in many ways, but we will never know the heart and mind of God until we understand the cross.
  - i) God speaks through the cross.
- b) 1 Corinthians 1:22
  - i) The Apostle Paul is writing to the people at Corinth in this passage.
    - (1) There was a great contingent of Jews and Greeks who lived in Corinth.
    - (2) The Jews had a particular idea of what they thought God ought to be like and how the Messiah should reveal Himself, so they sought after a sign.
      - (a) The word "sign" means "a miracle of great power."
- c) The Lord Jesus rebuked the Jewish people for seeking a sign.
  - i) John 4:48
  - ii) Luke 11:29
    - (1) It is evil to ask God to prove Himself or to perform a miracle that we might understand Him or believe in Him.

- (2) Matthew 12:40
  - (a) The sign of Jonah is the resurrection.
- iii) Matthew 12:39
  - (1) Evil people seek after a sign.
- iv) Most of us, at one time or another, have asked God to prove Himself by doing some miracle.
  - (1) The Jews were looking for a God who would demonstrate Himself that way with power.
- d) Instead of seeking a sign or a miracle, the Greeks sought after wisdom.
  - i) They were looking for a Messiah who was a grand intellectual who would help them unravel all of the divine mysteries of life.
    - (1) The Jews said that if God speaks, He will speak through miracles.
    - (2) The Greeks said that if God speaks, He will speak through intellectualism and philosophy.
- e) 1 Corinthians 1:23
  - i) The word “stumbling block” here means “scandal.”
    - (1) It was scandalous to the Jews, who were looking for a mighty miracle working Messiah, that the Messiah being preached was one who died upon the cross.
  - ii) The Greeks thought it was ludicrous and foolish that God would die upon a cross.
    - (1) They found it absurd that God’s answer to this world was His Son dying upon the cross.
- f) 1 Corinthians 1:24
  - i) “Them which are called” means “called by God” and “called out of this world.”
  - ii) Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God.
    - (1) The Jews wanted power, and the Greeks wanted wisdom.
- g) The cross is the power of God.
  - i) The greatest demonstration of power is not when God created the universe, but it is the salvation of the soul.
    - (1) The greatest power on Earth is the power that can save a soul.
  - ii) Romans 1:16
  - iii) God created the worlds with a word; he just spoke.
    - (1) But in order to save a soul, He had to hang His Son upon a cross.
- h) The cross is the wisdom of God.
  - i) Through the cross, we know the heart of God and the mind of God.
    - (1) Through the cross, God is revealed.
  - ii) We never have to doubt the love of God or the mind of God when we see the cross.
  - iii) 1 Corinthians 1:21
    - (1) The intellectual elites do not have a head start.
      - (a) The world by wisdom knows not God.
      - (2) In the wisdom of God, a little child can know Him.

- (a) This is a wisdom that anyone can know.
  - i) We will never understand the heart, the mind, the power or the wisdom of God until we understand the cross.
    - i) 1 Corinthians 1:23-24
- 3) GOD SAVES THROUGH THE CROSS (1CORINTHIANS 1:18)
- a) 1 Corinthians 1:18
  - b) The world does not like the idea of salvation through the cross.
    - i) The world doesn't mind our music.
    - ii) The world doesn't mind our good works.
    - iii) The world doesn't mind platitudes and moral living.
    - iv) But the world resents the Gospel of the cross.
  - c) 1 Corinthians 1:21-23
    - i) It is still the same way today.
  - d) The world laughs at the idea of salvation by the blood.
  - e) The world is incensed by the idea of the Gospel by no other name.
    - i) But Jesus Christ crucified is the only way to Heaven.
      - (1) There is no other way.
      - (2) God is powerless to save apart from the cross.
      - (3) If you are not saved by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus, then you will not be saved.
      - (4) Hebrews 9:22
    - ii) Many liberal preachers today have stopped preaching on the blood.
      - (1) But there is power in the precious blood of the Lamb.
- 4) GOD SANCTIFIES BY THE CROSS (1 CORINTHIANS 1:18)
- a) 1 Corinthians 1:18
    - i) "Which are saved" literally means "which are being saved."
      - (1) Not only have we been saved, but we are being saved.
  - b) Salvation is in three tenses:
    - i) We have been saved.
      - (1) We've been saved from the penalty of sin.
        - (a) Those who are saved are not going to Hell.
        - (b) Between some people and Hell, there is only a heartbeat.
        - (c) Between the Christian and Hell, there is a cross with Jesus on it.
    - ii) We are being saved.
      - (1) We are being saved from the power of sin.
        - (a) He saves us daily from the power of sin.
      - (2) The fact that we are being saved doesn't mean that there is any chance that we could ever be lost again.
    - iii) We shall be saved.
      - (1) We shall be saved from the presence of sin.
        - (a) When the rapture comes, we'll be caught up to meet our Lord in the air.

- (b) There will be no sin in Heaven.
- c) As believers in Christ, we are being saved right now.
  - i) What we're experiencing right now is not all the "saved" that we're going to be.
    - (1) We have not yet arrived.
  - ii) Each of us need to be "being" saved day by day.
    - (1) We need to be saved from self.
    - (2) We need to be saved from sin.
    - (3) We need to be saved from Satan.
  - iii) The Bible says that God is not finished with us.
    - (1) God is in the process of moving us to where we need to be.
      - (a) And He does that through the cross.
- d) Sanctification is the process by which God makes us more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - i) When we got saved, we weren't automatically made holy and perfect.
- e) 1 Corinthians 1:18
  - i) This verse speaks of those who are perishing, and it literally says, "to those who are in the process of perishing."
    - (1) An unsaved person is in the process of being lost.
      - (a) A lost person may think that being lost isn't so bad, but the devil is not finished with them yet.
      - (b) James 1:15
- f) Salvation is a crisis (we've been saved), and it is followed by a process (sanctification).
  - i) The cross is God's way of salvation.
  - ii) The word of the cross is God's way also of sanctification.
- g) Many Christians understand that being saved is a miracle, but they have the idea that the Christian life is something that they have to do.
  - i) We will never have victory in the Christian life until we understand that the Christian life is also a miracle.
  - ii) The Christian life is not hard; it is impossible.
    - (1) It commences with a miracle, which is the new birth.
    - (2) It concludes with a miracle, which is the resurrection.
    - (3) It continues with a miracle.
  - iii) When God saved us, He did not abandon us.
- h) How does God sanctify us? How does the cross make us more like the Lord Jesus?
  - i) Jesus said, "Take up your cross, and follow me."
    - (1) Mark 10:21
    - (2) A cross is not for carrying; a cross is for dying upon.
      - (a) This is why it seems so foolish to the world.
        - (i) The world doesn't want to talk about dying but living.
    - (3) Taking up your cross is voluntary.
      - (a) Jesus volunteered to die.

- (i) John 10:18
- (ii) Jesus willingly, voluntarily took up His cross.
- (b) We must willingly, voluntarily take up our cross.
- (4) We have misconceptions about what our cross is.
  - (a) Your cross is not a nagging spouse or an illness.
  - (b) Your cross is not something that happens to you or some circumstance that you wish you didn't have.
  - (c) Your cross is something that you willingly, knowingly, deliberately and voluntarily take up.
- (5) When we take up our cross, it is not something that we carry.
- ii) We are sanctified by the principle of the cross.
  - (1) We need to come to the cross for pardon.
  - (2) We need to get on the cross for power.
- iii) There is only one life that has power, and it is the crucified life.
  - (1) Jesus came that we might have abundant life.
    - (a) John 10:10
    - (2) The cross is the way to life.
      - (a) The cross was the way to Easter and the resurrection.
    - (3) Mark 8:35
      - (a) The Lord Jesus willingly died for us.
      - (b) We should willingly die to self, sin and Satan.
  - iv) The principle of the cross is simply saying "no" to self and letting that old self die with Christ and saying "yes" to Jesus Christ.
    - (1) Galatians 2:20
- i) Oftentimes in our Christian lives, we try to serve God.
  - i) To try to serve God is like being in quicksand.
    - (1) The more we struggle, the more we sink.
    - (2) We try to do better, and we fail.
  - ii) It's time that we stop trying and start trusting.
    - (1) Romans 6:11
      - (a) As we trusted God to save us, now we need to trust Him to make us what He wants us to be.
  - iii) Galatians 3:3
    - (1) We are saved by the Lord and His death on the cross.
      - (a) There isn't anything we can do to save ourselves.
    - (2) But we then think that the flesh is going to somehow make us mature.
      - (a) We think that we're saved in the Spirit but that we're going to be made perfect by the flesh.
        - (i) We need to remember that Jesus is the one who saves us, and He's the one who sanctifies us.
  - iv) Colossians 2:6
    - (1) We receive Him by faith.
    - (2) We walk by faith.
      - (a) Quit trying and start trusting.

- v) We should stop trying to make ourselves acceptable to God because we're already accepted by God through the cross of the Lord Jesus.
- vi) We need to rest in His love and let the power of the cross sanctify us.
  - (1) The same Jesus who died to save us and gave Himself for us is the one who rose to give Himself to us and will live in us and through us if we will let Him.

5) CONCLUSION

- a) Hebrews 9:22
- b) You will never know the step of sanctification if you have never known the step of salvation.
  - i) You can be saved today.
- c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16