



divided

OPENING UP



What is the best piece of wisdom someone has shared with you, that you've heard, or that you've read?

TEXT



The Message of Fools | 1 Corinthians 1:17b-25

^{17b} and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

¹⁸ For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach^[a] to save those who believe. ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

Big Idea: God's wisdom and power are in the message of Christ crucified.

Key Question: Where are you finding “wisdom?”

1. Confess our “wise” foolishness of the world. (vv. 17-20)
2. Profess the “foolish” wisdom of the cross. (vv. 21-25)

DISCUSSION



- This week's passage addresses the difference between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world. What sources of worldly wisdom influence you most, whether or not you seek them out? What "wisdom" have you put your trust in that has let you down?
- In 1 Corinthians 1:18 Paul says, "the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to those being saved it is the power of God." In other words, the picture of a "Savior" being killed seems foolish, like a failure, but for those who understand the whole gospel, they know it was a necessary part of God's plan. Share a time in your life when God's way seemed crazy (or foolish) but turned out to be perfect.
- In 1 Corinthians 1:21-25, Paul talks about how "foolish" the cross seemed, but how it ultimately led to our saving grace through faith. By professing the cross, we embrace the wisdom of God. What are the promises of God you are currently believing? If you are struggling to trust the promises of God, why is that?
- The wisdom and power displayed through the gospel can lead us to confidence in the plan of God. In what areas do you need strength to trust and obey the plan of God for your life? Take time to pray for each person as they share.

LIFE CHALLENGE



The world offers a lot of wisdom and advice that ultimately leaves us dissatisfied and doesn't get us very far; it is foolishness. Yet it's easy to get caught up in the "wisdom" of the world. Take some time to reflect and confess how you've been a "wise" fool.

The only thing that will truly satisfy our souls and lead to life is embracing the "foolish" wisdom of the cross of Christ. Think about someone in your life who has been struggling as they try to move through life with the world's idea of wisdom. Discuss ways that you might gently and graciously point them to God's wisdom in every day conversation. Pray for opportunities to share about God's wisdom in the cross of Christ.

CLOSING PRAYER



Father God, thank you that your ways are so far beyond my own that even your foolishness is better than my wisdom. Thank you for the cross and for turning things upside down for us. God, I confess that I have embraced the world's wisdom in my life in different ways. Please help me to not get caught up in the wisdom of this world, but to trust in your ways, your promises, and your provisions. True wisdom comes only from you. Amen!