

1 Corinthians Class Schedule

1/10/2016	1:1-9	Salutations to the Church
1/17/2016	1:10-17	Divisions in the Church
1/24/2016	1:18-25	The Message of the Cross
1/31/2016	1:26-31	Consider your Calling
2/7/2016	2:1-5	Proclaiming Christ Crucified
2/14/2016	2:6-13	The Wisdom of God
2/21/2016	2:14-16 to 3:1-4	The Three Types of Men in Scripture
2/28/2016	3:5-15	The role of God's servant

1

Outline*

- A. The Problem of Divisions Stated 1:10-12
 B. Paul's teaching on Unity 1:13-4:21
1. Unity is Achieved by Considering the Person and Work of Christ
1:13-17
 2. Unity Is Achieved by Considering the True Nature of the Gospel
(i.e. Word of the Cross) 1:18-25
 3. Unity Is Achieved by Viewing the Membership of the Church
1:26-31
 4. Unity Is Achieved by Considering the Nature of True Wisdom
2:1-3:4
 5. Unity Is Achieved by Considering the Nature of Christian Service
3:5-4:21

* adapted from McCalley 2

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

¹⁸ For the word of the cross is **foolishness** 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 CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."

²⁰ Where is the wise man? 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 through its **wisdom** did not *come to know* God, God was well-pleased through the **foolishness** of the message preached to save those who believe.

²² For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for **wisdom**;

²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles **foolishness**,

²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the **wisdom** of God.

²⁵ Because the **foolishness** of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

3

Overview*

Unity Is Achieved by Considering the True Nature of the Gospel (i.e. Word of the Cross)

- a. The Two Evaluations of the Cross 1:18
1. How the Perishing Evaluate the Cross 1:18a
 2. How the Saved Evaluate the Cross 1:18b
- b. The Two Evaluations Analyzed 1:19-25
1. The Perishing Evaluation Explained 1:19-22
 2. The Saved Evaluation Explained 1:23-25

* adapted from McCalley 4

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

What is "the word of the cross"?

word – logos - the expression of thought, in this case lit: **a message or doctrine**; also used as a title of the Son of God - see Acts 13:26; Acts 14:3; Acts 15:7

What would be the important aspects of this message?

1. Jesus Christ, the son of God died
2. His death satisfied a Holy God about man's sin, giving eternal life to all those who believe in Him.
3. His death also separated all who believe in Him from the source of their sin (their sin nature) making it possible (as they walk by faith) to live for God (i.e. in fellowship with Him).

5

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

foolishness – mōria - folly, foolishness, absurdity from the English word "moron"
see 1 Cor. 1:21, 23; 2:14; 3:19

perishing - those who perish (who are perishing) means those who are exposed to eternal death
see 2 Cor. 2:15; 2 Cor. 4:3 Vine

note: "the perishing" are in this state continually much like the statement when Christ said "and allow the dead to bury their own dead" Matt 8:22

This describes the continual state of the unbeliever!

6

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

note: "are being saved" is in the passive voice and present tense

This tells us that salvation is a continual process

- We have been saved – past
- We are being saved – present
- We shall be saved - future

It is the power of God that is accomplishing this!

7

¹⁹ For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."

next we will see God's evaluation and judgment of "the perishing" and their wisdom in verses 19 to 22

God's judgment is as following:

- I will destroy the wisdom of the wise
- I will set aside the cleverness of the clever

verse 19 is a quote from Isa 29:14

destroy – the idea is not extinction but ruin, loss, not of being, but of well-being. This is clear from its use, see Luke 5:37, Luke 15:4,6,24

8

¹⁹ For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."

cleverness - the word denotes the ability to understand concepts and see relationships between them see Luke 2:47

set aside - to set aside, make void, nullify, disannul – lit: bring to nothing - see Luke 7:30

Paul quotes from Isaiah 29:14. This passage in Isaiah deals with what may be called judicial blindness. It centers about the fact that there are consequences for coming into contact with truth and rejecting it. – McCalley

9

²⁰ Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

Paul's rhetorical questions

Where is the wise man - this would be a reference to the Greek philosopher.

Where is the scribe – this points to the Jewish thinker.

Where is the debater of this age - combines the Jewish and Greek logicians (Acts 6:9, Acts 17:18)

God's judgment on human wisdom

Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world

Subject = God

Verb = made foolish (aorist, indicative, active)

Direct Object = the wisdom of the world

10

²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

Paul now explains God's action

For since in accordance with the wisdom of God the world had never in reality, by means of its wisdom, come to know God (Williams NT)

Isaiah 55:8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. ⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.

11

²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to know* God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

What is the message being preached?

The message preached is - but we preach Christ crucified!

God has judged human wisdom because of its failure to achieve the highest good - to know God. As a consequence, God saves men by a message that insults human wisdom and pride. It will hear nothing of man's logic and will have nothing of his works.

McCalley

12

²² For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;

For indeed Jews ask for signs

•these signs are literally attesting miracles
see Mark 8:11-12, John 2:18

Greeks search for wisdom

•wisdom is the Greek word sophia

...the learning and philosophy current among the Greeks and Romans in the apostolic age intended to draw away the minds of men from divine truth, and which stood in contrast with the simplicity of the gospel
- Zohiatis

13

²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness

- the saved evaluation (of the cross) explained v23-25

Subj = we – Paul & the others – an emphatic statement

Verb = preach – to proclaim an objective message in the present tense

Direct Object = Christ

Modifier = crucified – in the perfect tense

having been crucified in the past with results into the present and on into future - this speaks of the completeness of Christ's crucifixion

see 1 Cor 2:2, Gal 3:1

But as for us, we are proclaiming a Christ, one who has been crucified; (Wuest)

14

²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness

•**to Jews a stumbling block** - A crucified Messiah was a stumbling block to the Jews because they regarded Messiah as the Person on whom God's blessing rested to the greatest degree (Isa. 11:2). However, Jesus' executioners hung Him on a tree, the sure proof that God had cursed Him (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13). - Constable

•**to Gentiles foolishness** - to others it is *foolish*, revealing the two enemies of the cross: religious pride and intellectual pride. - McCalley

15

²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God

- now we have God's evaluation of the saved

but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks

every believer is called – see 1 Cor 1:2, Rom 8:28-30, 1 Thes 5:24

• **Christ the power of God** - this is similar to a statement that has been made in v:18, also see Rom 1:16

• **Christ the wisdom of God** - He is the instrument of God's wisdom in solving the problem human reasoning could not unravel, namely how people can know God and come to God. - Constable

16

²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men

Can God be foolish in His essence?

We could translate "the foolish act of God" (as man views it)*

and the weakness of God is stronger than men

Also we could translate "the weak act of God" (as man views it)*

Nothing of human accomplishment even begins to rival the power of the cross to save men.*

* McCalley

17