

# The Word of the Cross

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**Bible Text:** 1 Corinthians 1:18-25  
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Well, let's go to 1 Corinthians this morning. To be honest, 1 Timothy is not out of the oven yet. I left our conference and went and helped with the conference in Olive Branch, Mississippi, sort of a suburb of Memphis there and, um, just didn't get it done, but when I do get to it, hopefully next Sunday morning, then we're gonna talk about worthy widows and worrisome widows because that's what the text talks about.

1 Corinthians 1:18-25. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 Paul writes to the church at Corinth and says,

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, Greeks they search for wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are the 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.

The phrase Paul uses here in writing to the Corinthians is "the word of the cross." The word of the cross, the preaching of Christ, including our faith, our confident reliance on Jesus and what he accomplished for us through his death, burial and resurrection. This word.

Now we know that all those who hear the Gospel are really all of those who exist on earth, I should expand it out to those, to everyone rather. All of those exist in two categories: there are those who are in the status of perishing and continue in perishing; there are those who are in the status of being saved and are continuing being saved. Ah, just as a side note, don't want to get too far off on this but the song we just sang, by the way, ah, those, those songs were rich Gospel songs, just blessed me. Ah, "My Savior will

defend me," was the line in the song and, um, what an assurance that should give us. Now listen to me, that includes Jesus defending us against the justice of God and he can defend us because he achieved justice for us by dying on the cross. That also includes Jesus defending you against your own conscience that would condemn you, because outside of the omniscient Holy Spirit you and your conscience know your wickedness and your sins more than anyone else, but even though your conscience is not somehow, sometimes convinced, Christ will defend you even against yourself and your own self-condemnation. Hallelujah, what a Savior. What a Savior. Well, now back to my sermon. That was a mini-sermon on the side.

There are those who are of the perishing and continue to be perishing. There are those who are of the saved and continue to be saved. We see it very clearly in the text here. He says in verse 18, "For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing, or foolishness rather to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." The word "perishing" there means "in the state of lostness and in the process of perishing." They're already there. They're not waiting to be there. The first time you hear the name Jesus and reject him, you didn't become condemned, you already were condemned. The first moment you heard the Gospel and pushed it away, you were not judged because of that, you were already judged. You were of the perishing already. Ah, the Bible says in John 3:18, those who have not believed are condemned already. That's the state of every man. That's because of inherited depravity. That's the old Bible Baptist doctrine our forefathers have held to from the very beginning, that we cannot save ourselves. We come into life as woefully fallen human beings, of the perishing, of the lost. A. T. Robertson, the Baptist Greek scholar, says it means those who are in the path to destruction. This is the group that is blinded to the truth. Remember as Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3 unless something miraculous happens to you from an agent outside of yourselves, you cannot see the kingdom of God and you cannot enter the kingdom of God. Unless you're born from above, Jesus told him, unless something acts on you to enable you, you can't see it and you can't enter it. You're of the condemned. You're of the perishing and you continue to perish.

And to those as the text says here in verse 18, the preaching of the cross is to them foolishness. The word "foolishness" here is the word we get the English word "moronic" from. A moron. Mentally deficient is the idea. To the person who's embraced the world and the world's philosophy and the world's values, ah, this is all there is. If we listen to Bernie Sanders today, he would say the end-all of end-all is material things and we've got to redistribute material stuff so that everybody's more equal except for those at the top which he'd be at the top, they get a whole lot of stuff because they're elitist. If you buy into those philosophies and the many other philosophies of the world, then when you consider Christ and the cross as the center of God's purposes and God's wisdom, God's power and God's wisdom, then you think, "Well, that's foolish. That's not helpful. That's okay, keep your religion but go over there in the corner. That's not really valid for everyday living," they would say. It's foolish, it's moronic to them. Go to the university where the majority of the professors are among the perishing. Go to the astrologist. Go to the biologist. Go to the psychologist or the sociologist in the university, or just pick your discipline, stand up in his or her class and say, "Jesus Christ's death on the cross, burial

and resurrection is the wisdom and the power of God and everything else is foolishness compared to that," know what they're gonna look at you and say? "No," they're gonna say, "No, you're foolish for believing that."

Now we've got some college professors in our church who are not of the perishing so let me say to you this morning, God bless you. I appreciate you and we need to pray more for you. We've got school teachers in this church who are not of the perishing and God bless you. Want you, want you to know your pastor appreciates you and stands with you and keep breaking the rules. Keep passing out Bibles when you find out a kid in your class believes he got saved. I remember Miss Juanita Wheeler, she used to do that all the time. She wasn't really supposed to but she'd hear about some young person that, ah, believed they came to faith in Christ and she'd give them a Bible or something to help them at school the next... Thank God for teachers like that, amen? Thank God they're not all of the perishing.

Some of them have the wisdom of God but that's the general consensus. It's just, ah, not even considered and, boy, doesn't it make you want to get out your seven millimeter pistol and shoot it right through the television when one of these radical, liberal, socialist liberals, progressives, call them what you want and they take some verse of Scripture and rape the context to support their man-centered wisdom they're trying to flaunt and, and put out on the rest of us? Well, to them the word of the cross is just foolishness.

The word of the cross, you see, begins declaring the total depravity of man and no man is going to naturally humble himself and embrace that truth. When you begin there and say your problem is so thorough, your, your problem reaches to the core of your being, you're so polluted and corrupted by sin that in the womb of your mother you stood as the enemy of God and you need a divine miraculous salvation, when you begin that way which is where the Gospel has to begin, by the way, with the sin and fallenness of man, when you begin there, the world and its wisdom is gonna say that's foolishness, that's not helpful, that will not get you ahead.

This word of the cross, this Gospel, it humbles men. It cuts the taproot of man-centered wisdom. It severs the Achilles heel of man-centered learning. It starts with fallen and totally, and men rather fallen and totally unable to get up unless God lifts them up. Man is in and of himself totally incapable of reaching to God, much less getting to God. That's the Gospel and that's why the world calls it foolishness.

Now we're not saying there's no learning in the world that's not helpful. I'm glad that the advances in technology have given us a better cup of coffee. I'm glad the advances in medical science have healed so many diseases and these are the common grace gifts of God and on and on we could go, but as far as being sufficient to give man's life meaning and true purpose, all of man's wisdom is foolishness and God's wisdom is true wisdom. So among the perishing, among those who are lost, among those who have, or, or those who have received Christ as Lord and Savior, the word of the cross is foolishness. It's, it's, it's divisive.

Um, there are those who would teach that, ah, if we just love Jesus right and minister right through and out of our churches, we can bring harmony and unison in the world. Where did you get that? What book are you reading? There's only gonna be unison and peace and harmony in the world when the King of kings returns and everyone opposed to him is banished. By the way, I believe in absolute totalitarian, ah, regime if Jesus Christ is leading it.

No, he's the great divider. The word of the cross is divisive. There are those who are perishing, who are against it, and those who are saved and are being saved who are for it. Now it doesn't mean that, um, somehow we're supposed to be difficult. In every way we can, we want to get along with the world. In every way we can, we want to serve. In every way we can, we want to show compassion. In every way we can, we stand for justice and truth. But we cannot neglect to say the centerpiece of what we are about is love for and faith in Jesus Christ who died for our sins, was buried and rose again, and our whole devotion is to him.

Well, that's the ones who are being saved, those in the state of salvation and continue to be saved. To us, the word of the cross is the power of God. It's the consummation of God's power and it gives a vivid demonstration of God's power. Of all the gloriously powerful things God has done, is doing, or will do, nothing surpasses the power of God displayed in Jesus Christ redeeming his church. The word of the cross is the power of God. There's nothing more powerful than that.

When Jesus Christ died for his children, he died that he might render for them pardon and forgiveness. The problem with a lot of people is they don't know the God of the Bible, they know the God that's been made up in their minds by somebody who professed to be a Christian preacher perhaps, but they haven't begin to grasp the Triune holiness of this glorious infinite God of Scripture and when you grasp – listen to me – when you grasp that Christ on his own procured what was necessary to appease and satisfy the wrath of God against us and now we have forgiveness, that is power. That's power. And for us you can talk about all the nuclear programs and the, the armaments of all the world and all the powerful things that are out there, but to us the most powerful thing is this God through his Son forgives me. And on and on we could go, the power of having fellowship with God. What a power it is that we fallen sinners who ought to be judged forever can now run to God and cry Abba Father and no matter the performance in our lives, he stands with grace to say, "Welcome back, My child. Welcome back." The power to establish the relationship with God between sinful man and a holy God is amazing. It's the power of God, the power of God that brings us the peace of God and peace with God.

Everything in God as far as his righteous judgment is concerned should be facing us like a ferocious lion but all the ferocity of his great vengeance and wrath for our sins fell on his Son in our place so now there is – listen to me – sweet peace between sinners and a holy God for us, those who are saved and are being saved, and does it not increase as your knowledge of truth increases? The power in this, the glory in this, the wonder in this is just bigger and bigger and bigger to us.

The word of the cross to those who are saved and are being saved is powerful. It's God's power. Omnipotent power is opened to us through the cross. We have found omnipotence in the message that they find impotent. They find it weak. Matter of fact, 1 Corinthians, um, chapter 4, verse 20, um, Paul states it this way, "For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power." Now to the Corinthians of the day, they were enamored with rhetoric, they were enamored with philosophers who could turn a phrase and give a, a rousing and interesting and, and motivating speech. Paul many times said, "I didn't come with eloquence of speech. I didn't put on all of that stuff." The power of the Gospel is seen in all of you who used to love the world and now are learning to love God; all of you who used to treasure the notion of get all you can, can all you get, sit on the lid and poison the rest now reject that philosophy. All of you begin to love God and joy in God and enjoy the things of God and enjoy one another. You are the demonstration God's power's done something. By the way, this is an experiential religion. Our religion is not about collecting some thoughts or some facts in our heads. Yes, the truth must come through the mind but the truth comes from the mind and empowered by the Spirit changes the core being, the heart. That's the power of God.

Well, II., the word of the cross is divisive. It divides the entire world between those who are perishing and think it's foolishness, and those who are saved and being saved that thinks it's the power of God and the wisdom of God. Number 2, the word of the cross is destructive. It's destructive in this sense: it destroys the so-called wisdom of the world. It obliterates it. It annihilates it and that's the point he wants to make.

Now in verse 19, we actually have a quote of Isaiah 29:14, "For I will destroy the wisdom of the wise," notice that, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside." Isaiah 29:14 was in context of Israel backsliding and Israel reverting back to man's wisdom and made an alliance with Egypt to protect them against mighty Assyria who was threatening them as their enemy, and so God was saying, "What foolishness have you to do what natural men would do. To help yourselves, you make an alliance with a pagan, with wickedness." And brothers and sisters, is it any different in our day when you compromise in sin to get a better position at work? You're making an alliance with wickedness to get ahead when God may have put you in a higher position if you just trusted him. Is it any different for us today when we as local churches begin to capitulate and pander to the world and try to fit into the culture so we can be more effective as a church? It's as if God says, "When did you need the wisdom of the world to get ahead? What's wrong with My wisdom and My power?" So Israel was looking to Egypt instead of looking to God to protect her against her enemies and God says, "You don't understand something, that kind of wisdom's the kind of wisdom I'm in the business of destroying."

Are you listening to me, brothers and sisters in Christ? If that is true, and of course it is, then God is right now presently in the business of destroying many of his professing churches because so many of them have almost given themselves wholly over to worldly means to do God's work.

So God prophesied that he would reveal true wisdom and that true wisdom when revealed was the cross, here called the word of the cross, and when he revealed it, it would consequently expose man's supposed wisdom to be the fraud that it is. Everything that's not centered in Christ and his cross that claims to be true wisdom is a fraud. It's now been exposed. The word of the cross, that is God's wisdom, has exposed man's wisdom as completely useless. The unveiling of the word of the cross and consequent, consequently the intelligentsia's rejection of it exposed the ignorance of the so-called learned.

Now in verse 20 he says, "So where is the wise man?" Who's wise now? Where is the wise man and that would refer in this context to the Greek philosophers of the day. So many of them came out of that background and perhaps as immature Christians or young Christians, they still were somewhat enamored with their great Greek philosophers. It's as if God says, "Line them up here and let's see how they do against My wisdom."

"Where is your wise man? Where is your scribe," he says there in verse, um, is it verse 20? Yes, "Where is the scribe?" That'd be the Jewish religious scholar, that one that had the charge of transcribing the Scriptures and expositing the Scriptures for the people, but unfortunately they brought man's wisdom into it and made Judaism into a simplistic works religion centered in man's ability and not trusting in God's provision of a Savior. They left God's wisdom out and just clung to man's wisdom. They just cloaked man's wisdom in religion. Can I say that again? Men, heads of households, be wise when you begin to see really what's actually man's wisdom but they've doctored it up with the camouflage of sound doctrine or religion.

Then he says, "Where is the debater of the age?" And that include either the scribe or the wise man. His point is that God is challenging them. God is saying, "I, I, line them up here and let's prove what their wisdom is compared to My wisdom, that is, the word of the cross." Here's his point: as any of all of these religious teachers, has any of all these great Greek philosophers, all the wisdom of all the world out there, has any of that gotten any man to God? God says, "Come on, tell Me. Have any of you found the true wisdom, have any of you found the truth? Have any of you found the final axiom of the universe, God, through your channel of religion or man's wisdom or the philosophies of the day?" Well, the point is anybody who's ever read that and was honest has the same response you're having, silence. No, they haven't. Which wise man, which religious leader has self-discovered the way to righteousness and peace and holiness before a holy God? None of them have.

So where are they? Where are they in their pride and in their confidence? Where are they? They're frauds. Again, they may help us with some good technological advances. Thank God for those gifts, but they cannot get us to God. They cannot provide us forgiveness.

So he has exposed and indeed destroyed, that's his word, destroyed, the word of the cross is destructive is my point here, exposed and destroyed man's wisdom as foolishness. The word "foolishness" here is the word that's used for salt that's lost its savor. Have you ever noticed that salt even when the price goes up still doesn't cost much? It just don't cost

much so how worthless is salt once it's wet and don't have any bite left? God says that's what I've shown man's wisdom when he esteems it, "Hey, I know the way to life. I know the purpose of life. I know what it's all about," and they leave out Jesus Christ and his cross it's like salt that's wet and old and useless. To us, that's foolishness, their wisdom.

Then he says something real interesting here, we have to humble ourselves again with joy under the sovereignty of God. Verse 21, "For since in the wisdom of God." In other words, God's saying, "I planned it to work out this way." "The world through its," we could say so-called "wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." God says, "I intended it all to be this way. I had it planned out that the world through its own wisdom, through its own capacities to discover and reason and figure and solve problems, would never come to know God." Luke 10:21, Jesus cast his eyes toward heaven and he says, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight." You intended it to be that way.

So when we marvel over the engineers and the brilliance behind Apple computers, and they are brilliant and we ought to esteem it such, for mankind they are, but as compared to the wisdom of God revealed through the cross, they're nothing. They're nothing and God meant for it to unfold that way. God meant for those who thought they were wise and intelligent to be eventually shown as frauds and false, and God meant for those who would believe a message and embrace it as their all-in-all, that the world would say is foolish, would be proven to be ultimately wise and right. So God has put to shame all human wisdom by making the message that the worldly wise would reject as absurd, the true wisdom of God.

Now we go to verse 22, sort of an extension of verse 21, "For indeed Jews ask for signs and the Greeks search for wisdom." The Jews as they're foolishly putting forth their falseness, their fraud, they're always talking about, "Give us a sign. Give us a sign. Give us a sign." Jesus condemned them and said, "An adulterous generation looks for a sign. No sign will be given you but the sign of Jonah the prophet." I think he was referring to the fact that Jonah was in the belly of the whale then came back forth from the dead three days later. Jesus was gonna die and go into the grave and come back three days later. He said, "That's the sign you're gonna get but this is the real thing, that this is the wisdom of God and the power of God. That's the sign you're gonna get." They wanted other signs, not the sign God was intent to give them.

So the Greeks weren't asking for signs, they just keep asking for wisdom. They kept saying, "Give us something that makes sense to us." Listen child of God, listen child of God, listen child, the, the, the good preacher is not the one that can bend and twist, I call it pretzel theology. The good preacher is not the one that can take orthodox doctrine and twist it around like a pretzel so that the world might think there's some good in it. Did you just hear what I said? My job is not to help the world in their fallen foolish wisdom accept my Gospel. My job is to preach the Gospel, to preach and teach the word of God and trust the Spirit of God to blank out their foolishness and give them capacity to receive

and accept the truth of God as the true wisdom that it is. This requires a spiritual birthing in their hearts. They cannot naturally grasp it. The preacher that makes things acceptable to the natural man has lost the true Gospel. Are you hearing me, church?

That's why when we hear this stuff today about the church has to go out here and lock hands with the culture and solve all the "inequalities and the injustices" of the culture, I can't do that because we use a different dictionary. What they define as injustice my Bible doesn't define necessarily as injustice. What they define as equality my Bible doesn't define equality as maybe the final thing in some of those areas. So unless, if they will get converted, which they can't do, God's gotta do that, if they would get converted and have the capacity to accept the truth of the word of God, then we can hold hands with them but then they're a part of the church and no longer a part of the world.

Folks, our message and our Gospel will forever be offensive to the wisdom of the world. Now look, I always have to put things in balance. Don't go out there and try to cause trouble. Don't, don't go out there and be knuckle-head. Don't go out there and just try to prod people wrong and rub people wrong. No, as far as it is possible, the Bible says, be at peace with all men, but we cannot deny our Savior and the truths of Scripture. We can't do that. Trust me, you just be faithful to Christ, you'll stir up enough trouble just doing that.

Well, III., the word of the cross is dynamite. It is divisive, all men are either of the perishing and continue to perish, or of the saved and are continually being saved. It is destructive. Eventually as time unfolds and comes to the eternal state, all the wisdom of man will be destroyed, biblical word. And lastly, the word of the cross is dynamite. Look at verse 24, "but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks," I love that. No special ethnic nationality has any special inroad here. "But to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Dunamos is the word for power. You've heard it many times. It's the word we make our English word "dynamite" from. That's why I use it, it's the word you could translate it "dynamite" for today's common usage of the English language. It is true, it's dynamite to us.

These truths are powerful to us and it's powerful to whom? Well, the word Paul uses here to the Corinthians is "the called." Isn't that interesting? I've had people tell me, "Now pastor, when you deal with sovereign grace issues like God's predestination and God's election and, ah, God's special elect favor toward his children, etc., you don't want to do that to folks until they get mature in Christ." Well, you couldn't have a more immature church than Corinth and he says they're the called. In this context, this has to be referring not to the externally or universally called but to the effectually called, those to whom the Spirit didn't just work among but those to whom the Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel has actually regenerated and they've come to repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. The truly converted. This isn't those who just joined up with the church or those who are just going along with Christendom because it's a part of their culture. They're the called, the, the truly born again ones will begin to see this great power and this great wisdom that is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



Let me just give you a quick theological lesson on this. The general call would include the conscience, God speaks to men through their conscience, and by the way, are you listening to me? They didn't deserve that. Everybody says, "Well, is God fair?" Well, he gave everybody more than they could possibly deserve or earn. He gave them a conscience to bear witness in their hearts of what was right and wrong and men kept choosing wrong. He wrote the law of God in their hearts, the Bible says, so that that would work with the conscience to show men that there is a, an absolute Creator God who is the law-giver, who ordained from his very holy being what is absolutely right and absolutely wrong, and that bears witness within men. All men, all men who have ever lived have that witness from God. That's the general call.

And then creation itself. Men look at creation and they use their engineering or their mathematics and their physics and they figure out some of the structured and organized ways God put the universe together because if he had not done it in a structured and organized way, we couldn't have figured out anything. All of this proves there's a God.

He's used that, the witness of Scripture. How many of you have sat under even my preaching over and over and you're not yet converted? You've gotten far far more than you deserve.

And then as we studied at the conference, if you didn't hear my morning messages, you outta listen to them. One of the messages was about how you can be associated with the Spirit but not born of the Spirit. Another witness we don't deserve.

That would be all under the general call of God and all men are accountable to God to respond to that, but you know how many respond to that? Jesus with his arms outstretched saying, "Come one, come all"? No one comes. No one. No one comes. But in an anthropomorphic way of expressing it, as if God were human and thinking, the Bible does this sometimes so I'm gonna do it, it's as if the Father sits in heaven and says, "You mean you think I'm gonna let My Son expire on the cross and everybody reject Him? You mean My Son's gonna die like that and not receive the reward of His suffering? My Son's gonna die to bear, to have for Himself a bride and a church and they're all gonna turn their back? It shall not happen. So I will make sure there are some who are effectually called and they will receive Him." Now listen, and because of the work of the Spirit in the power of the Gospel in their hearts, of their own free choice they will choose Christ. Get all that I said. They will choose Christ, repent of their sins and hold onto him and those, those are the ones who say, "The cross of Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God and everything that thinks it can tell us what life is about and leaves that out is a fraud, is a lie, and is utter foolishness and as worthless as salt that's lost its savor."

We know, those of us who are the called, and I'm using the called, I could use those who've believed. That's not what the text uses on this occasion. It could, but he's got a reason for this. I think his reason is this, his reason is you've got a lot of you buddies there in Corinth, you've got a lot of folks in church with you there in Corinth that don't get it yet and would fight against what I'm saying and would push against it because

they're not the called. I think that's where he's going. That's just my sort of speculation about where Paul's coming from. Could be wrong. Don't think so. But we who know him, who have been called and come to faith and repentance, this Gospel has produced effects on us that only a divine, infinite, or you could say omnipotent power could have performed.

We are beginning to grasp that we stand righteous before a holy God without consequence of measuring our actual righteous behavior, but we should repent of that when we're unrighteous but that doesn't affect our standing, that's our sanctification, we stand righteous. Only the omnipotence of God could make you and I stand as righteous before God. We, we, we're grasping that effect that this has had on us. The holiness of God. I'm still learning. I'm still grasping and growing and there are times in my study when I contemplate the holiness of God and God is my witness before you this morning, I am ground to a speechless pile of mush. It's just too wonderful. It's just beyond us. Yet he – now listen – yet he now through his dynamite power – are you listening – he calls me his holy one. Phew. I'm a holy one.

Now you don't get that, you don't get the dynamite of that until you begin to understand what the Bible talks about, what his holiness means. "You mean me?" This is just a little bit too far but I'm gonna do it anyway. It's as if God the Father, when I say and I say, "You mean, God, me?" That's what the word "saint," the original Greek for "saint" is "holy, holy one." "You mean me? I'm your holy one?" And it's as if God the Father smiles at God the Son and God the Son smiles at God the Father and they give each other a high-five. "We did it. We did. Our power did that." We have experienced the effects of the dynamite of God that only godly dynamite could accomplish. Hebrews 2:11, "For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason," now drink this in, "He is not ashamed to call them brethren." The eternal, perfect, holy, righteous Son of God says, "Now you, I view you as My co-equal brother before our Father." Only the dynamite of God could get you there and get me there.

Child of God, when Satan whispers to you, "You're condemned. You're unclean. You're dirty." You are but Jesus has caused you to stand as one of his holy ones in spite of you. Are you hearing me this morning? In spite of you, Jesus can make you God's holy one. Doggone, that'll preach right there. Are you getting this? [unintelligible] a little bit longer this morning? Are you getting this? I want you to go home and eat your roast marveling over it. Righteous and holy one and he, sometimes there's some folks you are ashamed to call your brethren and Jesus looks at you, you worm, you wretch, you enemy of God, he looks at you and he's not ashamed to call you his brethren. Only the dynamite of God could do that. Don't you love Jesus? Don't you love the cross? Don't you love the preaching of the Gospel? I could do it all day. It produces effects that only divine power can accomplish and it, it imparts wisdom that only divinely powerful wisdom could give us.

Now I'm really trampled all over this, again, grasping that we're considered holy and grasping that we stand in righteousness, grasping that though we've sinned and struggled, that he will continue the progressive sanctification all the way home to glorification. Now

once again, I've told you this many times, church, why do you know for sure, for sure, for sure, for sure if you're one of God's redeemed you're gonna make it all the way home to glorification? Here's how you know, because God's not gonna let his Son Jesus be robbed of his bride. He's gonna make sure Jesus gets those he won. Your eternal salvation depends on God wanting God to be pleased, not you missing hell. Now that's wonderful and that's a part of God's motive but it's not God's highest motive. God's highest motive is Jesus will have his children for all eternity.

Verse 25, we're done, "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men," anthropomorphic expression because God can't be foolish but anyway, "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." He said if it were possible to take the tiniest tiniest tiniest weakest part of God's wisdom, it would be magnificently infinitely greater than man's wisdom. If, if it were possible that the tiniest tiniest tiniest, ah, ah, fragment of God's strength, it would still be mightier than any strength man ever had.

Some time ago I read about a Frenchman who had become a follower of Eastern mysticism and he was into to meditating. Remember that, guys, who are old like me that '60s, maybe '70s people began to meditate like the gurus? They'd go to a mountain somewhere in India and [chanting], whatever, and they just did strange stuff. This guy got in a, a, a posh hotel in the Dominican Republic before Easter and he decided he would let them nail him to a 7 ½ foot high cross. They gonna, they put, they did, the nailed the nails through his hands and nails through... You may have read about this years ago. Nails through his hands, nail through his feet, and he said, "I'm going to do this to contribute to the peace and salvation of the world." Very stupid.

Well, 2-3 hours passed and the agony was so great they had to lay it on, lay him down on the ground so no longer is he vertically, he's, he's, he's horizontally nailed to a cross. And then after a couple more hours, the doctor said he is going to actually die and they had to let him up. So he made it, I think, a few hours and last I checked, there's still a lot of unrest peace [unintelligible] in the world. That's just one of a billion illustrations of man in his wisdom is foolish.

I don't have time to go into this but I'll see you if you leave. You have to leave when I pray, that way I don't see you. Amen? I don't know where I was but I looked out the window and there was a dear man walking down the road, he had like a 10-15 foot cross on his shoulder and he was cheating because it had a wheel on the bottom of it. Jesus' cross didn't have a wheel on it. Now hear what I'm gonna say. I'm not questioning the dear man's genuineness. I'm not questioning the dear man's motive to do something to please God. It just so happens there's nothing in the Bible about it. You don't have to let them nail you on the cross. That's been done already. And you don't have to carry his cross. He carried it just fine on your behalf. You do have to carry your cross. You know what your cross is? Your cross is not you thinking up something you could do that in, inevitably draws attention to you. Your cross is to live for God in this world and honor Jesus Christ.

So let's don't be hard on the brother. Next time you see one who's carrying a cross across the world, just realize that may look a little more like the foolishness of the world than the wisdom of God. Are you winning people to you and your sacrifice? Are you winning people to Jesus? For Jesus this Christmas, this Christmas, Christmas too, this Easter season is not get you a cross and carry it across town or across the state or across the country. The best thing you can do is get up at 7, 6-7 o'clock and take your shower and brush your teeth and get before God and pray and have your quiet time, get your kids off to school, kiss your wife, kiss your husband, be loving and kind, go into work, do your work at your job like working unto the Lord, no lazy Christians, honor your employer, be a witness at work if you can, have your lunch, have your afternoon break, work all afternoon, come back home, pet the dog on the head, have your supper, pray over supper, talk to your children, don't watch anything on tv that God wouldn't want you to watch, and live for God. That's the most spiritual thing you can do for Easter because the Bible talks about doing all those regular things, just doing them for God and for his glory knowing that all the way through from the time you get up in the morning, you brush your teeth, you take a shower, eat your meals, get the kids ready for school, all day long there resides in your heart, "Thank God for the word of the cross. Thank God for the wisdom and power of God that's changed me and saved me and keeps me forever. Because whether or not I have this job tomorrow or whatever else, nobody can take that away from me."

So when it all comes down to it at the end, you take all the gurus and all the learned people and what are they gonna do for you in those last breaths of life? I can tell you what Jesus'll do for you, he'll take you safely right on into glory. That's wisdom. Knowing him, that's wisdom.