

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 5-10-15 PM NOTES
"THE FACTS ABOUT FORGIVENESS"
VARIOUS SCRIPTURES
#2 in Series, "Dealing With Your Past"

Colossians 2:13 (NKJV) "And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

1 John 1:9 (NKJV) "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Luke 7:40-50 (NKJV) ⁴⁰ And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' So he said, 'Teacher, say it.' ⁴¹ 'There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?' ⁴³ Simon answered and said, 'I suppose the *one* whom he forgave more.' And He said to him, 'You have rightly judged.' ⁴⁴ Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair of her head. ⁴⁵ You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. ⁴⁷ Therefore I say to you, her sins, *which are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little.' ⁴⁸ Then He said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' ⁴⁹ And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' ⁵⁰ Then He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.'"

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (ESV) ¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."

I. Conversion and Forgiveness

Colossians 2:13-14 (NKJV) ¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross."

Isaiah 43:25 (NKJV) "I, *even* I, *am* He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins."

Psalms 103:12 (NKJV) "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

Micah 7:19 (NKJV) "He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

II. Confession and Forgiveness

1 John 1:9 (NKJV) "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1 John 1:6-9 (NKJV) “⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Sin in the life of a forgiven person doesn't cause them to lose their **identity** as God's forgiven child; it causes them to lose their **intimacy** with the One they love and long to please.

“The sins of the ungodly plunge the spear into Jesus' side. The sins of the Christian plunge it into His heart.”

☐ Charles Spurgeon

Colossians 2:6 (NKJV) “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.”

III. Consequences and Forgiveness

2 Samuel 12:13b (NKJV) “The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die.”

There Is a Distinction Between the Consequences of Forgiven Sin and Unforgiven Sin:

- > Forgiven sin only has earthly consequences, while unforgiven sin has earthly and eternal consequences.
- > God's enabling, comforting grace is available while going through the earthly consequences of forgiven sin. Those who are unforgiven are strangers to God's enabling grace.
- > The consequences of unforgiven sin have to do with punishment. The consequences of forgiven sin are not punishment, because Jesus has taken our punishment.

Why God Allows Us to Suffer Earthly Consequences of Forgiven Sin:

- > To demonstrate and remind us, and those who observe our lives, of the seriousness of sin.
- > To put on display the amazing, enabling grace of God.
- > To keep the forgiven child humble.
- > To serve as a deterrent to future sin.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 5-10-15 AM
“THE MEMBERS OF A KINGDOM FOCUSED CHURCH”
1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-2:5
#2 in Series, “A Kingdom Focused Church”

Last week we looked at the marks of a Kingdom focused church. We saw that a Kingdom focused church is a selfless church. That selflessness manifests itself not only in taking the Gospel to the lost, but

also in coming alongside struggling churches to help them to come to a place of health and once again be a lighthouse shining forth the light of the Gospel in their neighborhoods. I believe that the service last week was one of the most important services in the years I have been at this church. The other mark of a Kingdom focused church is that it is willing to take risks. What we are praying and encouraging you to pray is that God will give us wisdom as we seek to become a selfless risk taking church that steps out in obedience to God and His leading even if it, from a human viewpoint, puts us in great risk.

In this message I want to focus on the members of a Kingdom focused church. Surely the members of a church like we are describing would be special people. Well, yes, they are special in their willingness to sacrifice, trust God and put others above themselves, but not special as the world thinks of being special. What are the members of a Kingdom focused church like? What qualities characterize them? What motivates them?

The context of our text is Paul giving a contrast between the foolishness of men (which they think is wisdom) and the wisdom of God (which men think of as foolishness). The members of the church of Corinth weren't among the intellectual elite; they were not eloquent or versed in the competing philosophies of their day; they were not wealthy. The people who made up the church at Corinth were not among the upper crust of their culture. The Christians were looked down on by the intellectual elite. We have a preserved critique of Christians from the 2nd century that reflects the same cultural rejection that the Christians at Corinth would have experienced. Listen to the following written by the non-Christian philosopher Celcus. "Let no cultured person draw near, none wise and none sensible, for all that kind of thing we count evil; but if any man is ignorant, if any man is wanting in sense and culture, if anybody is a fool, let him come boldly [to become a Christian]... We see them in their own houses, wool dresses, cobblers, the worst, the vulgarest, the most uneducated persons... They are like a swarm of bats or ants creeping out of their nest, or frogs holding a symposium around a swamp, or worms convening in mud." [Quoted in John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary – 1 Corinthians*, page 51].

When it came to reaching out to those in the world and sharing the Gospel, the Corinthian church members had a huge inferiority complex. Who were they compared to the educated and the eloquent and the influential of the world? I submit to you that so many in the church – in this church – have that same kind of inferiority toward those they work with, live next to, or sit beside at a sporting event. Members of a Kingdom Focused Church must choose to accept God's evaluation of them instead of the world's evaluation. If we are going to be the kind of church we described in the last message, a Kingdom focused church, it is not going to be accomplished by just the pastors. It is going to be accomplished by the people in the pew who understand who they are in Christ and are willing to invest their lives and their money in revitalizing struggling or dying churches so every neighborhood of this county has a healthy, vibrant, Gospel proclaiming, disciple making church. In a Kingdom focused church there will be other members who respond to God's call to go to some under-reached cities of North America and indeed into other continents to reach those with no access to the Gospel.

My goal, my highest desire going into this message is that every member of this church walks out saying, "Lord, when I have You, I have all that I need and I want to be a vessel you will use to make disciples through this body and if you so lead to be willing to be a part of a revitalization in another church."

I. The People God Chooses to Use (1:26-28)

Here is the bottom line of this section of Scripture: God chooses people to accomplish his plans in such a way as to nullify human pride. **Luke 16:15b (NKJV)** "For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God".

Notice those that God seldom calls. There are three times that the text says, "not many"; it doesn't say "not any". God called Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. In church history God called Count Zinzendorf, Sir Isaac Newton, and General Gordon. However, the bulk of those He calls to be His adopted children and to immerse them into Kingdom causes are the nobodies of the world. Even the some

bodies of the world must humble themselves and confess that they are nobodies that have nothing to merit a salvation that is received by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

Let's look at those God does call to Himself (1 Corinthians 1:26-28). When you think about it, this describes most of the world. Most of the world is not worldly wise, mighty or noble. Let's face it; most of those that God uses are (based on the world's standards) nothing to write home about. Did you ever notice how many average people God created? Most that He calls into His family to do some of His greatest work are average if not below average when it comes to intellect, talent, and worldly potential. God only chooses a few that are highly intelligent, mighty and noble. Mark Dever made a simple but yet profound statement that gripped me. He said, "It is a historical fact... that God chooses the foolish and weak. Anyone who wants to follow Christ must begin that way. You must begin by realizing that you will never find out how much God is till you realize how much you *are not*." One Salvation Army leader gave this testimony on his death bed. "I deserve to be damned; I deserve to be in hell; *but God interfered*." No one comes to Christ because of their superior intellect, their astounding reasoning powers, or their deep insight into eternal things. All that are saved are saved because God interfered in their life, opened their blind mind, unstopped their deaf ears, and drew them to Himself. When they repented of sin and savingly believed on Christ, He sent His Spirit to indwell them to equip them to serve Him and obey Him with a power that is totally beyond them. There is nothing special about me or you, but there is something really special about this gracious merciful God who interfered in our lives and saved us and now calls us to pour out our average lives in way above average service to our great God and then God does great things through us in His great power.

When I think of the foolish things of the world that God has called, I think of Dwight L. Moody. Once, Moody was invited to speak at the prestigious Cambridge University in England. A chief complaint was that Moody spoke horrible English ("murdered the king's English"). Some of the students feeling very superior to Moody determined to heckle him – this country bumpkin. When Moody addressed the students, every thing got quiet. Certainly his English was atrocious. As Moody stepped up to the podium, he said, "Young gentlemen, don't ever think that God don't love you, for he do!" The students forgot to jeer and Moody's compassion spoke volumes. Many were saved and one of the more notable awakenings of 19th Century started out of the meetings Moody conducted at Cambridge.

The world doesn't like "weak things". One example would be Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. Nietzsche was born in 1844 into a preacher's family. While studying theology, he developed a deep dislike of the Christian faith. He portrayed Jesus as a weakling who shamefully died on the cross in utter failure. Nietzsche magnified power and hated weakness. He was probably the greatest influence on Adolph Hitler. While much of the world may not go as far as Nietzsche, there is a dislike for the weak and an attraction to the strong, but God deliberately chose those the world calls weak. The phrase "base things" means no illustrious lineage, low born, from a family of nobodies. That phrase "things that are despised" means to be considered as nothing. The phrase "things which are not" translates one of the most contemptible put downs that could be uttered against another human being. The Greek culture magnified "being" and to be called a nothing was the strongest insult imaginable.

God didn't choose many of the worldly wise; He chose those the world called foolish. God didn't choose many of the mighty; he chose the weak. God didn't choose many of the noble; He chose the base, and the nobodies. Why would God do that?

II. The Glory That God Refuses to Share (1:29)

The reason that God chose not many worldly wise, mighty, or noble is so that no flesh should glory or boast in His presence. This is the explanation of why God doesn't choose many mighty, noble, well born, highly intelligent people. These people cannot be used of God unless they die to their own abilities and live in dependence on God. Oh how many times have I heard people say, "If _____ would just get saved, they have so much to offer the Lord." They make it sound like God is desperate and needs them. The truth is that if people have much to offer from the world's perspective, they can only be used if they die to all of it and depend completely and boast exclusively in the Lord and what He has done. Sometimes when He

then uses us nobodies and we start getting a little puffed up, God allows us to be humiliated. Sometimes he allows us to be humiliated even as a preventative measure to keep us from glorying in ourselves. I love the words from Augustus Toplady in 1832 in the hymn “Rock of Ages”. I think this is one of the greatest verses in any hymn ever written and it summarizes this passage in 1 Corinthians.

Nothing in my hand I bring,

Simply to thy cross I cling;

Naked, come to Thee for dress,

Helpless, look to Thee for grace;

Foul, I to the fountain fly,

Wash me Savior, or I die!

We must not glory before Him, only in Him!

III. The Enabling God Freely Gives (1:30)

Here is what God does for us nobodies who come to Christ in answer to His effectual call. He unites us to Christ; He identifies us with Christ; He baptizes us into Christ and makes us a partaker of His very life. When we are identified with Him, the old us in Adam is crucified with Christ and thus sin no longer holds us in slavery. Here Paul reminds us of 4 things that are ours because we are in Christ.

A. Wisdom (V30a)

True wisdom has nothing to do with one’s IQ; Wisdom is the God enabled ability to see everything from God’s perspective. It is the God given ability to take knowledge, circumstances, people and relationships and see them as God sees them and thus make the right decisions and responses. Paul prays for believers in **Colossians 1:9b (NKJV)** “...that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom...” Only those “in Christ” have this capacity. Listen to what is in Christ: **Colossians 2:3 (NKJV)** “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” True wisdom comes only from Christ; He has a monopoly on true wisdom.

B. Righteousness (V30b)

Righteousness as it is used here is right standing with God. It is acceptance by God. Most who are not in Christ are trying to earn that righteousness, that acceptance on the basis of works. Those in Christ have been made a partaker in Christ’s righteousness. We have the righteousness of Christ. His righteousness has been imputed to us (put on our account). **Philippians 3:9 (NKJV)** “and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith”.

C. Sanctification (V30c)

This is the same root word as holiness. He is our holiness, our sanctification. The wisdom of Christ and righteousness from Christ works its way out in our life through holiness. **Romans 6:22 (HCSB)** says, “But now, since you have been liberated from sin and become enslaved to God, you have your fruit, which results in sanctification—and the end is eternal life!”

D. Redemption (V30d)

In Christ we have been bought out of the slave market (that is the meaning of the word “redemption) and set free. There is also a future redemption of our bodies. **Romans 8:23 (NKJV)** “Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.” Our bodies still suffer the ravages of living in a world that is cursed by sin. Our bodies get sick, they age, and eventually they die. One day at the return of the Lord we will receive the full effect of Christ’s redemption price – a new body that never gets old, sick, or dies. That is our hope because we are in Christ.

A summary of what verse 30 teaches is **Colossians 2:10a (NKJV)** “and you are complete in Him...”

IV. The Boasting God Allows (1:31)

Paul says basically the same thing in **Galatians 6:14a (NKJV)** “But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...” Are you beginning to see the picture here? God calls

mostly those the world calls nobodies so those nobodies can be transformed and in Christ have His wisdom, His righteousness, sanctification and redemption. God uses those who used to be nobodies to do His Kingdom work and the used to be nobodies who are in Christ can only respond with praise to the Lord that He has changed and used former nobodies for His glory. Who else could we boast in but Him?

V. The Illustration God Provides (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

The chapter breaks in Scripture aren't inspired. These first 5 verses of chapter 2 are continuing the reasoning of chapter 1:26-31. The first two words "And I" are translated in the NASB, "And when I came to you". In other words, "In light of what I just shared with you in 1:26-31, here is how I came to you."

Paul says in verses 1-2, "My approach was not to try to wow you and win you over with my eloquence and education." Paul's approach was counter cultural because itinerate teachers gathered a following with their worldly wisdom, eloquence, and education. Paul came as an ambassador, not as a statesman or a salesman. He came only with the "testimony of God" – God's revelation of the Messiah and Savior who was wounded for our transgressions. Paul is saying that he wanted nothing to detract from the message of the crucified, resurrected Savior. Paul did not come to Corinth with a lot of human verbiage and opinion. He presented them with the testimony of God and nothing else.

Notice Paul's attitude in 1 Corinthians 2:3-4. Why the fear and trembling? It was not because of the possible persecution he would face. He had already been persecuted and bore many scars on his body to evidence it. His fear and trembling was over the possibility of trying to proclaim the gospel in his own power or to dilute it with eloquent speech and human wisdom. Corinth was the center of immorality. In fact a new word had come into use to describe the worst kind of moral degeneracy. It was to "corinthianize". Nothing could touch and change these people but the power of God and Listen to **Romans 1:16 (NKJV)** "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is **the power of God to salvation** for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." Some of the reasons we fail to launch out of our comfort zones to share the gospel, to get involved in ministries, to get involved with a church replant are that we are not eloquent enough or educated enough, but those who have these human gifts have to die to them in order to trust in them and then choose to stick with Jesus Christ and Him crucified. His fear and trembling was over the possibility of diluting the powerful gospel by mixing it with his human wisdom.

In 1 Corinthians 2:5, Paul gives more insight into his motive of sticking with the central truth of Christ and Him crucified (V2). If their faith rested on the wisdom of men they might have changed intellectually, but they would not have had a heart change, a nature change. They would have still been spiritually dead. Only the clear and undiluted Gospel brings the power of God. Paul left behind human wisdom, human eloquence, and human education. He brought only the Gospel – Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Charles Spurgeon put it this way: "The power that is in the gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher, otherwise men would be the converters of souls, nor does it lie in the preacher's learning, otherwise it would consist in the wisdom of men. We might preach until our tongues rotted, till we would exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless the Holy Spirit be with the word of God to give it the power to convert the soul" [Charles Spurgeon, quoted in John MacArthur, 1 Corinthians Commentary, Page 57].

CONCLUSION

I hope you are encouraged as you see God's plan that results in God getting all the glory. We provide the willing vessel without eloquence, without stature in the world, without a great deal of human wisdom, and God provides the supernatural power to change lives and fulfill the ministry He calls us to. The result is that He gets all the glory. This is the mindset that we must have if we are to be a Kingdom focused church. This is why what God has called us to is gloriously possible.