

The Message of the Cross



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *1 Cor. 1:17–31, Col. 1:20, 1 Pet. 2:24, Acts 13:16–47, 1 Cor. 2:1–5.*

Memory Text: “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (*1 Corinthians 1:18, NIV*).

Cicero, a pagan Roman writer and orator, had told the Roman people to not even think about the cross, so abhorrent was it as a means of death. Although Cicero died about a half century before Jesus was born, his statement illustrates the contempt with which the Romans had held the cross. It was so bad that they should not even think about it.

In contrast, Paul would write: “The message of the cross . . . is the power of God” (*1 Cor. 1:18, NIV*). For Paul, the Cross is the instrument of reconciliation between God and man (*Eph. 2:16, Col. 1:20*), the supreme symbol of Jesus’ humility (*Phil. 2:8*), and the place where our immense debt was paid (*Col. 2:14*).

The Cross is Paul’s answer to the problems in Corinth. You don’t have to go very far in 1 Corinthians to realize that he is very concerned about one major issue: divisions in the church. Paul is so perplexed that right after the greetings (*1 Cor. 1:1–3*) and the thanksgiving section (*1 Cor. 1:4–9*), this is the first topic he addresses (*1 Cor. 1:10–17*). This week, we will turn to the powerful message of the Cross as the answer to this problem and to other issues in Corinth.

* Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, July 11.

The Gospel of the Cross

Paul says that the message of the Cross is the power of God to us. It is not surprising that “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” is the center of his preaching (*1 Cor. 2:2, NKJV*).

Read 1 Corinthians 1:17–31. What important point is Paul making here?

In 1 Corinthians 1:18–31, Paul deals with a contrast between human foolishness and divine wisdom. The Cross has the power to display the worst of man and the best of God. This section of 1 Corinthians is introduced by the statement in 1 Corinthians 1:17. Because the cross of Christ is not supposed to be emptied of its power (*1 Cor. 1:17*), the message of the Cross must occupy the central place of our preaching (*see also 1 Cor. 2:2*).

Paul says that he was sent not to baptize, but to preach the gospel of the Cross. This statement requires two important observations. First, the Greek verb translated as “to send” is *apostellō*, which stems from the same root as the word “apostle.” Thus, Paul’s fundamental apostolic task was the proclamation of the gospel. Second, Paul’s words about baptism did not mean that baptism was not important, or at least not as important as preaching. He was, instead, rebuking those who made a big deal out of who were the ones doing the baptizing as opposed to the One, Jesus, into whom they have been baptized.

By “wisdom of words” (*1 Cor. 1:17*), Paul is not implying that eloquent speeches are bad in themselves. The point is that human wisdom should not obscure the message of the Cross. This phrase refers to Greco-Roman rhetoric. In Athens, Paul used logic, science, and philosophy, but this resulted in little fruit. So, “he decided to follow another plan of labor in Corinth in his efforts to arrest the attention of the careless and the indifferent. He determined to avoid elaborate arguments and discussions, and ‘not to know anything’ among the Corinthians ‘save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.’”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 244.

In what ways can elaborate discourses obscure the message of the Cross? Why did the proclamation of Jesus Christ and Him crucified produce more fruit in Corinth than logic, science, and philosophy did in Athens? Might there, however, be times that logic, philosophy, and science could be helpful in proclaiming the gospel?

Foolishness to Those Who Are Perishing

In contrasting human foolishness to divine wisdom, Paul states that the “message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing” (*1 Cor. 1:18, NKJV*). This is the first of six references to foolishness or foolish in 1 Corinthians 1:18–31.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:20, 21, 23, 25, and 27. How do these references to foolishness help us understand what Paul meant when saying that the message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing?

The Greek word for “foolishness” in 1 Corinthians 1:18 is *mōria*. This word occurs only five times in the New Testament, and all in 1 Corinthians (*1 Cor. 1:18, 21, 23; 1 Cor. 2:14; 1 Cor. 3:19*). Apart from *mōria*, other words from the same family occur numerous times in the New Testament.

The reference to foolishness in 1 Corinthians 1:18, 23 is not denigrating the Corinthians’ intellectual capacity but directing attention to their unwillingness to consider the truth of the gospel. As a result, Paul also had to confront immoral behavior and thought, lack of discernment, and even rebellion against God.

Think about Paul’s situation in this city. He comes to a place that prides itself on its own so-called knowledge and wisdom and cultural sophistication. And, in this context, he talks about a Galilean Jew, Jesus of Nazareth, who had been crucified by the Romans and then raised from the dead—all in order to pay for not only their sins but for the sins of the world. *Can this guy be serious? Who was he kidding?* This wasn’t some deep new philosophical concept, either, that could be parsed and analyzed by philosophical tools; it seemed to be lunacy, nonsense, nothing that any smart and educated Corinthian could take seriously.

And, as foolish as Paul’s message sounded to the pagans, for many of the Jews, the message of the Cross sounded worse. What Jew was expecting a Messiah to be executed by Rome? The Messiah was supposed to overthrow the Romans, not be crucified by them.

Thus, from the start, Paul had a lot going against him in Corinth. And yet, despite all this, souls—Jewish and Gentile—were won to the gospel.

The message here?

Whatever opposition we face, God has people who are open to hearing the truth. We must be ready to be used by Him to reach these people wherever they are, even in places today that are as bad as, or even worse than, Corinth was.

Power to Those Who Are Being Saved

The message of 1 Corinthians 1:18 is too clear for one to miss the point. What the Cross means depends on the way one looks at it. It is foolishness for those in rebellion against God, but it is power for those who long for His salvation.

Read Colossians 1:20 and 1 Peter 2:24. What did Jesus accomplish for us on the cross?

As we have already seen, in preaching the gospel, one must avoid “words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power” (*1 Cor. 1:17, ESV*). In light of 1 Corinthians 1:17, it becomes easier to understand why the opposite of foolishness is the power of God and not human wisdom (*1 Cor. 1:18*). The Cross, which is so contrary to human wisdom, reveals just how foolish human wisdom really is.

The Greek text of 1 Corinthians 1:18 suggests that “those who are perishing” (*NKJV*) are receiving the result of their actions. The text can read like this: “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are destroying themselves.” The Greek verb *apollymi* (“to perish”) can also mean “to destroy” (*John 10:10*). In fact, *apollymi* is translated as “destroy” in 1 Corinthians 1:19.

What is happening here? Paul provides a biblical foundation for this statement in verse 18, about these people perishing, by quoting in verse 19 God’s words in Isaiah 29:14. In verse 19, God is the one behind the destruction, which seems to contradict the self-destroying pride mentioned right before. However, there is no contradiction. The idea is that God will destroy that which already is destroying itself.

In contrast to those being destroyed, the phrase “to us who are being saved” (*1 Cor. 1:18, NKJV*) indicates that salvation comes only from God. Paul is saying that we are being saved; that is, we are not saving ourselves. We, of course, can’t. Our salvation has an external source. While destruction is self-caused, salvation can only be granted, a gift of grace to sinners. As is clear in 1 Corinthians 1:21, it is God who saves those who believe. Foolishness, in this sense, is the act of rejecting what God has offered humanity through the cross of Christ (*1 Cor. 1:30*), thus bringing destruction upon oneself.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (*Rom. 6:23, NKJV*). In what ways does this verse restate what Paul was saying in 1 Corinthians 1:18, 19?

A Messiah Crucified

Paul wrote that the “Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom” (*1 Cor. 1:22, ESV*). The Cross—the idea of God, the Messiah, being crucified—was not a sign that the Jews had expected. Nor was it the kind of wisdom that the Greeks wanted. It went against everyone’s expectations.

In fact, all one has to do is read how the disciples reacted to the idea of Jesus being crucified (*see Mark 8:31, 32; Mark 9:30–32; and Mark 10:32–34*) to begin to see how alien, and repulsive, the whole notion was, especially to the Jews. As said before, the Jews expected the Messiah to conquer the Romans; that is not what happened, at least not in the worldly military sense of “conquer.”

For centuries, the cross has been, for Christians, a symbol of faith. It is hard for twenty-first-century Christians to understand how crazy the idea of a crucified God was for the first-century mindset.

However, it is precisely because this was such a shocking message that makes it worthy of our most profound reflections. The portrait of a crucified Messiah makes it entirely clear to the whole universe how far God was willing to go to complete the plan of redemption. The idea of the cross itself, and of the Lord’s dying on the cross, is astonishing enough to us, sinners here on earth. (Imagine, though, what it must have meant to the sinless beings who knew, and worshiped, the Lord Jesus in heaven!)

Read Acts 13:16–47 (especially verses 26, 38, and 47). What does this passage teach us about the meaning of the Cross?

Paul says Christ sent him to preach the gospel. And so Paul preaches the message of a crucified Messiah (*1 Cor. 1:23*). He resumes these ideas in 1 Corinthians 2:1–5. The apostle was faithful to Christ’s commission. In proclaiming the gospel, he didn’t employ “lofty speech or wisdom” (*1 Cor. 2:1, ESV*); instead, he focused only on “Jesus Christ and him crucified” (*1 Cor. 2:2, ESV*). His speech and message “were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (*1 Cor. 2:4, ESV*) because, in fact, “the wisdom of men” stands in visible contrast with “the power of God” (*2 Cor. 2:5, ESV*).

A crucified Messiah was something completely unexpected by the Jews and the Greeks. What does this tell us about the fact that God does not always act the way we expect? Why is this an important concept to grasp, especially when things don’t go as we have expected?

Christ, the Power and Wisdom of God

In 1 Corinthians 1:19, 20, 30, and 31, Paul talks about how God’s wisdom and human wisdom are incredibly different and, thus, mutually exclusive. Notice that Paul does not reject wisdom as such, but he rejects the kind of human wisdom that tries to compete with God. Human wisdom is incapable of freeing men from sin. Only Christ, the wisdom of God, can perform this work. See the table below.

but to us who are being saved	[the message of the Cross] is the power of God	1 Cor. 1:18 (NKJV)
but to those who are called	Christ [is] the power of God	1 Cor. 1:24 (NKJV)

Both 1 Corinthians 1:18 and 1 Corinthians 1:24 show that Christ is the power of God, in the sense that He has the power to save people from their sins. Indeed, “it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe” (1 Cor. 1:21, NKJV). The phrases “us who are being saved” (1 Cor. 1:18, NKJV), “those who believe” (1 Cor. 1:21, NKJV), and “those who are called” (1 Cor. 1:24, NKJV) refer to the same group, namely, people living the experience of salvation through faith. “The gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16, NKJV).

Christ is not only the power but also the wisdom of God. This means that through Him God faced and solved the problem of sin, a problem that human wisdom was powerless to solve. The wisdom of this world is unable to make people know God (1 Cor. 1:21). Conversely, through Christ we become wise for salvation (2 Tim. 3:15).

Read 1 Corinthians 1:24–29. Notice the words there, such as “foolishness,” “weak,” “power,” and “wise.” What point is he making?

In reading 1 Corinthians 1:24–29, one should also notice the terms *foolish* (or *foolishness*) and *weak* (or *weakness*). The point is that human wisdom may consider the message of the Cross to be foolishness and weakness. However, “the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Cor. 1:25, ESV). This doesn’t mean that God is weak or foolish; it’s merely an expression showing how God’s power and wisdom far exceed anything human.

Dwell on the words “that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” (1 Cor. 1:26, NKJV). What message is there for us?

Further Thought: Read Ellen G. White, “Calvary,” pp. 741–757, in *The Desire of Ages*.

“To the minds of multitudes living at the present time, the cross of Calvary is surrounded by sacred memories. Hallowed associations are connected with the scenes of the crucifixion. But in Paul’s day the cross was regarded with feelings of repulsion and horror. To uphold as the Saviour of mankind one who had met death on the cross, would naturally call forth ridicule and opposition.

“Paul well knew how his message would be regarded by both the Jews and the Greeks of Corinth. . . . Among his Jewish hearers there were many who would be angered by the message he was about to proclaim. In the estimation of the Greeks his words would be absurd folly. He would be looked upon as weak-minded for attempting to show how the cross could have any connection with the elevation of the race or the salvation of mankind.

“But to Paul the cross was the one object of supreme interest. Ever since he had been arrested in his career of persecution against the followers of the crucified Nazarene he had never ceased to glory in the cross. At that time there had been given him a revelation of the infinite love of God, as revealed in the death of Christ; and a marvelous transformation had been wrought in his life, bringing all his plans and purposes into harmony with heaven. . . . He knew by personal experience that when a sinner once beholds the love of the Father, as seen in the sacrifice of His Son, and yields to the divine influence, a change of heart takes place, and henceforth Christ is all and in all.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 245, 246.

Discussion Questions:

- 1** In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me” (*Matt. 26:39, NKJV*). What does this prayer say about the immense price Jesus paid on the cross?
- 2** Paul says, “The foolishness of God is wiser than men” (*1 Cor. 1:25, NKJV*). In what ways is the wisdom of God so different from human wisdom?
- 3** The message of a crucified Christ was a stumbling block for the Jews and foolishness for the Greeks. What biblical themes that we preach today can produce the same effect in modern audiences, and why?
- 4** Paul says that “the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God” (*1 Cor. 2:14, NKJV*). So, how can we speak about Jesus to these people in a way that could touch their hearts? Or maybe our actions alone will reach them.

A Touch That Transforms

By VYACHESLAV DEMYAN

Fabiola lived in the peaceful surroundings of Belo Horizonte, Brazil, yet peace was the last thing she felt. A breast cancer diagnosis had shaken her world, and with the added fear of COVID-19 spreading across the country, death felt closer than ever.

Meanwhile, in the city of Salvador, Luisa's world was collapsing. A betrayal shattered her marriage of 23 years, leaving her to discover she had contracted syphilis from her husband. Additionally, her mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and she witnessed a neighbor take her own life. The thought haunted her—maybe she should do the same.

Both women were drowning in their suffering. Like the woman who had bled for 12 years in the biblical story of Mark chapter 5, Fabiola and Luisa were desperate for physical, emotional, and spiritual healing. They each needed a touch of hope.

On two separate evenings, God intervened in a surprisingly similar way. As Fabiola tried to escape her anxiety by watching TV, her small dog hopped onto her lap, accidentally stepping on the remote and switching the channel to Novo Tempo, Hope Channel in Brazil.

Some 800 miles away, Luisa's dog did the same thing. In Fabiola and Luisa's darkest moments, one divinely placed paw on a remote revealed the life-changing love of a Savior.

Both women felt a wave of hope wash over them.

Today, Fabiola has found renewed purpose, encouraging those around her with the same message of comfort she received. The messages from Novo Tempo reshaped her outlook on her illness. She no longer saw cancer as a punishment but as a part of something God allowed to help transform her. Now, as she waits for her medical appointments, she shares Christian books, speaks of Jesus, and encourages those around her with the hope she found.

For Luisa, the programs she watched helped her recognize she was battling depression. She was able to receive treatment that became her turning point, helping her emerge from darkness into the light of God's love.

"I was that lost, dirty, empty daughter," she reflects. "But [after His touch], I never want to leave His presence."

Hope Channel exists for people like Fabiola and Luisa—people searching for hope, for healing, for Jesus. Thousands are waiting to be reached. Eighty-four Hope Channels around the world are reaching people through life-changing content, offering Bible studies, and connecting seekers with Christ.

When you give to the mission offering during Sabbath School or choose mission on your tithe envelope, a portion of that offering helps fund Hope Channel's important ministry around the world. Thank you for your generous support.

Part I: Overview

Key Text: *1 Corinthians 1:18*

Study Focus: *1 Cor. 1:17–31.*

Introduction

When faced with a towering wall of flames amid a wildfire, one's first thought probably would not be to apply more fire to the already extremely dangerous situation. As foolish as this action may seem, firefighters often do exactly that. A fire needs oxygen and fuel, such as dry vegetation or flammable structures, in order to keep burning. If one can cut off either the oxygen supply or the fuel supply, the fire can be brought under control. Firefighters often use this technique, known as "backfiring," to halt or redirect a fire.

Fighting fire with fire seems to go counter to reason, or appears even foolish, when faced with a fast-moving wall of fire, pushing quickly toward a town or settlement. Yet, when done appropriately and carefully, this strategy can make the difference between survival and destruction by fire.

In the same way, Paul's exaltation of Christ's sacrifice on the cross went against the sentiment of his day. In the introduction to his first letter to the Corinthian church, Paul highlights the countercultural nature of the Christian message of the Cross, which is something that most of us living in Western, or Christian, contexts will struggle to understand. Most of us grew up in a world in which crosses on churches or in other public spaces were shorthand for Christianity and the message of salvation.

But the cross meant cruel death, severe punishment, and absolute shame to most people living in the first-century A.D. Greco-Roman world. Yet, contrary to the popular thinking of that time, Paul taught that the gospel of Jesus Christ was the power of God to those who accepted it (*1 Cor. 1:18, ESV*).

Lesson Themes

This week's lesson highlights a number of important themes, including:

- 1. The Message of the Cross.** The cross is God's surprising, and all-encompassing, answer to the sin problem. It is the foundation of the gospel message preached by Paul and the other apostles to a world that had a radically different worldview.
- 2. True Wisdom.** Wisdom was an important element of Greek philosophy and a major topic in distinct philosophical schools. Paul's use of the term stands in stark contrast to its use in Greek philosophy and connects more easily to the understanding of wisdom in the Old Testament.

3. The Cross: Folly or a Way Home. The cross becomes either a stumbling block or folly to those who hear about it without embracing the One who hung there. Jesus died on the cross in order to offer the world forgiveness, transformative grace, and a way home to the God who invests all to save His fallen creation.

Part II: Commentary

1. Background: The Hellenistic concept of wisdom (*sofia*) in the New Testament period emphasized intelligence and theoretical knowledge over practical skills. A philosopher was a “lover of wisdom,” someone who understood and disseminated knowledge about the natural world and the human experience. Truth could be ordered into a general system that could help explain the world. Quite a number of differing Greek philosophical schools, with distinct emphases, existed during the time, but they all focused on observation, reason, logic, and intellectual arguments, even though they were not devoid of ethical concerns.

Six major Greco-Roman philosophical schools should be distinguished: the school of Pythagoras; the school of Plato and his successors; Aristotle’s peripatetic school; the school of Epicurus that emphasized imperturbability as the ideal; the cynics (emphasizing simplicity and freedom from societal conventions); and the school of the Stoics, which, during the time of the events of the New Testament, was known as Roman stoicism (or Late Stoa) and became the most influential school of philosophy during that time (see John T. Fitzgerald, “Greco-Roman Philosophical Schools,” in *The World of the New Testament*, eds. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013], pp. 135–148).

In the Old Testament, wisdom is not limited to knowledge, or the integration of knowledge into a coherent system; rather, it describes the ability of a person to make right use of knowledge that is relationally connected to God. This knowledge is, thus, God-given and results in making ethical (i.e., “good,” echoing Creation language) decisions. Exodus 31:1–5 uses three key terms of wisdom language (*hokmah*, “wisdom;” *binah*, “intelligence;” and *da’at*, “knowledge”) to describe the divinely given skill that the artist Bezalel needed to create the tabernacle and its utensils. The use of these terms in this particular context helps us to understand that wisdom in the Old Testament is practical and goes beyond a mere intellectual endeavor.

The Old Testament authors ask big questions about God’s justice and how humans can obtain true wisdom, even though they recognize that not all our questions, nor our search for wisdom, will lead always to clear

answers (for example, *Prov. 20:24; Job 28:20, 21*). Wisdom literature in the Old Testament includes the books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and selected wisdom psalms (for example, *Psalms 37, 49, 73*).

The discovery of a significant corpus of wisdom literature, emphasizing knowledge among the writings from the Khirbet Qumran community in the first century B.C. (also known as Dead Sea Scrolls), highlights the fact that discussions about wisdom were an important element of intellectual and philosophical discussions among Jewish communities prior to the arrival of the Messiah in Palestine (see J. I. Kampen, “Wisdom Literature at Qumran,” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, eds. C. A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000], pp. 1263–1268).

2. Foolishness and Wisdom: Following his initial greetings, thanksgiving, and exhortation to unity, Paul begins his message to the young church in Corinth by focusing on foolishness and wisdom. First Corinthians 1:18–31 is a rhetorical high point of the New Testament. Paul’s thesis statement to the Corinthians suggests that the gospel is folly to some, while it represents the saving power of God to others (*1 Cor. 1:18*). This paradox is significant, as it suggests; and as Paul points out in later chapters, the weakness of humanity is really an opportunity for God to display His strength.

The remainder of the passage offers a number of contrasts between wise and foolish, God and the world, strong and weak. The cross, an instrument of cruel Roman torture and death, has become the means by which God accomplished salvation. This argument, which underlies all the preaching of Paul and the early Christian church, must have felt countercultural and paradoxical to many newly converted Gentile believers. The “word of the cross” (*1 Cor. 1:18, ESV*) is shorthand for the message of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, offering salvation for those who have heard and believed in that word. We get a hint of the sense of the folly that any Greco-Roman audience would have perceived in this message: How could God save people (and the world) through the death of a crucified convicted felon? Jews, on the other hand, would perceive this message as a “stumbling block” (*ESV*), or Greek *skandalon*, as noted in 1 Corinthians 1:23. This stumbling block, on the one hand, or foolishness, on the other hand, refers metaphorically to an obstacle to one’s faith.

3. The Good News of the Cross: Right from the outset, Paul argues that the message of the cross is the power of God to those being saved. The cross offers believers the key to understanding God’s wisdom of offering salvation to those who do not deserve righteousness nor can ever attain it. The cross is also more than a sign or symbol, though Jews do not recognize it as such, even though they yearn to see miraculous signs (*Matt.*

12:38, 39; Mark 8:11, 12; also 1 Cor. 1:22). The desire to see signs and wonders reflects a basic spiritual blindness, and perhaps even a hardness of heart, by those who “demand” (not “ask for”) them. The gospel of the crucified and risen Christ does not elicit faith in Jews or Greeks but, rather, becomes to them a “stumbling block” or “folly,” respectively. Paul summarizes this reality in 1 Corinthians 1:25: “For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (*ESV*).

This pronouncement leads Paul to the next important statement: God’s election of those making up the church in Corinth was based not on their wisdom or their power and influence, but solely on God’s sovereignty (*1 Cor. 1:26–29*). God’s choice is never based on human accomplishments, power, or influence but happens in response to our grasping the hand of Jesus by faith. Sometimes we can grab the entire hand, while at other times we barely manage to hang on to the tip of the little finger of His hand—yet, rest assured, we can trust that we are in the center of God’s grace. This knowledge, according to Paul, saves us also from boasting about our own “faith accomplishments.” And “ ‘let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord’ ” (*1 Cor. 1:31, ESV, referring to Jer. 9:23, 24*). Intriguingly (and perhaps anticipated already in the personification of wisdom in Proverbs 8 in the Old Testament), Jesus Christ is the personified wisdom from God, His righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (*1 Cor. 1:30*).

Part III: Life Application

Wisdom and folly are found closely linked in Paul’s opening chapter to the church in Corinth. He helps his readers understand that “human wisdom cannot lead to a true saving knowledge of God, which is only available through the foolishness of the gospel (v. 21).”—“1 Corinthians,” in *Andrews Bible Commentary*, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez et al. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2022), p. 1620. Discuss with your group the following questions as you consider 1 Corinthians 1:17–31:

- 1. What could be a stumbling block to our faith, though we have the advantage of being able to look back on nearly two thousand years of church history and the history of biblical interpretation?**

2. What would be the best argument to make to those who consider the gospel message foolish or just a “sedative for the ignorant”?

3. What aspect, or aspects, of the good news of the Cross would appeal to people in your community, outside the church? What would make accepting the gospel more difficult for them?

Notes


