

“Making Void The Cross Of Christ”

“For Christ sent me ... to preach the gospel; not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void. For the word of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:17f).

Following this statement Paul launches out onto a discussion of how the wisdom of the world is worthless in our understanding the gospel. He tells us that God will *“destroy the wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discerning he will bring to naught”* (1 Cor. 1:19f). He had just told the brethren that *“the word of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness”* (1 Cor. 1:18).

The *“word of the cross”* simply means the word about the cross. To *“wise men”* it is *“foolishness”* that men might be saved by the sacrifice of Jesus. They see no efficacy in it. Six times in the following verses the words *“foolish”* or *“foolishness”* are found. We read that God made *“foolish the wisdom of this world”* (1:20). God is pleased that through the *“foolishness”* of the preaching to save them that believe (1:21). *“Christ crucified”* is to Greeks *“foolishness”* (1:23). The *“foolishness of God is wiser than men”* (1 Cor. 2:5). God chose *“the foolish things to put to shame the wise”* (1:27).

We should take care that we have a proper respect and regard for the cross of Christ. The cross to which Jesus was nailed was the instrument through which He was put to death. Thus *“the cross”* comes to stand for the sacrifice Jesus made when He died. We sing about the *“Old Rugged Cross”* and well we should exalt in it. Paul gloried in the cross (Gal. 6:14). The Gentiles and Jews were made one body by the cross (Eph. 2:6). Christ made peace through the cross (Col. 1:20). Jesus removed the law which was against us, nailing it to His cross (Col. 2:14).

The sacrifice of Jesus must be announced far and wide, telling all of the benefits of that sacrifice and how men receive the benefits of it. Nothing is more valuable than the soul, and because this is true, every precaution should be taken to see that men clearly understand the significance of the cross and what men must do to procure the remission of sin.

The wisdom of man sets aside the wisdom of God. The prophet of old wrote, *“Oh Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps”* (Jer. 10:23). Isaiah urged, *“Seek ye that Lord while he may be fond; call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return*

unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are our ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:6-9).

Let Paul's warning be received by all. We who preach should have the determined aim that men understand the gospel of Christ, for if one does not understand, he cannot believe. No matter how learned one may be, his hearers are not edified if they do not understand what he says. One may speak in English, but if the English words one speaks are not understood, the speaker benefits his hearer not at all. He makes void the cross of Christ by his wisdom.

Lift Jesus up so that all can see Him. Exalt Him in words all can understand so that all sinner may come and "Kneel at the cross" -- i.e., obey the gospel and be saved!

Jim McDonald