

## 1 Corinthians 1:17-25 (February 6, 2022)

### OPENING QUESTION:

**SERMON DISCUSSION:** How were you impacted by the sermon? What new thoughts or lessons did you discover? In what ways did you find yourself challenged and/or encouraged?

### READ 1 Corinthians 1:17-25

1. “The art of rhetorical persuasion was highly valued in the Greco-Roman world and professional orators frequented large cities like Corinth, giving impressive displays of their abilities to entertain and instruct. Paul’s proclamation of the gospel failed to measure up to these standards.” (ESV Study Bible p. 2392)

Why was Paul’s lack of eloquent words of wisdom a good thing?

2. Paul points out that there are only two categories of people in the world. What are those categories and the spiritual condition of each?

3. The opposite of folly (or foolishness) is wisdom. But what does Paul present as the opposite of folly in 1 Corinthians 1:18 (see also Romans 1:16)?

4. Explain why is the cross the crux of Christianity (1 Corinthians 1:17-25; Romans 3:23-25b; John 1:29, 3:14-15; Mark 10:45).

5. Why does Paul say that “Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and a folly to Gentiles” (1 Corinthians 1:23)? What is the one and only exception (1 Corinthians 1:25)?

6. It is understandable the Jews and Gentiles who were not believers would find the message of the cross offensive. “But Paul’s argument in this epistle suggest that *even some Christians in Corinth had tried to move ‘beyond’ the centrality of the cross*, perhaps to a more Spirit centered, or triumphalist religion...Such Christians, Paul insists, need to hear afresh the effective reality of the cross as a *reversal* of all ‘natural’ human values. For what the world naturally perceives as sheer **folly** is in fact divine **power** and divine **wisdom**. For **God’s** so-called **‘foolishness’ is wiser than human wisdom**, and **God’s** supposed **weakness is stronger than human strength** (v. 25). (1 Corinthians-A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary p. 44-45 by Anthony C. Thiselton)

In what ways do you find yourself tempted to trust in human wisdom rather than God’s “foolishness” or to trust in human strength instead of God’s “weakness”? What helps you redirect your trust?