

The Folly Of Trusting In Human Wisdom

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1 Cor. 1:18-31

Today, we are faced with many issues over which people disagree...

Moral issues related to what is good or evil. Doctrinal issues related to what is right or wrong.

It is not uncommon to hear people appeal to certain “authorities”. Those considered experts in the areas of science, philosophy, and religion. Those who share the results of their experiments, research, or careful thinking.

Many place their faith in such “authorities”. Especially in areas of morality and spiritual truth. Is that a wise thing to do?

In our text for this lesson (1 Cor. 1:18-31), the apostle Paul warns against “The Folly Of Trusting In Human Wisdom”. In this passage of scripture we learn that...

God has made foolish the wisdom of the wise

Consider the message of the cross...

The idea of a crucified Savior, dying for the sins of the world.

To those who are perishing, it is foolishness.

1 Cor. 1:18, *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”*

To those being saved, it is the power of God!

The foolishness of the message is by design.

God proclaimed that He would destroy the wisdom of the wise.

1 Cor. 1:19, *“For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”*

God has made foolish the wisdom of this world.

1 Cor. 1:20, *“Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”*

Why? Because the world in its own wisdom rejects God.

1 Cor. 1:21, *“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”*

We see that in the idolatry of Paul’s day.

Rom. 1:18-23, *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.”*

We see it today in the theories of evolution, humanism, and immorality.

So God chose to save man through faith in a message that seems foolish.

1 Cor. 1:21, *“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”*

While the Jews were seeking signs, and the Greeks sought after wisdom.

1 Cor. 1:22, *“For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.”*

But for those who accept the call of the message of Christ crucified, there is both power and wisdom!

1 Cor. 1:23-24, *“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”*

For God’s foolishness is wiser than man, His weakness is stronger than man.

1 Cor. 1:25, *“Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”*

Thus, not many wise, mighty, noble are called.

At Corinth, there were not many wise (according to the flesh), mighty, noble who had responded to the call of the gospel.

1 Cor. 1:26, *“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.”*

The same is true today: those receptive to the gospel are usually not the wise, mighty, noble. Again, this is part of God’s design to shame the arrogant wisdom and might of those who reject God.

1 Cor. 1:27-28, *“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.”*

Otherwise, the wise and mighty would boast of themselves in the presence of God.

1 Cor. 1:29, *“That no flesh should glory in his presence.”*

This should make us cautious about anything based solely on the wisdom or strength of man. Man in his wisdom and strength cannot begin to compare to the foolishness and weakness of God! Thus...

We should boast in the Lord, not man

For in a crucified, risen Savior...

There is to be found wisdom from God.

- 1 Cor. 1:30, *“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”*
- Col. 2:3, *“In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”*

There is both righteousness and sanctification.

- 1 Cor. 1:30, *“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”*
- Phil. 3:9, *“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”*

- 1 Cor. 6:11, “*And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*”

There is redemption from sin.

- 1 Cor. 1:30, “*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”*
- Eph. 1:7, “*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*”

Thus, we should glory in the Lord.

Just as it written in the Scriptures.

1 Cor. 1:31, “*That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*”

Not in our own wisdom, might, or riches.

Jer. 9:23, “*Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches.*”

But in understanding and knowing God, who delights in lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.

Jer. 9:24, “*But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.*”

Paul provides himself as an example.

He had plenty of reasons to boast in himself.

- Gal. 1:13-14, “*For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.*”
- Phil. 3:4-6, “*Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*”

Yet, he counted such things as dung, in comparison to the excellence of knowing Christ and His salvation.

Phil. 3:7-11, *“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”*

Thus, his boast was in the cross of Christ.

Gal. 6:14, *“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”*

In what do you boast?

You may think yourself wise, strong, or self-sufficient because of your wealth. You may think others worthy to guide you in matters of truth and morality.

But unless it is ultimately the Lord who guides us, it is folly!

Conclusion

Every time we hear or read some expert or authority who gives their learned opinion, some poll in which the majority expresses their beliefs, we do well to remember:

1 Cor. 1:20, *“... hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”*

The only true and ultimate source of wisdom is from the Lord Himself...

- Col. 2:3, *“In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”*
- Col. 2:10, *“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”*

So, as Paul warns: Col. 2:8, *“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”*

Are you willing to place your trust, your life, your eternal security, in the hands of mere men? How much better to trust the words and wisdom of the Creator and Redeemer!

