

# **MAKING CHURCH EXCITING**

Part 11 of Foundations 260. 1 Corinthians 1:17-31; 2:1-5.  
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. April 6, 2025.

## **LOOKING FOR AN EXCITING CHURCH**

**I overheard a conversation.**

- I asked myself, “What makes a church exciting?”
- The answer is found in 1 Corinthians 1-2.

## **THE CONTEXT**

**1 Corinthians is a letter written by the apostle Paul to a church he planted.**

- The congregation was a mess, full of divisions caused by a focus on the messengers rather than the message.
- Paul reminded them the church was built on Christ and his cross, not on personalities etc.

**What makes a church exciting is the proclamation of the gospel message about the crucified Christ.**

## **1 CORINTHIANS 1:17-32; 2:1-5 (CSB)**

**The Bible reading.**

Please turn to the passage in your print copy of the Bible or the Bible app on your device. Copies of the Bible are available at the entrances to the auditorium.

**This passage highlights God’s wisdom in a foolish age.**

- God’s wisdom is revealed in the crucified Christ.
- People need the “word of the cross” whether it feels relevant or exciting to them or not.

# **THE WISDOM OF THIS AGE**

**Ancient Corinth was steeped in Greco-Roman culture.**

- It celebrated human-centered ideas about power, wisdom, philosophy, and social status.
- Paul called it “foolishness” and “the wisdom of this age.”

**An example of this foolishness was seen in public speaking and debate.**

- Teachers and philosophers gained prestige by using big words and flowery language. This was the “the world’s wisdom” (verse 20).

**The Jewish community in Corinth had their own form of folly.**

- They insisted on signs to authenticate Jesus.

**The consequences of worldly wisdom were negative:**

- 1:17: It empties the cross of its saving power.
- 1:18: It deafens people to the word of the cross.
- 1:21: It prevents people from knowing God.
- 1:22-25: It is powerless to restore people to God

**The Corinthian church was infected by worldly ideas of wisdom and power.**

- They followed leaders based on speaking skills rather than gospel substance. This caused division in the church.

# **THE WISDOM OF GOD**

**Paul’s response was to explain what he did and why he did it.**

1 Corinthians 1:17 (CSB) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel — not with eloquent wisdom (Greco Roman standards), so that the cross of Christ will not be emptied of its effect.

- Paul preached the gospel because:

1 Corinthians 1:18 (CSB) For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but it is the power of God to us who are being saved.

- Only the word of the cross can restore lost sinners to the holy God.
- A crucified Savior may seem offensive, stupid, and weak. But ...

1 Corinthians 1:24-25 (CSB) Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, 25 because God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

- The crucified Christ is what the world needs most:

1 Corinthians 1:30 (CSB) It is from him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom from God for us — our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

- God's wisdom saves people. Nothing else can. That's why Paul did not succumb to the lure of worldly, foolish standards of relevance and eloquence. Rather:

1 Corinthians 2:1-2 (CSB) When I came to you, brothers and sisters, announcing the mystery of God (Christ and the cross) to you, I did not come with brilliance of speech or wisdom. 2 I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

- Paul preached Christ and left the results to the Holy Spirit:

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 (CSB) My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not be based on human wisdom but on God's power.

## **MAKING CHURCH EXCITING**

**An exciting church boldly proclaims the message of Christ crucified.**

- Because ... The deepest needs of life are met by the crucified Savior.
- Both salvation AND sanctification.

# SMALL GROUP GUIDE

## Review

- Review Peter's April 6<sup>th</sup> teaching and study guide.
- What were the highlights of Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- Use the S.P.E.C.K. method to reflect on and apply the teaching:
  - S: Sins to confess
  - P: Promises to claim
  - E: Examples to follow
  - C: Commands to obey or Christ to rest in
  - K: Knowledge or insights to consider

## Discuss

- In what ways is the crucified Christ considered weak, or irrelevant, or stupid by Christians and non-Christians today?
- Explain why you agree/disagree that the message of Christ crucified makes a church exciting and relevant.
- How can we avoid relying on human wisdom or eloquence when sharing our faith and instead depend on God's power?
- Describe a situation where you felt weak or inadequate but saw God use you powerfully?

## Prayer

- Pray the Cornerstone would continue to boldly proclaim the crucified Christ.
- Pray Colossians 1:9-13 for the group and the Cornerstone.