

Lesson #5

18 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.

19 For it is written:

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

1 Corinthians 1:18-19

A QUICK REVIEW

1. The early years of the Corinthian Church
 - a) Good years
 - b) It became a highly gifted church
2. The latter years of the Corinthian Church
 - a) Factions grew up
 - b) The strength of the church was affected adversely
 - c) Paul had to address the problems:
 - i) Swiftly
 - ii) Candidly

THE PRIMACY OF THE CHURCH

1. The primacy of the Church

The preaching of the message of the cross

2. Preaching the Cross
 - a) It is not the only ministry

b) But its primacy must be defended

3. The message of the Cross

a) It was considered "foolishness" by some

b) Factions in the Church had caused a drift from the ministry of preaching the Gospel message

c) Paul defended the primacy of preaching the Message of the Cross

d) It was the power of God to those who were being saved

e) What the Cross represented:

i) The suffering of the Saviour

ii) The love of the Lord Jesus

iii) The power of God to save those who turn to the Lord Jesus in faith

iv) The message of the Gospel must not be diluted

A SPECIAL BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

1. Paul cited a text from Isaiah 29

¹³ Therefore the Lord said:

"Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths

And honour Me with their lips,

But have removed their hearts far from Me,

And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,

¹⁴ Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work

Among this people,

A marvelous work and a wonder;

For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,

And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden.

Isaiah 29:13-14

2. There were bad religious teachers in ancient Israel

- a) They taught wrongly
 - b) The teachers substituted the word of God with their wisdom
3. There were people in the Corinthian church who prided their wisdom too
- a) They did not focus on the primacy of the message of the cross
 - b) They wanted the focus of the church to be on other issues
4. Paul took a firm stand on this matter
- a) He summarised and applied Isaiah 29:13-14
 - b) Paul's application

For it is written:

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

- i) God disdained the wisdom of the wise
 - ii) He would bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent
- c) Paul rejected worldly wisdom
- i) He insisted on the primacy of preaching the cross
 - ii) It was the power of God that leads to salvation
 - iii) Human wisdom cannot result in the work of salvation

OUR CHALLENGE

1. To remain faithful and steadfast
2. To stand firmly on the need to remain true to the primacy of preaching the Gospel of the cross
3. To trust in God's wisdom and power