

**August 23, 2020 ~ 1Corinthians 1:18,
Is the Message of the Cross Foolishness?: Part One**

Read **1Corinthians 1:18-21**... When Paul says "word of the cross," he is speaking of the total revelation of God's plan and provision as recorded in the 66 Books of the Bible, this being fulfilled in and through God's Son [Jesus Christ], as Paul writes (**1Corinthians 15:1-4**), "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

The word *gospel* originated from the Anglo-Saxon word *godspell*, which means 'good story', and is expressed in the Bible by the Greek word *evangelion*, which means, "good news".

In **1Corinthians 1:18** Paul is referencing the message of the great chasm between God's holiness and man's depravity, as recorded and revealed from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21, this is indeed the *good news about Jesus Christ: crucified, resurrected, and coming again to get all those who belong to Him.*

Paul declares that this message is considered to be *foolishness* to those who are perishing [the Greek word translated foolishness is 'moría' (meaning = nonsense, dull, stupid; from which we get our English word moron).

Those "who are perishing" are those who have mortal life, but are spiritually dead, and unless they repent and believe in Jesus Christ they will die in their sins, doomed to an eternity in hell.

Those who reject the cross of Christ remain dead in their sins because they have rejected God's gift of forgiveness and eternal life. Please turn to Romans chapter 3.

Romans 3:10-12, as it is written [Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3], "There is none righteous, not even one; There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one."

Romans 3:23-24, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

Romans 5:8-9, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:1-2, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."

Romans 10:9-10, "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

No wonder Paul proclaims (**2Corinthians 9:15**), "Thanks be to God for His indescribable Gift!" At the very beginning of time (as we know it), God declared His plan and provision to save us from the consequences and condemnation of sin.

Please turn with me to **Genesis 3:1-24...**

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" **2** The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; **3** but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" **4** The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! **5** For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." **6** When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. **7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. **8** They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. **9** Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" **10** He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." **11** And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" **12** The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." **13** Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." **14** The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; **15** And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; **He** shall bruise [harm, injure] you on the head, And you shall bruise **Him** on the heel." **21** The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. **22** Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"— **23** therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. **24** So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the

cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

Turn to Isaiah 7:14, "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."

Turn to Matthew 1:18-25... "18 The birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. 20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." 22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us." 24 And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, 25 but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus meaning God's Salvation, the Lord Saves, Savior.

John 1:29... [At the river Jordan, John was baptizing, and when he saw Jesus approaching him he said] "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Ephesians 1:7, "In Him [Jesus] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."

Hebrews 1:1-3, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Hebrews 9:27-28, "Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him.

Hebrews 10:4-6, "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, But a body You have prepared for Me; In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure. 9-10, "then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first in order to establish the second. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." 14-18, "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who

are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, And on their mind I will write them," He then says, "And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin."

As we read earlier in **1Corinthians 1:18**, Paul declares that the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who believe, it is the power of God for salvation.

Let's look at some of the words of the Son of God, concerning God the Father's plan, purpose and provision fulfilled in and through Jesus Christ:

John 5:24-30, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment. I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." **6:28-29**, "Therefore they said to Him, 'What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.'" **7:14-18**, "...Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach. The Jews then were astonished, saying, 'How has this man become learned, having never been educated?' So Jesus answered them and said, 'My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.'" **8:23-25**, "He was saying to them, 'You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.' So they were saying to Him, 'Who are You?' [And] Jesus said to them, 'What have I been saying to you from the beginning?'" **28-30**, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.' As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him." **10:22-33**, "The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, 'How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are

the Christ, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered them, 'I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.' The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, 'I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?' The Jews answered Him, 'For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.'"

14:6-7, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."

The biblical and historical record of credible eye witness accounts, reports, and recordings of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, are too numerous and well documented to dismiss.

Jesus repeatedly told His disciples (**Luke 9:22**), "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day." And just as Jesus had said, on the third day after His death on the cross, He came out of the tomb and began showing Himself to many of His followers over a period of 40 days.

Why do the majority of people who live on the earth reject the free gift of God, forgiveness for sins and eternal life through Jesus Christ the Lord?

Tough question, but the answer is quite simple.

You see, in order to ask God for forgiveness, a person must sincerely admit their need to be forgiven, i.e., they must own up to and repent of their sins, confessing Christ as Lord, but also as the only way of salvation; for there is no other way to resolve the enmity that exists between the Holy God of Creation and sinful humanity.

When Jesus began His earthly ministry (cf. **Mark 1:15, 17**), He made it very clear that we must "Repent (of our sin), believe (in Him for salvation), and then follow Him (obeying God's Word in and through our life).

The message of the cross is not foolish, it is God's word: sovereign, infallible, inerrant, eternal. The truth is, that mankind apart from the saving grace of God through Christ, is foolish [i.e., stupid, idiotic, halfwitted, brainless, unreasonable; reckless, foolhardy, dimwitted, dopey, self-centered, and downright rebellious].

The epitome of foolishness is to reject the free gift of God (His own Son), who provides forgiveness for sin and eternal life. The poster child for all fools is found in **Psalms 14:1**, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

But honestly, we were all fools prior to believing in Christ; for we were dead in

our sins, unwilling to give the place of authority in our life to God. And for those who continue to consider the message of the cross to be foolishness, God's judgement is inevitable:

Romans 1:18-20, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."

1John 5:11-13, "And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

The message of the cross, the gospel of Christ, is anything but foolish...

Romans 1:16, "it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes," and again (**Romans 10:13**), for "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord [for the forgiveness of sin] will be saved."

In **Acts 4**, Peter and John are on trial for healing a man (lame from birth). Peter declares **10**, "Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health. **12**, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" [only Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior: Crucified, Resurrected, and Coming Again].

"[May] the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all," (**2Corinthians 13:14**).

Pastor Mike

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