

Sunday, September 13, 2015—I Corinthians 1:26-28: Confounded

Introduction/Review

- Last Sunday we studied verses 22 through 25.
- Verse 23—Paul’s core message was “Christ crucified” which was a “stumblingblock” to the Jews and “foolishness” unto the Gentiles.
- Verse 24—for those Jews and Gentiles who were called i.e., the “saved” of verse 18 Christ is both the “power” and “wisdom” of God.
- Verse 25—some of you asked questions after the service regarding my short comments at the end of last week’s message on verse 25. I believe that Paul is using a figure of speech or a turn of a phrase in verse 25. Paul is not saying that God is actually foolish or weak. Rather he is pointing out to the Corinthians that what lost men view as foolishness and weakness in God i.e., the preaching of “Christ crucified” actually magnifies God’s power and wisdom (verse 24).

I Corinthians 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:**
- *For ye see your calling, brethren*—Paul follows up verse 25 by telling the Corinthians to look around at those who comprise the church at Corinth. Paul wants them to observe something about those who harkened to the calling of the preaching of the cross and believed.
- By looking at those who comprise the church in Corinth they would observe that there are not many “wise men after the flesh,” “mighty,” or “noble” among them.
- *Wise men after the flesh*—in the context these people would be the wise, the scribes, and the disputers of this world from verse 20. These are people who view the message of the cross as foolish and intellectually beneath them.
 - Romans 11:25—“wise in your own conceits”
- *Not many mighty*—the English word “mighty” means having great bodily strength or physical power; very strong or vigorous; as a mighty arm. 1) Very strong; valiant; bold; as a mighty man of valor. Judges 6. 2) Very powerful; having great command.
 - Revelation 6:15
- These are people who possess and wield power in this world.

- *Not many noble*—the Greek word translated “noble” carries the following meanings according to *Strong’s Concordance*: 1) well born, of a noble family 2) noble minded. I believe that Paul has the first meaning in mind here in verse 26.
 - Luke 19:12
 - Acts 17:11
- According to Paul, if the saints in Corinth looked around their assembly that would not find many “wise men after the flesh” “mighty” or “noble” i.e., those of high birth or station within in society.
- Notice what the verse does not say. It does not say that there are **not any** “wise men after the flesh,” “mighty” or “noble” within the assembly. Rather it says that there are **not many**. This does not mean that the message of Christ crucified is irrational or contrary to reason what it means is that it runs contrary to man’s wisdom. God is not irrational for he created the laws of logical thought.
 - Isaiah 1:18
- What this means is that those who have the most to lose in this world in terms of intellectual prowess, power, position, station, or finances will struggle the most with the preaching of the cross. These kinds of people have placed a lot of stock in what they can do and accomplish. Then along comes the message of Christ crucified which says:
 - You are a sinner. You can do nothing that God will accept.
 - Christ died for your sins. He did what you could not. Trust and rely exclusively in what he did for you.
 - Not only did Christ die for your sins but he rose from the dead the victor over sin and death.
- For the “noble” this message is too much because they are relying/trusting in the fact that they are something in this world. For the “wise men” believing in the miracle of resurrection is irrational and contrary to the laws of nature and “unscientific.” For the “mighty” they don’t want to relinquish their power. So the result is that not **many** of these types of people are going to be found in the church in Corinth or any true Bible teaching assembly.

I Corinthians 1:27

- **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;**

- Note the contrast “but” at the beginning verse 27. Verse 27 helps explain what we just observed in verse 26.
- *But God hath chosen*—this is way God chose for things to function.
 - Verse 20—God made foolish the wisdom of this world.
 - Verse 21—“. . . it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”
- God chose out of the pleasure of his own will that the foolish things of the world would confound the wise. The English word “confound” carries a host of meanings according to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*: 1) To mingle and blend different things, so that their forms or natures cannot be distinguished; to mix in a mass or crowd, so that individuals cannot be distinguished. 2) To throw into disorder. 3) To mix or blend, so as to occasion a mistake of one thing for another. 4) To perplex; to disturb the apprehension by indistinctness of ideas or words. 5) To abash; to throw the mind into disorder; to cast down; to make ashamed. **6) To perplex with terror; to terrify; to dismay; to astonish; to throw into consternation; to stupify with amazement. 7) To destroy; to overthrow.**
 - Genesis 11:7, 9
- The English word “confounded” occurs 50 times in 47 verses in the King James Bible. Confounded means “mixed or blended in disorder; perplexed; abashed; dismayed; put to shame and silence; astonished.” (*Webster’s 1828*)
 - Psalm 97:7
 - Isaiah 24:23
 - Acts 2:6; 9:22
- God has chosen for the foolish things of the world to destroy and overthrow the wise (verse 19) and the weak things of the world to destroy and overthrew the things that are mighty.