

THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS; *The Power and Wisdom of God*

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. 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. 20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

The Power of God in the Gospel

- In verse 17, Paul said that it was his mission to preach the Gospel but *not with wisdom of words*. Why does he say that, and what can we learn from this today?

The Wisdom of God in the Gospel

- In verses 19-23, Paul says that the wisdom of this world was incapable of bringing men to a saving knowledge of God. Looking at the different groups in view, and their respective approaches to God, what is the one thing they had in common?

- Throughout this passage, Paul uses the present tense to describe certain groups of people. For example, he speaks of those who “are perishing” and those who “are being saved” (v 18). In verse 24 he speaks of those who “are believing.” How does that change the way we understand and apply this text to our lives?
