

## I. The World Has Its Own Wisdom

Do you seek wisdom? Do you desire to be wise? Where does your wisdom come from? Is it from the world or from God? The dictionary defines wisdom as "knowledge of what is true or right coupled with just judgment as to action..." Wisdom is something acquired by experience, observation, practice and in "the school of life."

The world offers us its own wisdom, which the Apostle Paul contrasts with the wisdom of God in this text. He says that "the foolishness of God" is wiser than the wisdom of the world. The Greeks greatly admired wisdom; they came from a long history of famous sages and had great confidence in their philosophical ancestors. The Jews looked for signs as proof of a Messiah (Mark 8:11; Luke 17:20-21; John 6:28-30). But the difficulty in seeking wisdom or looking for signs is that you are looking in the wrong place to find God.

It's important for us to understand that Paul is not speaking against learning from the world. He isn't saying that wisdom from experience and from observation is bad. The Apostle is referring to the foolishness and futility of seeking God using the wisdom of this world. It's not the way to seek God. And we Christians are not immune from seeking the wisdom of this world just as the Greek and Jew did in Paul's day.

The world has its own wisdom...

## II. But the Wisdom of the World Does Not Enable Us to Know God

The wisdom of the world doesn't save us. It is "through the folly of what we preach" that our Lord saves. Neither the Greek nor the Jew believes in Christ crucified. Therefore Paul focuses on just that as the key point for the Corinthians. The cross seems foolish to the people of this world.

The account of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11) shows us that the world desires to build and make its own way to get to God. And according to Paul the world seeks God in its own wisdom. But the Apostle definitely says that God has another plan. It is the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, repentance and faith in him that saves.

The world hates Christ (John 7:7). Today's postmodernists as much as the ancient Greeks refuse to believe in God. Today's unbelievers as much as the ancient Jews demand signs. We live in a world that attacks the Bible from all sides. Our children are taught to question the Bible or worse. In our universities many professors openly mock the Word of God. Our society in many ways has no regard for God.

The wisdom of the world doesn't enable us to know God because it doesn't look for him in his revealed word. How many people do you know who don't believe in the Bible? How many say nowadays that the Bible is irrelevant? How many are simply clueless about what the Bible has to say? How many people seek wisdom in science, or in "the spiritual" or in acquiring more knowledge? How many state that they are seeking the same God through different ways?

The search for God through the wisdom of this world is futile: it ends up in frustration, discouragement and desperation. It's a dead-end street.

### III. So Our Only Hope Is the Wisdom of God in Christ Jesus

If the wisdom of the world doesn't enable us to know Christ, how do we get to know him? How are we saved? Verses 30 and 31 give us the answer, which is no surprise. Only through the work of the Lord in Christ Jesus to justify us.

Verses 26-31 give us a good summary of how God chooses his people. Paul says that the Corinthians were regular folks, not very wise from the world's point of view. But God chose them in order to shame those who are wise. God acts and works in accordance with his perfect plan, which often is very different from what the world thinks.

In these six verses we see the Lord's plan for salvation:

1. God has chosen "what is low and despised in the world...so that nobody can boast before God." We're saved by pure grace, there's nobody who can say that he deserved or earned his salvation. We're all guilty and we all deserve God's wrath. Nobody can brag or boast before God (Galatians 6:14). God saved us by means of his beloved son, the Lord Jesus Christ, "who became to us wisdom from God..." (v 30).
2. Christ Jesus became not only wisdom from God but also our "righteousness, sanctification and redemption."
3. Jesus Christ came to save sinners (Mark 2:17). And he justifies us, he redeems us and he sanctifies us so that we can boast in the Lord (v 31). Since the wisdom of the world isn't trustworthy, Jesus Christ "became the wisdom of God for us" so that we would know true wisdom.

God has and will continue to frustrate the plans of this world (Psalm 33:10). What seems right to man may not be right at all (Proverbs 14:12). The Apostle Paul in his letter to the church at Colosse, tells us to be filled with spiritual wisdom (Colossians 1:9). The only hope that we have is to set aside our own wisdom or the world's wisdom and trust in Christ Jesus. Paul says that for the world preaching seems to be foolishness. He knows that for the Jew, a crucified Messiah doesn't fit with the idea of a triumphant Savior. The Greek can't even imagine a god who becomes man. Although 2,000 years have passed, not much has changed. The world continues trusting in its own wisdom and keeps on rejecting God. Regrettably many refuse to believe in him. They prefer the wisdom of the world to eternal life with Jesus Christ.

### IV. Conclusion

Not unlike the Apostle Paul, we live in an increasingly secular world which values, esteems and exalts its own wisdom over and against the wisdom of God. But that worldly wisdom is ultimately of no use and will go the way of all earthly things. Which wisdom are you actively pursuing? The world's or God's? Wisdom which will be ultimately worthless or that which promises salvation and eternal life? Following the "wise" people of this world or the One who is Wisdom? Looking for wisdom like the Greeks and seeking signs like the Jews, or faithfully listening to the "folly" of preaching, which is a means of grace unto salvation?

Our call is to continue in the delightful privilege of proclaiming the Lord Jesus Christ vigorously, courageously, joyfully and hopefully as we confront the wisdom of this world. The Bible teaches us to trust in the wisdom of God in Christ, who "became to us wisdom from God." Let us pursue that wisdom diligently in order to glorify God, which is our chief end and purpose in life.