

# **The Problem and the Power of the Message of the Cross**

## **INTRODUCTORY THOUGHTS**

### **Fee**

**1:18**

**1:19**

**1:20**

**1:21**

**1:22**

**1:23**

**1:24**

**1:25**

## **The Problem and the Power of the Message of the Cross**

"Houston, we have a problem" was possibly one of the greatest understatements of the last century; Apollo 13 did not just have a problem, she had a mission critical failure...Corinth didn't just have a problem...she had a mission critical failure

### **What was that?**

***Division and quarrels in the church, 1:10, 1:11***

***The problem was not a division of doctrine: "The problem is a power struggle, not a theological controversy."***

***Self-absorbed people wanted to get a team behind them and get what they wanted in the church. They gave themselves spiritual names.***

***They apportioned Christ, 1:12.***

They were attempting to divide Christ and pass out power-shares of him.

***Please make the Yankees win***

***Please don't let it rain on my kid's birthday party***

***Was Paul crucified for you?***

Did any of this take place for your personal benefit?

**This kind of thinking leads to a nullified cross, 1:17.**

***Where is the power of the cross in our church today?***

**The explanation of the problem of the cross, 1:18-2:5**

***The message of the cross, 1:18-25***

The recipients of the message of the cross, 1:26-31

Paul's preaching of the cross, 2:1-5

## The message of the cross; 1:18-25

***It is antithetical (the exact opposite) to the thinking of those who are perishing, 1:18***

Paul divides the whole world up into two groups

*Those who are being saved... Christians who are growing in their faith*

*Those who are perishing, all lost people*

***No third group, no 'tweeners.***

Paul makes clear the antithesis

***Foolishness***

***The power of God***

### ***An Old Testament proof text, 1:19***

Cites Isaiah 29:14: Israel, contrary to what God told them, thought that siding with Egypt would make them safe. What it did to was provoke Assyria to attack them.

***It is a complete nullification of all modern thought, of all the modern truth seekers, 1:20***

These groups of people were professional experts, the “think tanks” of the day. They discredit what does not meet their preconceived notions of truth or wisdom.

***It is clear that mankind can never reach God without the message of the cross, 1:21***

The wisdom of this world included persuasion through rhetoric, through working from common ground, through persuasive words and thoughts

God saves people through the proclamation of a scandalous, foolish message.

***This is a clear, antithetical explanation of the message, 1:22-24***

The Jewish notion of salvation, POWER, 1:22a!

*They thought their messiah would be strong and powerful.*

The Greek notion of salvation, (worldly) WISDOM, 1:22b

*They thought they could win the day through persuasive words and human reason*

The biblical message of salvation, a crucified messiah, 1:23a

*Obviously weak, defeated, and obviously foolish; who would be attracted to this?*

The opposition of the POWER people—it is a scandal, 1:23b.

*They knew what Deuteronomy 21:23 said. A crucified Christ was a weak, dead Christ.*

The opposition of the WISDOM people—it is foolish, 1:23c.

*The way of wisdom led to power and prestige; this was repugnant to Greeks. It was like eating earthworms or human waste.*

*I know what the Bible says, but don't you think...*

**Symbols that won't work**

**Nova = won't run**

**Noose**

**White hoods**

**Osama's Investments**

**Kevorkian Life INS Company**

**Sadaam Hussein Retirement Village**

But isn't Christ exalted in his resurrection?

*Yes, but you will never be identified with an exalted Christ if you are not first identified with a humiliated Christ.*

**They aren't interested in the humiliation of the cross they' want the power of persuasion, prestige, personal preference**

*You don't meet Christ on common ground; Nicodemus thought he could do that...*

***The only hope for lost people is that through the clear proclamation of a scandalous foolish message, God would call people to himself, 1:24***

Would you join a church where the pastor had sodomized boys, taken money from the local orphanage, pilfered money from the missions' fund, cheated on his wife with wives of the leadership in the church? In addition to this, the leadership, when they found out, decided to hide it from the congregation? This is a scandalous, foolish church.

Just so, apart from the preaching of the message of this cross, empowered by God's call to salvation, nobody would join this salvation. It is a powerful message; don't ever water it down by what you say...or by how you live your life in the local church.

***God isn't interested in impressing mankind in his depravity, 1:25***

God's message, at its "worst," is much more powerful than worldly wisdom at its best.

**So what?**

***Have you come to Christ at the foot of his cross?***

***Or have you come to Christ on common ground?***

***Are you living out the powerful message of a humiliated Christ in your daily life?***

***Are you living out the message of a humiliated Christ in your service to your church?***