POWER HOUR

11/1/2026

Lesson Text:
1 Corinthians1:18-31

Related Scriptures:
1 Corinthians 2:1-16;
Colossians 2:1-15; Matthew 11:25-30
2 Corinthians 12:1-10 &
Jeremiah 9:23-26

"THE WISDOM OF THE GOSPEL"

NLT TRANSLATION

Golden Text: For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. 1 Corinthians 1:25 NLT

Time: between A.D. 54 and 56 **Place**: from Ephesus

1 Corinthians 1:18-31 NLT

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; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."20 Where is the
wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this
age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the
wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased
through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. 22 Jews
demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a
stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has
called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25
For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is
stronger than human strength. 26 Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when
you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were
influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the
world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the
strong. 28 God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and
the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast
before him. 30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for

us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. [31] Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.

INTRODUCTION

We who know the Lord as our Savior love the gospel message and know it is "power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). However; the world may consider the message of Christ's death and resurrection to be weak and foolish, it is a demonstration of God's strength and wisdom.

The world deems raw power, nobility, and intellectual prowess impressive. But God often saves those who are weak and foolish through the seemingly weak and foolish message of the cross so that no one may boast.

God's power and wisdom are infinitely greater than humans'. Yet amazingly, His wisdom is available for us through Christ. Through Him, we can receive wisdom that far surpasses that of any of the world's greatest philosophers. What a tremendous blessing! Surely such wisdom is worth intense effort and serious pursuit! Yet we cannot boast because we receive this wisdom as a gift. We must give the glory to God.

Additional Scripture Readings:

The "Wisdom" of Men. Isaiah 29:13-24.

There Is No Other. Isaiah 45:20-25.

Boast in the Lord. Jeremiah 9:23-26.

The Lord Reveals Secrets. Luke 10:21-24.

Walk in Christ. Colossians 2:1-15.

God's Hidden Wisdom. 1 Corinthians 2:1-16.

The Wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:18-31.

1. Worldy wisdom rejects the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:18-24). In verse 18, Paul laid out the contrast he developed in this section. To "them that perish" (the unsaved), the preaching of the cross is foolishness. They reject and refuse to believe the gospel because it seems impossible. To us, the saved, the preaching of the cross displays the power and wisdom of God. We welcome and embrace the gospel.

In verse 19, Paul quoted Isaiah 29:14 to show that just as God nullified the so-called wisdom of the wayward Israelites, so He would do the same to people of the first-century—and to us today.

Verse 20 contains four rhetorical questions. The first three questions ask where the world's wise and intelligent fit into God's plan. The answer is the same for all three—these people can contribute nothing to God's plan. Paul posed the fourth question to show how God's wisdom makes man's wisdom look like foolishness.

Paul introduced the idea of the wisdom of God in verse 21. In God's wise plan, the world by its own wisdom can never know God. In contrast, God uses the preaching of the gospel, which the world considers foolishness, to save people.

In verses 22-24, Paul differentiated the Jews and the Greeks (Gentiles) in his discussion of God's wisdom. The Jews looked for a sign to validate God's plan, whereas the Greeks approached God's plan from an intellectual, cerebral standpoint (vs. 22). To the Jews, Paul asserted that the preaching of the crucified Christ was a stumbling block. They were looking for an earthly king, not a dead (in their eyes) leader. To the Greeks, the preaching of the crucified Christ was foolishness because one who died did not fit their idea of wisdom (vs. 23).

Paul affirmed in verse 24 that he preached the same crucified Christ to both Jews and Greeks. Believers from both groups considered the gospel to be the power and wisdom of God.

2. God's wisdom is displayed in the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:25-29). In this section, Paul developed his thoughts about the wisdom of the gospel. In verse 25, he spoke about the foolishness and weakness of God. Is God foolish and weak? Of course He is not. The point is that even what some consider to be the foolishness of God—the gospel—is wiser than human wisdom. Likewise, even what some consider to be the weakness of God—again the gospel—is stronger than people.

Paul then noted that few of the Corinthians were wise, powerful, or prominent when they were saved. His point was that God chooses those considered foolish, weak, lowly, and despised because they need Christ and realize that they cannot save themselves (vss. 27-28). And He does all this to confound those who claim to be wise.

This then is the wisdom of the gospel—to upend the world's ideas of who is wise

and to save those who realize they cannot save themselves. In this way no one can glory in himself (vs. 29).

3. Jesus Christ is our wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30-31). Paul concluded in verse 30 with a fourfold description of Christ. He both embodies and is the source of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Christ is all these, so that all glory goes to Him and not to anyone else (vs. 31). The gospel surely shows the wisdom of God.

PRACTICAL POINTS

The mindset of unbelievers opposes the mindset of believers (1 Corinthians 1:18).
God's wisdom has no equal (vss. 19-20).
It is impossible to find God through mere human intellect (vs. 21).
What counts for wisdom varies for different people groups (vss. 22-23).
Only in Christ can we find God's wisdom (vs. 24).
Nothing beats God's wisdom (vss. 25-26).
God uses weakness to proclaim His greatness (vss. 27-28).
No one is worthy of glory at God's expense (vs. 29).
In Christ, we gain everything that human wisdom cannot provide (vs. 30).
We should boast in God's wisdom (vs. 31).

CONCLUSION

Those who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior understand the wisdom of the gospel, and they also know the importance of sharing this gospel with others so that they too may believe and share in the wisdom of God. Sometimes opportunities to share the gospel with an individual appear multiple times, such as with a neighbor or coworker. But at other times, opportunities to share the gospel last only minutes with strangers the Lord brings across our paths. Pray that the Holy Spirit would help you see opportunities to share the gospel.

Next week's lesson: Explains our responsibility is to seek God's wisdom ***'Seek for Wisdom as for Silver" – Proverbs 2:1-9***

Union Gospel Press, LifeStone