



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

I CORINTHIANS 1:18-31

LESSON: THE WISDOM OF THE GOSPEL—

November 1, 2026

INTRODUCTION:

Paul writes this letter to the churches he had begun in Corinth on his second missionary journey. There are quarrels in the church, and they've become divided. *One is saying, 'I belong to Paul'. Another says, 'I belong to Apollos.' Another says, 'I belong to Peter'. And still another person says, 'I belong to Christ.'* Now, we're at this point!

1ST Cor. 1:13 **Is Christ divided: was Paul crucified for you" or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?**

Three things were asked of the Corinthians:

1. Is Christ divided? In other words, "Is part of Christ over here with this group or clique or is Christ part of the other group? Which one rules; who is Lord; Is Christ within the church or is He in pieces?"
2. Was Paul crucified for you? Paul was not the one crucified for the Corinthians! He was not the Savior for the Corinthians nor of any other body of believers! He did not hang on the cross to suffer in our place.
3. Were you baptized in the name of Paul? A believer is only to be baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

It is Christ's Name that has all authority. Jesus did not baptize anyone personally (Jh.4:2), but His disciples did in the Name of Jesus. Their allegiance should have been to Christ, and their support to the servants of Christ. The Believer confesses the Lord Jesus Christ and gives testimony that he is committing his life to follow the LORD.

1ST Cor. 1:14 **I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;—** Paul adamantly denies that he ever attempted to secure a personal following of believers when he said "*thank God I didn't baptized any of you except Crispus and Gaius.*" **Crispus** was the leading ruler of the Jewish synagogue at Corinth. He was led to Christ and baptized by Paul personally (Acts 18:8). **Gaius** was Paul's host when he was in Corinth (Rom. 16:23). Paul wanted to keep the message of baptism upon Jesus and the cross, not upon himself. He didn't want anyone to think that a person had decided to belong to him, for "*Baptism*" was not 'in his name', but "*in the Name of Jesus.*" He was already addressing contention in verse 11 and those being divided in the church. Divided, having favorites; devided like they have in preachers today. But Paul says **I thank God that I baptized none of you** which takes the spotlight off of him, to put it back upon baptism's real purpose: our union with Jesus and not our loyalty to a human leader. And there's only one Name we are baptized in, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for he addresses his purpose in verse 17.

1ST Cor. 1:15 **Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.** For no believer can r

ightfully accuse him of seeking to form a following or clique, and baptizing them in his (Paul's)

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

name. He's not trying to cause any division.

1ST Cor.1:16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. Paul now recalls another he has baptized, Stephanas. He is one of the three messengers who delivered the Corinthian letter to Paul.

1ST Cor.1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. Yes this is Paul's specific assignment and purpose. It was not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel, adding, not with wisdom of words; not with eloquent speech. The message was to be about the cross, lest the big words spoken overshadow Christ, and make Him of none effect, empty or deprived of substance. The success of the Gospel relies in the plain doctrine of a crucified Lord. It was not about being a great orator with Greek philosophy. The truth needed no artificial dress-up. It alone carries with it the "*power of God unto salvation*" (Rom.1:16). The Corinthians can be healed if they see the distinction of evangelizing the true mission of Christ on the cross, using God's wisdom more so than with speech that cannot be understood or received.

LESSON:

I. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-20

1ST Cor.1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. No other message has changed lives like the message of the cross of Christ. The preaching of the cross is the power of God to those who are saved. However, that preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. The seed of truth fell on hard ground. The lost do not like the message that man is saved through a crucified Messiah. It's too simple for them! ¹They wanted God to act in ways that seem wise and powerful to them as a king would take territory, but God saves those who are willing to trust Him.

We must **Hear** the gospel preached, **Receive** the gospel (that Jesus died on an old rugged cross to save us while we were yet in sin), **Confess** with your mouth the truth you've heard (Jesus is LORD), and **Believe** the truth in your heart (God raised Jesus from the dead). Then you shall be saved! **SIMPLE!**

1ST Cor.1:19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Since the perishing man trusts more in the wisdom of the wise, God says it is written in Isaiah 29:14c "*...for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.*" How does Jesus destroy and make foolish the wisdom of the wise? It is by the cross.

1. The cross exposes man's reasoning and wisdom of his achievements, for it exposes the problem of their sin, their depraved and selfish heart. Whatever the achievement you hold onto, it cannot hold to the weight of the cross. Jesus says, "*If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me!*"
2. The cross exposes man's search for love, joy, peace, and all the other spiritual qualities of life found in other things. It can only be found where they are least looking for it. God's Word is the way, truth, and life. "*For it is God who so loved the world that He gave...*" "He

¹ <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/1-corinthians-lbw.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

sent His word and delivered them...."

3. The cross shows that the answer to man's problems is the way of the sacrifice.

It's not in power and fame; selfishness and greed, nor human works and efforts, nor is it in all the books you've read. Jesus destroys and makes foolish the wisdom of the wise by His sacrifice on an old rugged cross. It's that simple—in that He laid down His life for us on that cross. That's what sacrifice is: He laid down! What are we laying down? What are we putting down for God to do what He wants? Therefore, the glorious message of the cross is that God loves us enough to save us, by offering the perfect sacrifice for us—Jesus Christ, God's own perfect Son took our sins upon Himself, died, was buried, and was resurrected by the Father to bring new life; salvation to us in which we could not get any other way! In this, Christ destroys the wisdom of the wise. Paul, the very one writing this can tell us. He had all the teachings, being a scholar of the law, esteemed in it all until he had an encounter on the Damascus Road, and called Jesus LORD—WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME TO DO...LORD? God wants us to see what sacrifice looks like, and how to do it! You know the saying, *"Let Go and Let God!"* That's our part!

1ST Cor. 1:20 **Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?**— So, Paul asks the question: Where are the wise? Where are the clever teachers, and where are the ones who know how to argue shrewdly of this world? Can't you see God don't need all of that to get His message over. He only needs those who believe. You can be full of head knowledge, but not understand the things of the Spirit. So, this is how God made foolish the wisdom of this world. In all of the world's wisdom, they still can't understand or figure out the way or worth of the cross. They still can't figure out spiritual truth without Christ or the Spirit of God. Man can do nothing without God. And God has said *"your ways re not My ways!"* What they deem valuable in this world is made foolish when they do not understand the cross, nor can they understand how Jesus can lay down His life for sinners on a cross. Medical people and scientists go by facts they can see; we go by faith, what eyes can't see.

II. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:21-25

1ST Cor. 1:21 **For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.** For after that meant after hearing the clever teachers, the shrew arguments of the world, all the wisdom that the wise had, it all still came down to: they still failed and didn't know God. So, God made it so simple. *"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching (the cross) to save them that believe."* (That was God's Wisdom).

1. The world don't know that the cross is the wisdom of God. God chose to save the world this way. It seems foolish to the world, but it's the key to be saved.
2. The world still don't know that the cross is the power of God to save those who believe. The Word of God is the utterance of power with the help of the Spirit to accept the Savior named Jesus Christ, who gave His life, being crucified for many upon a cross to live forever!

1ST Cor. 1:22 **For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:**— The world has made some mistakes in looking at the cross— The Jews or religionists of the world feel they are the chosen seed of God, but they were always looking for a sign; for a miracle; a physical wonder,





PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

then they would listen. And on the other hand, the Greeks want to listen to a message that has clever ideas; flowery speech about earthly affairs; intellectual splendor, which make them seem eternal.

1ST Cor. 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;— Coming from verse 22 of what the Jew and the Greek required, Paul says “**But**”—letting them know But this is what God requires: Preaching Christ crucified! To the Jews this was a stumblingblock, and it was foolishness to the Greeks. Both found it equally difficult to accept Jesus on the cross as their Eternal Savior. The idea of a suffering and crucified Messiah contradicted their messianic expectations and interpretations of the Hebrew Scriptures when looking for a Triumphant King to defeat and liberate them from Roman rule. Generations makes the mistake of stumbling over the simplicity of the cross. They just can't get pass that. John the Baptist preached that He was Coming. Yes, Jesus came and preached the Gospel, showing us the Way. And He's Coming back again. Will we be ready?

1ST Cor. 1:24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. So, Paul says “**But**” again, and says, “**them which are called**”— both Jew and Greek: Discover this: that Christ is the power of God, and He is the wisdom of God. Christ embodies the wisdom, and power of God. Jesus Christ is able to...

- ...bring their hearts and lives deliverance from the sin and restlessness of their souls.
- ...bring the knowledge of God, and His infilling love, and peace.
- ...bring the guidance, and direction of God as they walk through the trials of life day by day.
- ...bring perfect assurance that we will all live eternally with God.
- ...bring the greatest purpose and meaning in life possible, and that is, of reaching and ministering to a world that reels under the weight of calamity, and desperate needs—no matter the cost.

1ST Cor. 1:25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. The foolishness of God (the cross) proves that God's way is wiser, and the weakness of God (the cross) is stronger than man's human strength, and because God through Jesus Christ saves mankind. When a man truly bows before the cross, he surrenders all he is and all he has to Christ, and Christ makes him into a new creature. Have you been truly saved?

²Why God Chooses the Apparent Weak Things

- To nullify human pride (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).
- To spotlight saving grace as His work alone (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- To invite simple, childlike faith (Matthew 18:3-4).
- To prove that true power is moral and spiritual, not merely physical or intellectual (Zechariah 4:6).

III. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-31

1ST Cor. 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:— The Corinthians needed to remember who they were, and what they were when God chose them. Paul says you were **not** called because

² https://biblehub.com/Apply_God_s_strength_over_human_power.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

you were wise, mighty, or noble. All had flaws; made mistakes brethren, so look at yourselves for there's a calling on their lives. Paul said:

- Not many wise men after the flesh (those who pursue and live for the fleshly wisdom of this world) were called. Few of these are ever saved.
- Not many were mighty; powerful, for their earthly position and power have no bearing upon God's acceptance of them.
- And not many noble were called. Such may be esteemed by men, but they are not esteemed by God.

Pride, self-sufficiency, self-righteousness, self-centeredness keeps men from becoming acceptable to God. Men are saved by the grace of God, not by self-effort, nor their wisdom, nor their might, or nobility. No. Therefore, they had no excuse for acting snobbish, or for criticizing or ignoring others. Sometimes we need a wake-up call; a reminder. This was God's wake-up call; calling back to their remembrance of how they were when they were called.

1ST Cor. 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;—

"This lets us know that God takes the initiative in saving men. He knows why and what He chooses.

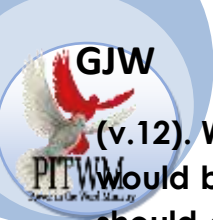
- God chooses the foolish things of this world. **Why?** to confound (shame) the wise. The wise with all their knowledge won't honestly take the foolish things of this world as genuine enough to truly study or believe God in the Holy Scriptures as truth. They have to do too much analyzing! That's why no flesh will glory in God's presence.
- God chooses the weak things of this world. **Why?** to confound (shame) the things which are mighty. The mighty that boast or have titles with their chest stuck out won't take the weak things that God would choose. That's why no flesh will glory in God's presence.

The wise think selfishly and think they are able to save themselves, while God is willing to use the foolish and weak things that will give total allegiance with humility to Him.

1ST Cor. 1:28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:—

- God chooses the base things (lowly things) and the despised things (unloved and loathed) of this world. **Why?** to nullify the things that are. Because pride, arrogance, self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency can't stand before God.
- God chooses the things which are of not; nothing; things not up to man's standard, and use the things that seem to be nothing, to nullify (dethrone) the things that are to make a difference. Even the Jews had to be brought down a notch, God's chosen people who despised the Gentiles.

1ST Cor. 1:29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. All those who think they are something in this world, God eliminates their boasting. The wise, the mighty, and noble... **Why?** That no flesh should glory in His presence. He's Creator! This hits at the heart of the Corinthians division from the beginning (vv.10-11). Members were boasting about their allegiance to different leaders



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

(v.12). We can't fool God about ourselves, He knows everything, and our boasting in the flesh would be dishonoring God. We have all sinned and fallen short of His glory. And our wisdom should only come from God! 2 Corinthians 10:17 says *"Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."* Pride, arrogance, self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency can't stand before God.

1ST Cor.1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:— "But of Him" means out of Him; out of His nature of love and salvation, ye are in Christ Jesus "because of Him." It centers all credit on the Father. God chose *"you"* or *"us"* to be in Christ—our position is in Christ.

1. God's real Wisdom is Jesus Christ, His only Son. God has given His *Wisdom* to the world through His Son Jesus Christ. And through Jesus Christ:
 - God's wisdom has spoken to the world. • revealed Himself to the world. • and lived before the world in human flesh. Therefore, man now knows the way, the truth, and the life of God. So, man is without excuse.
2. Christ is the Righteousness of God. The believer's *right standing* before God is made possible through faith in Christ (Romans 3:22). Man by his very nature can't live in God's presence, therefore, Jesus is the only way a man can become righteous. He stood before God, and before the world as the Perfect, Ideal, Sinless, and Righteous Man for the unrighteous man, and covered every man who accepted Him with His righteousness.
3. Christ is the Sanctification of God.
 - (a) *"Sanctification"* means to be set apart unto God. When a man believes in Jesus Christ, God takes that man's faith, and counts it as one of His, as set-apart unto Him.
 - (b) *"Sanctification"* means holiness and righteous, pure, and clean life. God puts the Spirit of Christ—the very life and energy and power of Christ, who is the Holy Spirit into the heart and life of the new believer to live. As the new Believer follows in the footsteps of Christ, living more and more like Christ, he becomes more and more set apart day by day.
4. Christ is the Redemption of God. When Jesus Christ died, His death became the ideal and Representative Man for all men. He was able to bear the punishment for every man's sins. And through His death, Jesus Christ *redeems* (buy back; ransom) us from sin, death, and punishment. He has redeemed us back to God. He is the Redeemer, the Deliverer for this world to God.

So now, Jesus Christ is our Ultimate Wisdom. He is Righteousness. It is His righteousness we are clothed in that puts us in right standing with God. He is our Sanctification. He makes us holy. And He is our Redeemer, paying the ultimate price to set us free— to all who will accept Him. Galatians 3:13 says *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us..."*

1ST Cor.1:31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

"According as it is written"— This takes me to Jeremiah 9:23-24

"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD





PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD..”

The purpose is to stir men to praise God instead of boasting or glorying in their own wisdom and self-sufficiency. *"If anyone is going to boast or glory in anything, let him boast only of what the Lord has done."* The end result will be unity and harmony within the church community, and a Christ-centered life! *"Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who glorieth glory in understanding and knowing Me..." "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."*

SUMMARY:

18 No other message has changed lives like the message of the cross of Christ. The preaching of the cross is the power of God to those who are saved, but foolish to those who perish. **19** And since the perishing man trusts more in the wisdom of the wise, God says *"it is written"* in Isaiah 29:14c *"...for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."* **20** So, Paul asks the question: *"Where are the wise? Where are the clever teachers, and where are the ones who know how to argue shrewdly of this world?"* Can't you see God don't need all of that to get His message over. He only needs those who believe. So, this is how God made foolish the wisdom of this world (**1Cor.1:18-20**).

21 In all the wisdom that the wise have, they still failed, and didn't know God. *"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching (the cross) to save them that believe."* (That was God's wisdom).

22 The world has made some mistakes in looking at the cross, for the Jews required a sign, and the Greeks sought after wisdom. **23** Generations makes the mistake of stumbling over the simplicity of the cross. Preaching Christ crucified to the Jews was a stumblingblock, and it was foolishness to the Greeks. Both found it equally difficult to accept Jesus on the cross as their Eternal Savior. The idea of a suffering and crucified Messiah contradicted their messianic expectations. **24** But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks discover that Christ is the power, and wisdom of God **25** because the foolishness of God (the cross) proves that God's way is wiser than men, and the weakness of God (the cross) is stronger than man's human strength, and because God through Jesus Christ saves mankind (**1Cor.1:21-25**).

26 The Corinthians needed to remember who they were, and what they were when God chose them. Paul says: *"Not many were wise men after the flesh, nor mighty, or noble when called."* All had flaws; made mistakes brethren, **27** but *God chose the foolish things of the world to confound (confuse) the wise; and God chose the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 and God choose the base things, and the despised things of this world, and used the things which are of nothing; the things not up to man's standard, bringing to nothing, the things that are to make a difference. Even the Jews had to be brought down a notch, God's chosen people who despised the Gentiles.29* All those who think they are something in this world, God eliminates



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

their boasting. Why? That no flesh should glory in His presence. **30** But out of Him; out of His nature of love and salvation; *"because of Him."* God chose "us" to be in Christ—our position is in Christ. He made us acceptable to God to have wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Everything we need is in Christ, His only begotten Son! **31** According as it is written, the purpose is to stir men to praise God, instead of boasting or glorying in their own wisdom and self-sufficiency. *"If anyone is going to glory, let him glory in the Lord"* (**1Cor.1:26-31**).

APPLICATION:

I must never let my appreciation for any teacher, preacher or author cause me to follow a man rather than the message of God's Word. My allegiance must be to Jesus Christ! Thank you, Lord!