

1 Corinthians 1:17-2:5

Introduction

The Corinthians were a church full of problems. Our purpose in reading this letter is to learn from their mistakes-- we want to be strong and to excel in the areas in which they struggled. What do you recall as being important from our last study?

Read 1 Cor 1:17-2:5

1. Verse 17 begins with the word, "For..." indicating that Paul is giving a reason or explanation for something. What is the issue that Paul is wanting to make clear to the Corinthians?

The nature of the gospel builds unity

Paul is concerned that the cross not be emptied of its power by being preached with words of human wisdom (v17). It takes Paul the rest of the passage to explain what he means. Let's see if we can follow his argument.

2. Throughout the passage, what reasons does Paul give for saying that the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing (v18)?
3. What does it mean that God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise (v27)?
4. What do we learn about 'the gospel of the cross' from this passage?
5. [optional] How might the cross be emptied of its power by being preached with words of human wisdom? (reflect back on v17)
6. When are we likely to rely on human wisdom when we really ought to be relying on the power of God? What would we do differently in these situations in order to depend upon God's power?
7. How would this passage serve to build unity in the divided church at Corinth?
8. How does this passage serve to build unity in our church?

For further reflection

How might this passage challenge you to change your estimation of yourself?

How might you explain 'the power of the gospel' to an interested inquirer?