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## THE CHURCH THE WORLD NEEDS | STRANGER THAN FICTION (3)

September 26, 2021

1 Corinthians 1:17-25

### PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst  
To cultivate mutually encouraging-relationships  
To participate in God's mission to the world

### ICE BREAKER QUESTION

10 MIN

Share one "high" and one "low" from the previous week.

### WORSHIP

10 MIN

#### OPENING PRAYER

God of all hope, bring hope to our weary world and to our troubled hearts; ignite hope within our worship this day. Strengthen our faith as children of hope, that we may partner with you and share the good news of your steadfast faithfulness with the world. In Jesus name, Amen.

#### RESPONSIVE PRAYER—Psalm 66:1-7

<sup>1</sup>Shout for joy to God, all the earth;

<sup>2</sup>**Sing the glory of his name;**

**Give to him glorious praise!**

<sup>3</sup>Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!

So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you.

<sup>4</sup>**All the earth worships you and sings praises to you;**

**They sing praises to your name."**

<sup>5</sup>Come and see what God has done:

He is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man.

<sup>6</sup>**He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot.**

**There did we rejoice in him,**

<sup>7</sup>Who rules by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the nations—

Let not the rebellious exalt themselves.

### SCRIPTURE READING

<sup>17</sup>*For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.*

<sup>18</sup>*For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written,*

*"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."*

<sup>20</sup>*Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

## BIBLE STUDY

40 MIN

### Summary and Connection

In v.17-25, Paul begins to offer a remedy to the deep problems of division and fighting that is taking place in the church at Corinth. Paul's prevailing message is this: ***true wisdom means embracing the foolishness of the cross of Christ***. For Paul, Jesus' death on the cross was the event that turned everything on its head so that what looks like folly is actually wisdom, and what looks like wisdom to the world is actually folly. Jesus' death on the cross is actually God's wisdom but it is so scandalous, so unexpected, so unfamiliar, that at first it looks like a foolish act of God and anyone who puts the cross at the center of their lives must be a fool as well. But Paul wants the Corinthians and us to embrace the foolishness of the cross, because it's at the cross that we see the wisdom and power of God.



#### 1. Looking at the Bible

What does the text say?

- Try reading the text twice. Each time listen carefully and notice what grabs your attention?
- Who might Paul be addressing or arguing with?
- In v.22 **how** might Jews have demanded signs and Greeks sought wisdom in Paul's day? What are the ways that we seek signs and wisdom in our own day?



#### 2. Looking at Jesus

If you are familiar with the crucifixion accounts of Jesus in the gospels, what specifically about that type of death made Jesus look foolish?

- How does the cross of Christ reveal God's power?
- How does the cross of Christ reveal God's wisdom?



### 3. Looking at our Hearts

How does this passage shape our life as a community? Paul here is not only talking about the **message** of the cross, but the **community** that is centered around the cross of Christ.

- How should this community live if the foolishness of the cross is the foundation for our life together?
- How have the Corinthians sought the world's power and wisdom up to this point? (See previous sermon!)
- How do we pursue worldly wisdom and power at the expense of our community?



### 4. Looking at our World

What are we to hope for?

- Consider v. 24-25 as a call to hope.
  - » In v.24 Paul continues the theme of “being called”. How might this offer us hope in light of his discourse on the foolishness of the world?
  - » In v.25, how do Paul's words about the foolishness of God and the weakness of God offer us hope?

**SHARING** 15 MIN Share your prayer requests, thoughts, hopes and fears for the coming week, and as you do consider how this passage might give light to what you are sharing.

**KINGDOM PRAYER** 15 MIN Pray that we would see ourselves called by God. Include other prayer requests.

**SENDING** 5 MIN Lord, throughout this day you have rescued us from harm and despair, giving us instead the joy of your Spirit and fellowship with our family and friends. Give us the faith to take refuge in you and delight in your Word; in Jesus' name. Amen.