

God revealed to His Church long ago that the world would consider it foolish, ignorant, and worthless because it hated Him first. It hates that He calls it to holiness and submission to Him. It hates that He loves the powerless and exalts the weak. It hates that He requires that it can only come to the Father, to know God, through Him and not by our own wisdom or performance. If we proclaim the gospel that the apostles taught, we will be hated, too. With this past week’s decision by the highest human court in our land institutionalizing the reimagining of God, that which He laid down at the beginning as “male and female He created them in His image...Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife...”, our nation proclaimed, yes preached, that we reject the imaging of God, we take his symbol of mercy in Noah’s salvation from wrath and proclaim it as the symbol of our rejection of Him and His icon of His image. It is a sad day, not because of detrimental social implications (of which there are many), but because it dishonors and demeans the God who made us to flourish within the design He made.

Yet, it should not surprise us that the world rejects God’s design, nor should it alter the work and words of the Church. We preach Christ crucified for sinners, our salvation in Him from the wrath to come, the wisdom and power of God, even if foolishness to the world. We do not put our hope in our rhetoric or Republic. We do not hope in coercion or congress. We hope in the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who came to rescue heterosexual and homosexual sinners alike through a crucifixion. The world may hate us for proclaiming holiness and for proclaiming the necessity of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ alone, for the cost of proclaiming the whole gospel is getting higher every day. Yet, it is God who justifies and God who saves. It is God who opened our eyes by sheer grace and God who will open any eyes who fly to Christ Jesus for salvation. So, take heart, Church! God is working miraculously to redeem from sin and to holiness. You are evidence of that work. For, God does not choose the powerful, the wise, or the somebodies of this world. He likes to choose the rejects, the fools, the despised, and the weak so that He might be revealed to be the sovereign God of grace and so shame the world’s self-proclaimed and celebrated progression of wisdom. May His glory shine in the darkness.

1. Disciples don’t measure up to the standard of wise, powerful, or somebodies to the world.
 - a. God doesn’t choose people we would assume.
 - i. First, God chose
 1. While some want to hold to the idea of absolute autonomy and freedom of the will, Paul doesn’t speak of this at all in regards to why we are in Christ Jesus
 2. In fact, he mentions God’s choice four times in these verses:
 - a. God chose (v27)
 - b. God chose (v27)
 - c. He chose (v28)
 - d. It is *because of Him* that you are in Christ Jesus (v30)
 3. This does not imply that there is no response of faith on our part.
 - a. Quite the contrary, apart from the confession of faith and belief in the heart, nobody is redeemed (Rom 10:9-10)
 - b. Yet, it is not a faith that is discovered, worked up, or achieved by man’s will, but one that is “born of God” within the work of the Holy Spirit who chooses to raise a dead heart to life.
 - c. The problem is in our will, but in our wisdom, i.e. what we value. We entrust ourselves (believe) to the things which we value, and this value is based upon one’s understanding and appreciation of what we desire
 - i. Thus, it is according to our affections, what we deem beautiful, worthy, valuable, that our will acts and our emotions respond and our reason vindicates

- ii. And it is our affections that are sovereignly raised from death to life: before the regeneration, monergistic, powerful working of God's Holy Spirit in enlightening the eyes of our hearts to show us the true beauty of the glory of God in the face of Jesus, we valued and desired lesser, broken, corrupt things
 - 1. Romans 1:18-2:5
 - iii. "Whatever captures the heart's trust and love also controls the feelings and behavior. What the heart most wants the mind finds reasonable, the emotions find valuable, and the will finds doable." – Tim Keller, *Preaching*
 - ii. God doesn't choose according to the intellectual power, influential power, or interpersonal power (none of these are bad in themselves, but when they are the *basis* for our knowledge of God/salvation, they have exceeded their capabilities)
 - 1. God doesn't choose on the basis of intellectual perception or knowledge
 - a. The fact that intellectual people deem it good does not influence God
 - 2. God doesn't choose on the basis of ability, strength, or influence
 - a. The fact that the powerful and influential deem it good does not influence God
 - 3. God doesn't choose on the basis of reputation or charisma or likability
 - a. The fact that a majority or plurality deems it good does not influence God
 - b. God chooses the morons, the weak, and the nobodies
 - i. God chooses the moronic things
 - 1. Now, this is wisdom of the world, i.e. powerful, not necessarily logically stupid or cognitively slow
 - a. In fact, Paul modifies "foolish" with "of the world" indicating that the world has judged such objects of His love to be fools and morons
 - 2. God doesn't choose such things or such persons *because* they are fools, as if foolishness was the preeminent work which earned God's divine favor
 - a. Rather, he chooses such for the purpose of eliminating all boasting
 - b. He has a reason for choosing foolishness, weakness, and nothingness as the objects of His love – His glorious grace is magnified to all Creation in heaven and upon earth
 - 3. Think about how God has chosen ways that are the opposite of the world's ideas of power
 - a. He speaks to Balaam through a donkey.
 - b. He rescues His people through judges that were left-handed and one-armed (Ehud), social seconds (Deborah), a bastard robber and child of a prostitute (Jephthah), a coward from the smallest tribe (Gideon), and a sexual deviant with an anger problem (Samson).
 - c. Jesus chose mostly uneducated and ignorant men.
 - d. God chose an execution to display His power: the Cross the symbol of humiliation and shame, i.e. foolishness
 - ii. God chooses the weak
 - 1. Think about how morally weak Abraham was (willing to let his wife go to another man to save his own neck...twice)
 - 2. Jesus touched the blind and the lame and the broken and the leprous, and women were among his most devout and committed followers
 - iii. God chooses the socially powerless
 - 1. Literally, "not well-born", i.e. without nobility or rank
 - 2. He chose the Samaritan woman, the social outcasts, the lepers, the prostitutes, the poor

- a. In Corinth, most of them were former slaves, either by birth or by unsettled debts, i.e. ignoble
 - b. Roman philosopher Celsus (178AD): “We see [Christians] in their own houses, wool dressers, cobblers, and fullers, the most uneducated and vulgar [common] persons...They are like a swarm of bats – or ants creeping out of their nests – or frogs holding a symposium around a swamp – or worms in convention in a corner of mud.”
- iv. God chooses the socially ostracized (the ‘nobodies’)
 - 1. God called prostitutes and tax collectors, “sinners”
 - 2. God called a young woman from a small hick town to bear the Messiah.
 - 3. God chooses slave-traders (Newton) and political cheats (Colson) and a cross-eyed actor who had to enter college as a servant because he didn’t have the means to pay for it (Whitefield) to build His Kingdom
- v. Such were you, O Corinthians! (v26)
 - 1. You were slaves, with no nobility of birth, no power or wealth, and no honor in the eyes of the world
 - 2. You are considered the ignoble, the ignorant, and the ignominious

2. God Chooses Such Powerless Things So That Nobody Can Boast

- a. It is God’s purpose to shame the wisdom of the world
 - i. *In order to* shame the wise
 - 1. Those who believe they have knowledge of Reality, Virtue, and Truth and see no need for absolute salvation through the cross of Christ
 - ii. *In order to* shame the strong
 - 1. Those with the strength and influence in the world and see no weakness for the necessity of the Cross of Christ
 - iii. *In order to* bring to nothing the things that are
 - 1. The “somebodies” of renown and repute according to the world’s standards of virtue and dominance
 - iv. God makes fools of the self-sufficient
 - 1. “He is opposed to the proud”
 - 2. God is an enemy of those who trust in their own wisdom, strength, and value
- b. He shames the powerful and honors the powerless *so that nobody can boast*
 - i. Here we see the greater purpose of God: HIS GLORY
 - ii. Thus, God shames and is opposed to people who glory in themselves, because it is foolish
 - 1. “A man’s free will cannot cure him even of the toothache, or the sore finger; and yet he madly thinks it in its power to cure his soul.” – August Toplady
- c. All the blessings of God are of His choosing and calling and collision so that He might receive all the glory for salvation
 - i. “Because of Him you are in Christ Jesus”
 - ii. And Jesus Christ (and you united to Him by God’s causation) has become all the glorious benefits of your salvation
 - 1. Wisdom of God to you
 - a. He is right and good and true, the fountain of all Truth to which all Reality must be centered (John 1:14; 14:6; Heb 1:3)
 - 2. Righteousness of God
 - a. The righteousness that God requires of His possession is Christ Jesus, and He is ours and we are His by God’s doing (Col 3:3-4; 2 Cor 5:21)
 - 3. Sanctification by God
 - a. The sanctification in which God delights is Christ Jesus, and He is ours and

we are His by God's doing (Eph 1:4, 13-14; Col 1:22)

4. Redemption to God

- a. The redemption which reconciles the corrupt sinner to the holy God is Christ Jesus crucified, and He is ours and we are His by God's doing
- iii. The reality that these standings before God (Righteous, Holy, Redeemed) are imputed by God's Wisdom and only by God's doing should deeply humble us
 1. Note that they are *imputed*, that is, He (Jesus) has *become these* FOR US
 - a. Imputed – given something that is to something that is not
 - i. We have Christ's righteousness though we are not righteous
 - ii. The ungodly being justified (Romans 4:5)
 1. Without the imputation of Christ's righteousness, then God would be perversely unjust
 2. What judge would you consider just who let guilty people go away justified?
 - iii. Only by the Cross of Christ where sin is actually dealt with and righteousness actually attained can we be set free: Is this not ultimate wisdom?!
 1. Union with Him: Our sins became His and His righteousness becomes ours (2 Cor 5:21)
 2. The GREAT EXCHANGE
 3. Only as we are united to Him is God both just and the justifier of those whom belong to Christ (Rom 3:21-26) *because HE has paid down sin (justice) and forgiven us (mercy) in Christ Jesus crucified*
 - b. Not imparted – making us experientially righteous, holy, or wise
 - i. This righteousness is not the same as maturity, the process of becoming more like Christ in life
 - ii. In other words, simply because we come to Christ by faith does not mean that we never sin again
 1. It means that our sins are covered by the blood of Christ and are not held against us by God (Rom 8:1)
 2. Thus, He is our sanctification TODAY in which we stand holy and separate and uniquely God's possession, even though we still stumble and fail and struggle
 3. It means that our lives are to be lived by continual faith in Him and His righteousness as our standing before God
 - a. He gets all the glory
 - b. We get a ton of joy!

4. Why is This Important?

- a. All unrest and turmoil is rooted in *trying to redeem ourselves by our own establishment of righteousness, wisdom, and holiness*
 - i. Self-Pity: we fail to establish our own righteousness
 1. We are not accepted by God or others due to our failures or insufficiency
 2. Anxiety and Fear – am I redeemed?
 3. Depression – I doubt I am redeemable.
 4. Self-pity – I am doomed.
 - ii. Self-Righteousness: we believe that we are establishing, or have established, our own righteousness
 1. We believe, but others have not yet confirmed, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that we are right and honorable

2. **Defend Ourselves:** When somebody questions or attacks our righteousness we fight back, therefore losing peace and entering into unrest and turmoil
 3. **Attack Others:** We attempt to tear down other people's righteousness so that we look better by comparison
- iii. Every relationship's struggles are rooted in these attempts to self-justify ourselves to the point where we end up destroying our relationships through self-righteous attacks and defensiveness (prove we're right) or a retreat into isolation of bitterness and anger due to our failures (self-pity)
1. **Marriage:** Do I have to defend my worthless righteousness in this situation? If my wife believes that I am a failure, am I trusting in my righteousness and sanctification or the imputed righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of Christ in my place?
 - a. When I trust in the imputation of Christ, I do not need to be approved by others, even those whom I most deeply desire and respect
 - b. Only when I am secure in the truth that it is God's doing, so I don't need to defend it, can I truly love for the sake of another (my wife) and serve her without bitterness, blame, or fear.
 2. **Employment:** Why do I need to cover up my failures or blame them on another? What righteousness am I trusting to justify me as a person?
 3. **Politics:** How do I handle losing? Why do I respond that way? What wisdom am I trusting in to make humanity flourish? Is it the Cross?
 - a. What righteousness, holiness, or redemption am I trusting to fix this brokenness?
- b. All *hopelessness* is also rooted in the same independent struggle for the power for righteousness, holiness, and redemption *by the work, wisdom, choice, or will of someone created*
- i. When I am trusting in man and he fails, then I lose my hope
 1. Bitter and angry?
 2. Desperate and separated
 - ii. The truth that God chooses to save and unite people to His Son means that I have hope for anyone, anywhere, at any time
 1. There is a tremendous reason for joy in this statement
 - iii. I do not need to coerce anyone into the Kingdom, but remember that the power of God is in the preaching of the Cross of Christ, which the world hates as ignorant
 - iv. Faith in the righteousness of Christ imputed to me means life and peace in humility
 1. Romans 15:13 – "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."
 2. We abound in joy and peace through *believing the great news* which results in our hope through the Holy Spirit.
- c. Ultimately, God simply is worthy of such boasting, and the only one worthy of such boasting
- i. The power to know God comes only from God: the power for peace and for hope come only from God, and He gives it to us through a Cross of rejection and death by the world
 - ii. The most beautiful, virtuous, glorious thing in all the Universe is God Himself, so it is proper for all boasting to go to Him, for all goodness comes from Him
 - iii. God is the preeminent worker of all that is glorious and good, and we have nothing apart from His sovereign grace: so let all boasting cease, unless it boasts of Him and submits to Him in weakness and humility

We did not come to know God through our wisdom. Our self-perceived wisdom is tainted and limited and corrupted by sin. We are not truly seekers of wisdom or honest seekers of Truth or we would have loved and honored God, but we didn't. We killed Him when given the opportunity. The cross proves

that we are fools, lovers of ourselves, seekers of power and righteousness according to our own terms rather than God's immutable ones.

Yet, it pleased God to save us through the foolishness of the Cross. What we could not do, because of sin, God did by sending His Son to die in our place. Though the wisdom of the world, according to which we once walked, deemed it foolishness and unnecessary, God was pleased to astound us that we might know Him.

Remember that He chose you who are powerless and weak and incapable, and He called you to Himself through His Son, who has become to you all that you need to be rescued from this perverse generation and returned to the knowledge of your Creator for whom you were made to flourish in humble worship. And this is not your doing, but His. So, don't get cocky when the world rejects you and hates you. You were the world. God chose you. Proclaim the Cross of Christ as the hope of sinners and don't appeal to the wisdom of the world to make it more attractive. They are opposing kingdoms with opposing foundations. For the power of God is in the proclamation that Man is incapable, corrupt, and enemies of God, AND that God was pleased to provide His Son to die in our place to rescue us from the divine wrath to come and to reverse the curse of sin and death that He might restore all things, for He has become our redemption.

Jesus Himself IS our righteousness, wisdom, holiness, and redemption. In Him, by entrusting ourselves to Him, we cannot lose these things. And we recognize that our union with Him, by faith, is not something that we willed up, wised up, or whipped up. It is all a gift of God's extravagant grace towards us. So, let us boast in His grace and His glory. Let us honor Him with our lives, submitting to His Word knowing that His will towards us in Christ Jesus is all-good. Let us look on our neighbors as we once were: blind and deceived and dead in their sins. And let us hope that the God who enlightened our eyes and raised our dead corrupt evil hearts to life in Christ Jesus can also do so with theirs. We have hope because God is sovereign. We have hope because God chooses the foolishness of the world. We have hope in our weakness and in our powerlessness and in humility, for God gives grace to the humble. So let all who boast, boast in the Lord.