

Guest Preacher - Rev. Iain T Campbell (Retired)

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Preacher: Rev Iain T Campbell

[0:00] Now, turning back to the portion of Scripture that we read, Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, and chapter 1.

! And we look this morning at verses 22 and 23. Verses 22 and 23 in that chapter.

For Jews demand signs, and Greeks seek wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.

A stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles. And in looking at these verses, we will first look at the danger of worldliness.

And secondly, we will look at human logic. And thirdly, the equality that the cross brings about.

[1:11] The equality that springs from the cross. And firstly, the danger of worldliness. The danger of worldliness.

Now, these two verses, these two verses are a powerful reminder to us that the gospel does not pander to human wisdom.

The gospel does not pander to human wisdom. And these verses reveal to us the tension that exists between the world and its desire for self-glory.

And the humility of God in the flesh. The humility of God in the flesh. Now, there were 50 schools of philosophy in Corinth at this time, according to research.

And they spent their time debating about the values of the merits of these schools.

[2:25] And the merits of the leaders of these schools. And this spirit had entered into the church in Corinth.

This spirit had entered into the church in Corinth. And it was creating division. As we were reading in the chapter, the members of that church were gathering themselves round various preachers. And debating about their gift of foreignry or the lack of it. As if they were nothing more than leaders of different schools of philosophy.

And this is a difficulty that the world, that the church succumbs to from time to time. This was grieving, Paul.

That the Lord's people, that the Lord's people would embrace the spirit that was within the city at that particular time.

[3:38] Now, it is a difficulty. It is a difficulty for the church. As history bears witness to.

The church sometimes finds it very difficult to be seen to be different to the world around her.

In the Old Testament. If we go back to the Old Testament. And Israel, of course, was the church in the Old Testament dispensation.

And what do we find Israel doing? She is demanding kings to be set over her. She is demanding of God to set kings over her.

So that she wouldn't be seen to be too different from the other nations. And even worse than that. Even worse than that itself.

[4:40] We find her worshipping the idols of the other nations. In order that she would blend in with the culture of the nations round about her.

She was feeling uncomfortable in being seen being different to all the other nations. It is a difficulty that the church succumbs to from time to time.

So the question is, why was Paul grieved with this? Why was he grieved with it? Because once the church becomes like the world.

She is no longer accomplishing her mission. The mission for which she was sent. The mission on which she was sent. And that mission was to be salt and light within the world.

But once she makes herself like the world. She ceases to be salt and light within the world. So how do we counter this?

[5:52] Well we do so in the way Paul does here. In impressing on the members of the church. That it's the wisdom. It's not the wisdom of the world that they are.

That they ought to give preeminence to. But the wisdom of God. And when we talk about the wisdom of God. We can say that we are talking about the world of God.

If human wisdom. If human wisdom or worldly wisdom is treasured so much by us.

Then. It gives rise to the question. Why. Why cannot human wisdom save us? And we find here. Israel. Looking for a sign. Seeking after a sign. And the Greeks. Seeking after wisdom. And they are both looking for a God.

[6:57] That they can fit into. Their own categories. One is looking for a heroic Messiah. To lead them.

The other is looking for a logical philosopher. To lead them. Very often.

We demand. A domesticated God. That will act. According to our terms. And so many.

Seek after a sign. A miracle. That is a display of power. And others.

Seek after wisdom. That brings with it. Intellectual clarity. Intellectual clarity. However.

[7:56] However. God refuses. To be managed. God refuses. To be managed. The cross. Is an offensive.

Act of love. And I use the word offensive. There with inverted commas. The cross. Is an offensive. Act of love. That demands.

My surrender. And your surrender. Rather than satisfying. Human pride. Which brings us. To the second thing. That we have here. Human logic.

So the question is. Are you here today? Are you here today? Looking for a God. That will vindicate. Your own way of thinking.

Your opinion on this. That and the next thing. A God. Who will act. On your command. A God. Who will act. On your command.

[8:51] Or are you willing. To embrace. A saviour. Who humbles. Your pride. A saviour.

Who humbles. Your pride. That. Is the choice. Before us all.

Paul here. Paul here. He contrasts. The wisdom. Of this world. With the foolishness. Of God. And according to human standards.

The cross. Of Christ. Was the foolishness. Of God. Was the foolishness. Of God. Worldly wisdom. Is based. Very often. On self-sufficiency. If I am going. To be saved. Then. I must have.

[9:51] A hand in it. I must have. A hand in it. By giving place. To. Good thoughts. Good words. And good deeds.

But the cross. Of Jesus Christ. Shatters. All of that. By demonstrating. Demonstrating. What. The unholiness.

The ungodliness. And the deceitfulness. Of the human heart. And what we must remember. Is this. That those.

Who were around the cross. On that. Triumphant day. And it was a triumphant day. Those who were around the cross.

On that triumphant day. Were a cross representation. Of the human race. And if we chose.

[10:47] Barabbas. And nailed the son of God. To the cross. What else. Are we capable. Of doing.

What else are we capable. Of doing. And you might argue with me. Well I didn't nail. I didn't nail. Jesus Christ. To the cross. Well listen to.

Isaiah. In his prophecy. In chapter 53. And verse 4 or 5. I can't remember. Which verse it is. What the number. Of the verse is.

Listen to what he says. He was wounded. For our transgressions. He was bruised. Or crushed. For our iniquities. It was my sin.

And your sin. That nailed him. To the cross. And so. If we chose Barabbas. And nailed the son of God. To the cross. What else.

[11:46] Are we. Capable. Of doing. What else. Are we capable. Of doing. That is.

The question. That is the question. Before us. What can you or I do. What can you or I.

Bring before this holy God. That will make us acceptable. In. His sight. What will. Can we bring. Before this holy God.

That will make us. Acceptable. In his sight. It's not that the reason. Why the cross. Is a stumbling block. Human merit.

Is worth nothing. When we compare it. To the perfect obedience. Of the son. To his father's will.
[12:48] This son. Jesus Christ. To his father's will. Human merit. Is worth nothing. Is worth nothing. The Greek word.

The Greek word. For stumbling block. As most of you. Probably know. The Greek word. For stumbling block. Is scandal. And to the Jews.

The cross. Was scandalous. Because. Scripture. Scripture. Says. Cushion. Is everyone. Who hangs.

On a tree. Galatians. Chapter 3. And verse 13. The Greeks. Looked upon the cross.

As nothing. But foolishness. How could anybody. Ever be saved. By a man. Who.

[13:42] Who. Died. Such an ignominious. Death. How could anybody. Be saved. By a man. Who died. Such an ignominious.

Death. To human reasoning. To human reasoning. This. Was. Nonsensical. Will. To this. To this. Day. Itself. To this. Day. Itself. There are people. Who look. For a sign. And people. Will tell you. I. I. I. Cannot. Believe. Until I see. God. Doing a miracle. And once. I see him. Doing a miracle. Then. I will believe. There are still. Many within. Our midst. Who are still. Seeking after a sign. There are others. Who are demanding. Clear explanations.

[14:39] That will. Validate. Human reason. That will validate. Human reason. If. They are. To believe.

And our. Expectations. Of God. Is based. On power. If you look. At these. At these. Verses. Our expectations. Of God.

Is based. On power. We want. To see. A sign. Of his power. It's based. On power. The man. Also. On the majesty. That belongs. To that power.

And it is based. On logic. It is based. On logic. The cross. Of Jesus Christ. Whoever reveals.

To me. And to you. A God. Who is not distant. But a God. Who enters. The arena. Of human.

[15:33] Suffering. And when you. And I. Face up to our foolishness. Our failures. Our sinfulness. Then we are.

When we are. Face up to our failures. Our sinfulness. And. Our moments.

Of chaos. When everything. Seems. To be out of our control. We are not asked.

To approach. A God. Who is disgusted. By our weakness. Who is disgusted. By our weakness. We are not. We are not.

But according. According to human. Standards. According to human. Standards. We are asked. To approach.

[16:33] A God. That is a failure. And if this son. Is truly.

The Messiah. Then. He is a failed. Messiah. Messiah. He is a failed. Messiah. That is what it looks like.

To our eyes. To our minds. He was crucified. He died. He is a failure.

But the fact is this. If Jesus. Endured. The agony. The rejection. And the isolation. Of the cross.

What does that mean? It means. That he. Is able. To be at one. With me. And you. In our deepest.

[17:36] Pain. In our deepest. Pain. He is able. To be at one. With us. We are not. We are not.

Asked. To pray. To an. Unsympathetic. Philosopher. Or pray. To a distant. Global.

Power broker. But we are asked. To pray. To a savior. Who knows. What it feels like.

To be crushed. Who knows. What it feels like. To be. Crushed. And what the cross.

Reveals to us. What the cross. Of Jesus Christ. Reveals to us. Is this. The creator. Of the universe.

[18:32] Allowing himself. To be subjected. To the most. Humiliating. Form of execution. By the hands.

Of those. Who may create it. At the hands. Of those. Who may create it. Which brings us.

To the equality. That the cross. Brings about. And what I've just.

Mentioned there. To the. To the first. Century mind. And yes. Even to the. Twenty first. Century mind. This is.

Incomprehensible. That. The creator. Of the universe. Would allow himself. To be subjected. To such.

[19:36] To be subjected. To such. And if this man. That is. Killed. To the cross.

Claiming. To be the son. Of God. Cannot. Save himself. Then. He is. An imposter. He is. An imposter. A deceiver.

If you are. The son of God. Come down. From the cross. Matthew.

Chapter. Twenty. Seven. And verse. Forty. And in other. Some of the other gospels. That is followed by. Come down. From the cross.

And we will believe. We will believe. But he couldn't. He couldn't. If you or I. Were going to be saved.

[20 : 32] And you see. When you look. When you look. At the logic. Of these people. And what they were saying. And what they were accusing Jesus of.

They weren't dunces. They were just. Thinking. Out things. As they were seen. And if this man. Truly is.

The son of God. Then why is God. Leaving him on the cross. And that's the very same. That's probably the way. That we would have been thinking. As well.

If we had been there. On that. Triumphant day. On that triumphant day. They weren't dunces. They were thinking.

Things according. To the way. They were seeing them. But what we've got to remember. Is. What we've got. In Isaiah. Chapter 55.

[21 : 27] And this is what the cross. Reminds us of. My ways. Are not your ways. Neither are my thoughts. Your thoughts. And as the heavens.

Are high above the earth. So are my ways. Above your ways. And my thoughts. Above. Your thoughts. The cross.

Is foolishness. To us. Because. Human wisdom. Defines power.

As independence. As independence. And strength. On the other hand. The cross. Defines power.

As self-denial. And an awareness. Of the needs. Of the many. Because we must remember. That he gave his life.

[22 : 25] As a ransom. For the many. That he gave his life. As a ransom. For the many. And that's the way.

The cross defines power. Self-denial. And an awareness. Of the needs. Of the many. That is why. The wisdom. Of this world.

Is foolishness. In God's sight. The world. Operates. On a hierarchy. Of values. You have the strong. And in using the word. Strong there. It means. Strength of mind. You have the strong. The intelligent. The influential. And the wealthy.

And according to. According to the world. These are the ones. Who will rise. To the top. These are the ones. Who will rise. To the top.

[23 : 25] This value set. However. Creates division. Creates divisions. Within society. And if you find yourself.

Without these qualities. If you find yourself. Without these qualities. Of strength. Intelligence. Influence. And wealth. Then you can feel.

Yourself. As. Being an outcast. Insignificant. Of little. Or no.

Worth. Of little. Or no. Worth. Whatsoever. Are. And the gospel. Reveals. The cross.

Of Jesus Christ. As the great. Equalizer. And this means. And this means. That these qualities.

[24 : 28] You lack. Vulnerability. Lack. Of status. The ordinariness. Of your life. And your sin. Along with your sinfulness.

These things. Are never obstacles. To the grace. Of God. They are never. Obstacles. To the grace. Of God. In fact. We could put it this way. That is the very soil.

In which the seed. Of the gospel. Flourishes. In which the seed. Of the gospel. Flourishes. The very soil. In which the seed. Of the gospel.

Flourishes. And very often. Very often. We think. That our vulnerability. And our weakness. Makes us. Unacceptable.

To God. And so. We try to hide it. But the cross. Of Jesus Christ. Demands you. To bring. These things. Out into the light.

[25 : 28] Of the cross. Before the light. Of the cross. For that is where. The power of the gospel. Is best displayed. And then. When you are. Converted. When you are. Born again. Through the seed.

Of that world. And you enter. The kingdom of God. What happens? Will you find. The very people. That you thought. Despised you. And look down. Upon you. The strong. The intelligent. The intelligent. The influential.

And the wealthy. They are there. As well. And they welcome you. With open arms. That's.
 [26 : 30] The equality. That the cross. Brings about. Because. We must remember this. Christ's own. Inimitation. Whosoever. Comes unto me.

I shall in no wise. Cast out. Whether you are. Poor. Or weak. Or strong. Or wealthy. Doesn't matter. You are all. All.

Invited. For there is no more. Barbarian. Or Scythian. Slave.
 Or free. Male. Or female. We are all. One. In Christ. Jesus. We are all. Made one. In Christ. Jesus. Jesus. Paid it all. All. To him. I owe. Sin.

[27 : 29] Sin left. A crimson. Crimson stain. But he washed it. White. As snow. Will you not come. To him. Today. And stop. Placing your dependence. Upon the wisdom. Of this world. upon the wisdom. Of this world. Believe. In the Lord Jesus Christ.
 And you shall be saved. Let us pray. O gracious. And ever blessed. Father who is in heaven. I grant us.

To be thankful. For the one. That you have made. Unto us. Wisdom. Righteousness. And redemption.

[28 : 31] That we would be thankful. That we can meet. In the name of Christ. On this day. On this morning. Knowing. That he is risen.

And knowing. That we are met. With that risen Christ. And that this is the reason. That we are no longer. Placing your trust.
 In the wisdom of this world. But looking. To that wisdom. That comes. From Christ alone. Help us therefore. To rejoice.
 In the blessedness of the sun. Through the Holy Spirit. And enable. Your word. To be blessed. On this morning.
 And in the evening. That is ahead of us. That you would awaken. This island. This nation. And even our day. And generation. To realize.

[29 : 27] Our need. Of the pardoning machine. Of the God. To spare not a son. But delivered him up. For us all. And how with him.

Shall you not graciously. Give us. All things. Forgive us for our sins. Accept of us graciously. In Christ. That the glory would be used in him. Forevermore.
 Amen. Let us conclude. By singing to God's praise. From Psalm 119. In the Singh Psalms. Psalm 119. In the Singh Psalms. And reading from. Verse 137. Verse 137.
 Turn to the end of verse 144. Oh Lord. You are the righteous one. The statutes that you give are just.

[30 : 36] You lay down laws of righteousness. Entirely worthy of our trust. My seal consumes and wears me out. Because my foes forget your word.

Because my foes forget your word. Your promises are tried and proved. And I your servant. Love them Lord. Down to the end of verse 144.
 Oh Lord you are the righteous one. Amen. Oh Lord you are the righteous one.
 The such is that you give our just. You've eaten lots of righteousness.
 Returning worthy of our trust. My seal consumes and wears me out.

[31 : 49] Because my foes forget your word. Your promises are bright and blue.

Under your servant, love and more. Though I am lowly and despised.
 Your presence I do not forget. Eternal is your righteousness.
 To his love, the new ascended. Dispresent trouble, press me down.
 The pure hearts are my delight. Ground wisdom so that I may live.

[33 : 17] The purest that you serve forever I. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us now and forevermore.

Amen.