

## **Lift High the Cross** 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5

There might be times in our lives when we are confused and unsure about what direction to go next. I am personally experiencing this both professionally as well as in relation to our family. There are many hard decisions that we have to make in life, some of which are not popular, other decisions are almost forced upon us and yet others take years to come to fruition. But we are always moving in one direction or another as we walk our walk this side of heaven.

We live in the information age with readily available knowledge literally at our finger tips. **There has been more information generated in the last thirty years than during the past 5,000. Having an abundance of information available does not always solve our problems.** Far too often **this wealth of information leaves us confused.** At times too much information is overwhelming and not helpful that is why we must always make our decisions in the shadow and at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ.

We need to hear the apostle Paul's words whenever we are confused. **Paul reminds us that not everything is about us. Paul draws our attention instead to the foundation of our faith.**

The people in Corinth experienced more than their share of problems before they contacted the apostle Paul with the hope that he could set them on the right path again. They had lost their focus and were reduced to fighting with each other. Sides were drawn and harsh words were spoken. The inevitable result was feelings were hurt, and the mission of the church came to a grinding halt.

While there were some people within that church who were of noble birth, the majority were not. Those with this perceived higher status thought they were better than the other people. Others thought they possessed more knowledge or were on a higher spiritual plane than everyone else in the church. These attitudes were causing problems within the church. **We still have those same kinds of people in the modern church as well. Those we feel that they are privileged because they are this or that and such distinction does not really matter in the kingdom of God.**

**Today we must constantly be on guard against having a superior attitude because we are church going people, believing that we are somehow better than other people who have had different life experiences thank those who are not part of the church.** The end result is instead of attracting people to Jesus Christ and the church those attitudes repel people, turning them off completely.

At times when we lose our focus it is always good to review what we believe. While the people of Paul's day were divided into groups their common denominator was the cross.

As you enter walking down one of our three aisles here at Trinity each Sunday the Cross beckons you to come. The cross reminds us that Jesus Christ suffered and died for our sins and the sins of the world. As we focus on the cross and we find ourselves at the foot of the cross we realize each one of us are sinner in need of forgiveness and strength. There is no distinction of class or personhood, we all are sinners who have fallen short of the Glory of God. We all have made and make mistakes and decision that not always popular.

Paul wrote, **"For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."** There is power in the cross because it represents the power of God at work in our lives and in our world.

Paul knew the transforming power of the cross from his own personal experience. Paul went from persecuting followers of Jesus to the church's foremost missionary. God knew who Saul was, what he was doing and He knew the outcome. **And it is true about us as well.** God made the decision to show us the way unto salvation through the cross of calvary.

However, not everyone was drawn to the power of the cross. **To those who sought after human wisdom the cross was viewed as a symbol of death and ultimately failure.**

**Some people believed wisdom was the pathway to enlightenment and had difficulty focusing on the cross. The people living in Corinth were heavily influenced by Greek thought and philosophy.**

Paul points out that worldly wisdom did not lead to salvation, **"the world did not know God through wisdom,"** Paul claims. **All the wisdom in the world does not lead anyone to God. Only through the cross can we find the God who saves us. Unfortunately, even Christians allow the world to influence their view of what is happening in the secular world. Rather we must look at the world through the lenses of the cross.**

**Paul was not saying that acquiring wisdom was not important. We benefit daily from the wisdom discovered in our world. Rather Paul was saying, while learning is important, we need to remember that knowledge does not always lead us to God.**

Some viewed the cross as foolishness in Paul's day, and today for so many the cross is still foolish and irrelevant to our lives and world. **People ignore God's word so they can live their lives on their terms, not what God expects of them.** They want to live their lives on their terms, not God's terms.

The notion that God would save humanity through the cross was inconceivable to those from a Jewish background. They had preconceived notions of what the messiah would accomplish; the idea that the messiah would suffer and die was nonsense to them. They demanded a "sign."

The Greeks loved wisdom and might not have given the cross a second thought. **While the cross was a stumbling block and foolishness for some people, it was the power to save a sinful humanity. For that reason Paul proclaimed the cross.**

Paul redefines wisdom as Christ for both Jew and Greek, **"Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."** This serves as another reminder that **God's ways are not always our ways.** The way we look at our world is not the same way that God sees us. Paul explains, **"For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength."**

**The power of the cross is that only God is able to take people who appear to be insignificant, or weak, and transform them. Paul was a living example of someone who underwent a major life transformation. God is the source of all our human achievements. God deserves the credit. If we are going to boast, Paul suggests let us, "boast in the Lord."**

It's easy to lose our focus and allow other thoughts to invade our faith. Sometimes it is our attitudes that prevent us from becoming the people Jesus has called us to be. The Corinthians thought wisdom was the pathway to God. Instead, Paul wanted them to focus on the cross of Jesus Christ.

While the Corinthians were vying for positions of power and status Paul encouraged them to take a fresh look at the Cross and reconnect to the power of God at work in their lives. God chose people who were weak and powerless **"so that no one might boast in the presence of God."**

May we continue to focus on our Lord Jesus Christ. We are called together to be the church in our community. We surrender our lives to Jesus. Amen.