

# Studies in 1 Corinthians-02 1 Cor 1:26-2:5

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald explores how God chooses the foolish and weak to demonstrate His power through the gospel in 1 Corinthians 1:26-2:5.*

**Duration:** 49:48

**Scripture:** Isaiah 55:9, Matthew 17:1-5, 1 Corinthians 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 1:30, 1 Corinthians 2:2, 1 Corinthians 2:4-5

**Topics:** "Gospel Message", "Faith And Humility"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the folly and weakness of the message of the Gospel according to the world's perspective. He emphasizes that Christians are often seen as a five-ranked army of fools. The preacher then describes the method used in preaching, highlighting the humility and lack of glory given to Paul. The sermon also emphasizes the importance of placing faith in the power of God rather than in the wisdom of men. Additionally, the preacher encourages reaching out to the poor and common people with the gospel, as they are more receptive to the message.

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## Transcript

to review the choruses that we've been learning. Does it look familiar, everybody? In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus. I'm going to let you have the crutch once, and then I'm going to remove it the second time, and see if you'll remember the words.

Ready? In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, we have the victory. In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, demons will have to flee. Who can tell what God can do? Who can tell of His love for you? Good.

In the name of Jesus, Jesus, we have the victory. In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, we have the victory. In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, demons will have to flee.

Who can tell what God can do? Who can tell of His love for you? In the name of Jesus, Jesus, we have the victory. That's very good. Do you remember this one? I know who holds the future, and He'll guide me with His hand.

I know who holds the future. When God thinks, don't just happen everything. When there's problems, I'll trust the God of miracles.

Give to Him my all. I know who holds the future, and He'll guide me with His hand. When God thinks, don't just happen everything.

My Him is planned, so as I say tomorrow, with His help, I'll trust the God of miracles. Give to Him my all. Okay, now we have another one today.

And I feel a certain sense of temerity trying it without the instrument, but let's pretend that we're living in the days before the piano or the organ were invented and see what we can do with this. This one really has a martial tune to it. Christ triumphant, ever reigning, Savior, Master, King, Lord of heaven, our life sustaining.

Hear us as we sing. Yours, the glory and the crown, the bright renown, the eternal name. I don't suppose anybody here knows it, do you? How many here read music? Dear friends, we're in deep trouble.

Let's see what we can do. Christ triumphant, ever reigning, Savior, Master, King, Lord of heaven, our life sustaining. Hear us as we sing.

Yours, the glory and the crown, the bright renown, the eternal name. It's a little bit high for me. Try it again.

Christ triumphant, ever reigning, Savior, Master, King, Lord of heaven, our life sustaining. Hear us as we sing. Yours, the glory and the crown, the bright renown, the eternal name.

Sisters, we really need your help on that, the high renown. It's hard for the men to reach that. So, let's just boom it out when you get to that, sisters.

Ready? Once again. Christ triumphant, ever reigning, Wait a second, we're off a little bit there. Try it again.

Christ triumphant, ever reigning, Savior, Master, King, Lord of heaven, our life sustaining. Hear us as we sing. Yours, the glory and the crown, the high renown, the eternal name.

Okay, we'll try that again next week. We'll review it. Hopefully with the instrument.

Today we're back in 1 Corinthians. So, if you'd please turn to 1 Corinthians. You can pass those papers to the nearest aisle and our efficient ushers will collect them.

We will recycle the hymn sheets. Very much. 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, verse 26.

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty, and the base things of the world, and the things which are despised has God chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to naught the things that are that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that as it is written, he who glories, let him glory in the Lord. Thy brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech, or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God, for I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling, and my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit, and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Now, we saw in the previous sessions that

Paul opens his epistle with customary greetings, and then he breaks out in thanksgiving, as he usually does in beginning a letter, and in this case he's thanking the Lord for the way the Corinthians had been enriched by the grace of God, for the gifts that had been bestowed upon the Corinthians. Not so much for their own attainments in the Christian life, but for what God had done to them.

He had to be rather guarded in talking about their attainments, because really they were a troubled church. It is true that they had an abundance of the gifts of the Spirit, but they had some serious spiritual problems in their midst. And most of this letter is directed to correcting those problems which they had.

But that doesn't stop Paul from being thankful. Somebody said, Blame comes, a rebuke comes best on the back of praise. And I think you see that exemplified here in 1 Corinthians.

Rebuke comes best on the back of praise. If you have to say something negative to people, well try to find something positive to say to them as well, to balance it out. And I think you see the Apostle Paul doing that here.

The Corinthians' mistake was that they were, the mistake he's dealing with here is that they were dividing over human leaders, in this case, preachers. They had their own favorite preachers and they were forming cliques around these men. And it was causing disunity in the church.

Frankly, it was a rather foolish thing to do, to become so enamored with human preachers that they were actually having strife in the church. And so that's what he deals with in verses 10 through 17. And then he goes on to show the folly of their doing that.

Namely, he gives three reasons why it was foolish. Christ is not divided. They were dividing over leaders, but the Lord Jesus himself wasn't divided and their leaders didn't die for them.

It was the Lord Jesus that died for them. You'll notice all through this section that all the searchlight is going to go on the Lord Jesus. It's going to go off men and on to Christ.

And that's Paul's whole intent in this section of the Word of God that Christ might have the preeminence, not men. And he shows it by the nature of the gospel. And he shows it by his own presentation of the gospel.

We're going to see that today as we move on. Paul was a Christ-centered man whose ministry was Christ-centered. And then he says they weren't baptized in their leaders' names.

They were baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. And Paul goes on to talk from his own experience the place that baptism had in his ministry. It was important in his ministry, but it wasn't the central thing Christ was the central person.

Then we saw he talked about the message. The message of the gospel. And it's really the message of the cross.

And we saw last week how this is foolishness to men. I mean, the Greeks want a sign. They want some... The Greeks seek wisdom.

They want some human philosophy to get attached to. And the Jews wanted a sign. And that is some powerful supernatural demonstration from God.

And here Paul comes along and he preaches the cross. The cross. The cross work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That Christ hung there on a cross of wood and died for the sins of the world. What an abject picture of weakness! What is more weak than a body nailed to a cross? And then the folly of the message. You mean to say that you can be saved just by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ? Just by repenting of your sins? No, no, no.

Human wisdom would never accept that. Human wisdom insists that there's something you have to do in order to earn heaven. You have to earn it by your character.

Paul says, no, you just come in all your sins and bow at the feet of the Lord Jesus and acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior and God saves your soul. Well, it's folly to men. The message of the gospel is folly to the natural men.

Foolish to unbelievers. But it is the power of God. Why? Because it works.

And there are some living demonstrations of it in our meeting today. Men and women who were lost and dead in trespasses and in sins and they trusted Christ the Savior and their lives have been revolutionized and they're as sure of heaven as if they were already there. But not one bit of it depends on them.

It depends completely on the Lord Jesus Christ. We do all the sinning. Christ does all the saving.

This is the only religion in the world that's like this. Every other religion says, do. The Christian faith says, done.

Christ finished the work on the cross of Calvary. Don't try to add to a finished work. You have that nice varnished table in your living room that represents the finished work of a table maker.

Supposing I come along with a hammer and a chisel and try to add to it, to add to its finished work. I'll ruin it. You can't add to a finished work.

The people are always trying to add to the finished work of the Lord Jesus. They're trying to add their own good works to faith in him. It won't work.

Grace is grace and it excludes human merit of any kind. Actually, the destruction of human wisdom was foretold in the Old Testament. We saw that last time.

The prophets looked forward to a day when God would indeed destroy human wisdom and he does it by the preaching of the gospel. The failure of human wisdom versus the success of the gospel. Human wisdom unaided could never come to the knowledge of God and would never have devised a gospel of salvation by grace through faith.

But, the success of the gospel is that down through the ages of time and even at the present time, people are coming to Christ, believing the simple message and finding that it works marvelously in their lives. We saw that the Jews want a sign and the Greeks seek after human wisdom. But, Paul says, we preach Christ crucified.

This was the message that he brought to them. And so, he contrasts signs and human wisdom with God's power and divine wisdom. Signs really means a powerful... People say, you just show me some powerful

miracle, I'll believe.

God says, you believe, then I'll show you a miracle. And the miracle is the miracle of the new birth. One of the greatest miracles happening today is the miracle of the new birth.

People are regenerated through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It isn't putting a new suit on a man, it's putting a new man in the suit. And God loves to do that.

And then, divine wisdom, divine foolishness and wisdom versus man's wisdom and power. Verse 25, the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. Now, there's no foolishness with God.

It's a poetic, it's a figurative expression. It's really rather humorous to me. It means that God at his most foolish is still wiser than man at his best.

The weakness of God is stronger than men. Here's a message that proclaims the weakness of God, the Savior, dying on the cross and yet it will do what no other message in the world will do. And so, in verses 18 through 25, you have the, quote, weakness and folly of the gospel.

The weakness and folly of the gospel. Now, he's going to go on to talk about the weakness and folly of the converts. Of those who respond to the converts, or as we say here, God's method.

And God's method is to choose the most unlikely people so as to give no place for human pride. Notice what it says in verse 26. You see your calling, brethren.

He's speaking to believers here, to those who have trusted the sinner's Savior. They have responded to the call of God. In one sense, everybody is called.

I mean, the invitation goes out to all the world. But in another sense, there's an effectual call. The call of those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's what's referred to here. The effectual call of God. What kind of people does he call? It's interesting the way churches, they love to have prominent men from the community come in, you know.

Wealthy people who can support the budget. And they quickly elevate them to be elders or deacons in the church. Give them some responsible job in the church.

We cater. We don't, but we see that happening. Cater to the wealthy and the wise and the noble and the mighty.

But Paul says, you see your calling that not many wise according to the flesh. You take men in this world that are reputed to be wise. The philosophers, the scientists and all the rest, the intellectuals.

Not many of them are born-again Christians. Every once in a while there's an exception. But not many of them are born-again Christians.

The Christians are in the minority in that circle. Not many wise according to the flesh. That is wise according to the flesh.

We're contrasting human wisdom and divine wisdom in this passage. Actually people who have trusted the Savior are the really wise people in the world. Not many wise according, not many mighty.

This word mighty fits with what has gone before where the Jews want a demonstration of power. And that really means not many powerful. The heads of state.

How many of the heads of state in the world today are believers in the Lord Jesus? A lot of them know his name. They know how to take his name in vain. But they don't know him in a personal way.

We believe that they are servants of God officially. But most of them don't know God personally. That's all there is to it.

Not many mighty, not many noble. Noble would here mean people who belong to the aristocracy. Back in Boston we would call them the blue bloods.

Or in England, people, titled people. You know, lady so-and-so or sir so-and-so. Not many from that class come to the Savior.

There was one lady of nobility in England years ago who did become a believer. Somebody said to her, how will you say it? And she said by the letter M. Boy, that's a new gospel. What's that mean? It doesn't say not any noble.

It says not many noble. She was saved by the letter. By the letter M she squeaked in.

Not many noble, not many of these are called. That doesn't mean that the invitation doesn't go out to them. Of course it does.

Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. God makes a bona fide offer of salvation to all men and women in all ages and all the world. Nobody living today who if he repented of his sins and trusted Christ wouldn't be saved.

Nobody. But the thing is they don't. Why don't they? Well, I think pride has a lot to do with it, don't you? Pride.

Because you don't come to the cross with your head high in the air. You come on your knees to the cross. Forsaking all, I take him.

It's a terrible blow to a person's pride to have to go back to the wise in the university and to the mighty in the seats of government and to the noble in the chambers of aristocracy and say I have taken my stand with Jesus Christ and then endure the twittering and the sarcasm and the jibes that follow. It's just too much for a lot of people to take. But see, this is the kind of people God calls.

And you and I could be very thankful for that today, can't we? That's the kind he calls. God has chosen the foolish things of the world. That is, people of no esteem in the minds of the worldlings.

People of no status to put to shame the wise. That is, the wise of this world. And God often does that, and this is his method of doing, to take the most unlikely material and fashion the temple for God's praise.

Somebody was showing off a church building once and he said, that was made of scrap marble. Imagine a church building made of scrap marble. I know something more wonderful than that.

The temple of God, the spiritual temple of God, made of scrap material as far as the world is concerned. Not the kind of people that the world would want in their societies, in their fraternities, or even in their

churches, if you will allow me to say it. God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise.

And it's so often that's true, you know, down through the history of the years. You've read about the atheist who wrote on the blackboard, God is nowhere. And a little believing girl came along and she just put an extra space in there.

God is now here. Foolishness putting to shame the wise. I think of a man like Harry Ironside.

Probably never went beyond high school, I would guess. And yet when he was preaching in Chicago in an auditorium with 4,040 seats, they were always filled. When I worked in a Christian bookstore, we had a Jewish salesman, his name was Gordon.

And we used to say, look, when you go to Chicago, why don't you go to hear Dr. Ironside? And he always had excuses why he didn't go to hear Dr. Ironside. But one night he was in Chicago alone and he thought, well, I'll just go to hear Dr. Ironside. And so he did.

And when he walked out of the building, he said, Nothing great about that. He said, I understood every word. That's what was great about it.

Tozer, A.W. Tozer. Humanly speaking, an uneducated man. But I'll tell you, the power of God was there.

And his writings and tapes are still in great demand. You see, the idea is, the more unlikely the materials you have, and the more wonderful thing you can do with those materials, the more glory it is to you, isn't it? The more questionable the raw materials, and I say that, raw materials that God has to work with, and the more wonderful thing you can do with, the more glory to him. Think of what he did with a man named Mel Trotter.

Mel Trotter was an alcoholic. And a bad one, too. I mean, he was really scraping the bottom.

He went so low that one time when his baby died, he took the shoes off the baby's body in the coffin and went and pawned them to get a drink. Now that's pretty low, don't you think? And he really realized after what he did, and he decided he would take his life. He was going to go down to Lake Michigan and drown himself.

But on the way down to Lake Michigan, he passed the Pacific Garden Mission. Somebody invited him to come in. And he came in and he heard this message that's foolish as far as the world is concerned, but the wisdom of God.

And he trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, and he became a powerful God, and he spent the rest of his life reaching the down and outers with the gospel. And that was very unlikely raw material, wasn't it? What could you ever do with a guy that would take the shoes off a baby in a coffin and pawn them? God couldn't do it. And you see, it's more glory to God to do something like that.

When he'd take Mel Trotter and make a saint out of him. Go to Grand Rapids and you'll find a mission there named the Mel Trotter Mission. Because of the impact he had in that ministry.

God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the what? God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty. Very humiliating, isn't it, to the world? With all its false ways, all its pretense to greatness, all its pretense to wisdom and power, to see God choosing the weak, the base, the poor, the despised, the things that are not, to bring to not the things that are that

what? That no flesh should glory in his presence. Funny, when you're unsaved, you look at it and you say, it doesn't make sense.

And when you're saved, you look at it and say, man, the wisdom of God. Makes all the difference which side of the cross you're standing on. And I hope you're standing on the right side of the cross this morning.

God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty. And base things of the world. And love.

Sometimes you might say the off-scouring of humanity. And it's true, too. Off-scouring of humanity.

Things that are despised. Things that the world despises. God has chosen things that are not.

That means things that are nothing. To bring to nothing the things that are. I was at a conference once, and they were having these tremendously flowery introductions.

I mean, the man would get up, and man, they'd build him up as if he were really something. And then they expected him to preach in the power of the Holy Spirit of God. Ridiculous.

Ridiculous. So I felt a little more mischievous than ever that day. And I said to the chairman, quietly, before it was my turn to get up, I said, I dare you do something.

He said, what? I said, will you introduce me? Say, ladies and gentlemen, the next speaker is weak, poor, base, base, despised, a thing that is nothing. And he was a good sport. And he got up, and without a smile on his face, he said, ladies and gentlemen, the next speaker is base, poor, weak, a thing of nothing.

And I was like, what? I don't think they had ever heard anybody introduced like that before. And I got up, and I said, now, don't be angry with the chairman. I put him up to it.

But I said, I want to tell you something. If I were more like what he said, God could use me more. He said, that's the people that God uses.

I thought afterwards, I wonder in the history of the Christian church if anybody had been introduced that way before. But that's what the passage says, isn't it? The problem is, we get these visions of grandeur. And we think, well, we're a pretty nice partnership, God and us.

Nonsense. Utter nonsense. It's all God.

The land is all the glory in Emmanuel's land. Peter, James, and John learned that lesson on the Mount of Transfiguration, didn't they? Peter said, let's build three booths. One for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

And God just covered them over and said, this is my beloved son. Hear him. God is not going to share his glory with somebody else, and neither will the Lord Jesus share his glory with someone else.

And you know, when I read these verses, I just rejoice. It's marvelous, isn't it? God's ways are high above man's ways. And God's thoughts are high above man's thoughts.

And God's methods, wow, they're high above man's. Man would have never chosen these methods. Why? To bring to nothing the things that are.

That no flesh should glory in his presence. Was thou, Savior, meek and lowly? And will such a worm as I, weak and sinful and unholy, dare to lift my head on high? Now, why is Paul saying all this? Because they were making so much of men. Because they were forming cults around men.

Because they were looking to human leaders as if they were something. As if they died on the cross. As if they were the saviors.

That's why it's so important for a local church to gather to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. And not to a human preacher. We stand for that.

We stand for it dogmatically. It's wrong to gather to a man. Because the best of men are men at best.

And God knows how to stain the pride of human glory. He knows how to do that. He knows how to prick man's balloon.

He's an expert at the use of the pin. The true ministry of the Holy Spirit of God exalts the Lord Jesus Christ. Illuminates the Lord Jesus Christ.

Makes him to be the central one. And that's why Paul says in verse 29 that no flesh should glory in his presence. And then he says in verse 30, but of him you are in Christ Jesus.

Not of Paul. Not of Apollos. Not of Cephas.

Of him. You are in Christ Jesus who came for us wisdom. You want wisdom? Find Christ.

Christ is wisdom incarnate. And when you have the Lord Jesus you have divine wisdom. I remember when I went through college.

It was a liberal college. And they were filled with doubts and denials and deviations and every other D under the sun about the word of God. But we were required to go.

It stopped there. So I left them. I used to go in and hear these prominent liberals holding forth.

And I'd walk out of that chapel and I'd say, huh. My father who probably never went beyond sixth grade to school can see more on his knees than they can see on their tiptoes. Because he knew the word of God.

And it was true. It was absolutely true. He came up from Scotland an unsaved man.

He was saved in this country. He got into the word of God. He studied the word of God.

He started serving the Lord. And he could speak with authority. And not a lot of these sweet nothings that these men were talking about.

And I used to think that. My father can see more on his knees than they can see on their tiptoes. Of him you are in Christ Jesus who became for us wisdom from God.

Boy, that's a wonderful thing to realize that a man walked the dusty lanes of this earth who was wisdom incarnate. Isn't that great? There hasn't been another like him since. There won't be until he comes back again.

Not only wisdom from God, but righteousness. See, everything is comprehended in the Lord Jesus. Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption.

What does righteousness mean? Well, it has to do with justification. It means that when a person truly trusts the Lord Jesus as Savior, God puts righteousness to his account. It's a wonderful thing, isn't it? That's what justification is.

It's reckoning a man who isn't righteous to be righteous on the basis of the work of Christ that tells him. Therefore, being justified by Christ, that is, having righteousness put to your account. That's exactly what happens when the sinner trusts the Savior.

God in heaven puts righteousness to the account. That's what makes you fit for heaven. That's what makes you fit for heaven.

Not anything you've ever done or undone. Not your tears of repentance, but the fact that God has put righteousness to your account. I was telling some of the friends the other night, quoting C.I. Schofield.

He said, and this was helpful to me when I first became a Christian. He said, justification takes place in the mind of God and not in the nervous system of the believer. This is true.

Justification takes place in the mind of God and not in the nervous system of the believer. The minute you trust Christ, God justifies you just like that. And that is your ticket to heaven.

You are made complete in Christ. You have all the merit that you need in Christ, not in yourself. God could never turn you away.

So, he's been made righteousness. This isn't our righteousness. It's his righteousness put to our account.

And sanctification, God doesn't leave us just in a state of positional righteousness. He goes on to do a work in our lives of sanctification. Making us more and more like the Lord Jesus.

The moment we are saved, we are sanctified positionally. But then there's a practical sanctification that flows on from that. And then Christ is made redemption to us.

And that refers to the future state here. It refers to the redemption of our bodies. You see, when we're saved, we're saved for time and eternity, but we're still living in a frail body.

A body that's been marked by the effects of sin. And Christ's work included the redemption of the body as well as the spirit and the soul. It was all included in the work of the Lord Jesus at the cross of Calvary.

And when he comes again and takes his people home to be with himself, redemption of the body. We'll have a body like his glorified body for all eternity. So, Paul is emphasizing in verse 30, Look, if you want these things, if you want wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, don't look to man for it.

No man can do that for you. Only the Lord Jesus can do it for you. I said last week that just as a magnet always points to the north, Paul's always pointed to Christ.

Says that, as it is written, he who glories, let him glory in the Lord. That's an interesting thing. That verse is quoted from Jeremiah 9.24. And if you go back there, you'll find that the Lord, when it's capitalized like that

in the Old Testament, always refers to Jehovah.

Jehovah. Here, Paul applies it to Jesus. What does that mean? It means that the Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

That's exactly what it means. It means that the Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. It's tremendous, really.

And Paul's argument is devastating here. To think that people would ever make so much of men and leave Christ out of the picture or only a part of the picture. Well, now in chapter 2, verses 1 through 5, first of all, he's talking about the human folly and weakness of the message of the gospel.

And then he goes on to talk about, in the passage that we've just read, the converts, what a five-ranked army of fools they are. That's what the world thinks. The world thinks that Christians are just a five-ranked army of fools.

Now he's going to describe the method that he used in preaching. And once again, no glory to Paul. Boy, if a man ever scrapes himself in the dust, it's Paul doing it in this passage of Scripture.

The weakness and folly of the preacher. That is as far as the world is concerned. The weakness and folly of the preacher.

The manner in which Paul delivered the message. That's what we're reading about. First of all, the method he spurned.

He says, when I came to you, he said, I didn't come with excellence of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. Well, that's good. He had his priorities straight.

He knew what he wanted to accomplish. And what he did not want to accomplish was to direct attention to himself. To have people go away and say, My, that Paul is a real spellbinder.

Talkable to do that, you know. In the preaching ministry, there's an awful temptation for an ego trip. True.

Paul said, I don't think. I didn't come to you with excellence of speech. As the world famous orator.

The man who can hold the audience in the palm of his hand. Not a very big audience. You can hold it in the palm of your hand.

With excellence of speech or wisdom. Not wisdom, but speaking here of human wisdom. Declaring to you the testimony of God.

What did you do, Paul? He says, I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. Now, don't misunderstand that. That doesn't mean that when Paul came preaching, he always talked about Calvary.

Doesn't mean that. When he says Jesus Christ and him crucified, he's talking about the person, Jesus Christ, and his work, him crucified. And that expression, him crucified, comprehends all the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not just Christ on the cross. It's Christ buried, risen, ascended, at the right hand of God, giving salvation to all who come to him in simple, trusting faith. What he's really saying is that he wasn't a sign-loving Jew,

although he was a Jew, a wisdom-loving Greek, but he was a Christ-loving believer, is what he was saying.

And he was taken up with the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's all he cared for. And before he got up to preach, that was his great concern.

Now the people would say, oh, that was a nice sermon, Paul. But they would say, what a Savior. What a wonderful Savior Paul preached.

And I'm sure that was exactly it. He came to them in physical weakness. He said, man, everything's against the gospel.

Everything but the power of God is against it. Everything but the Spirit of God working through the message is against it. From the human standpoint, look, forget it.

It's a failure. You know, from the human standpoint. It worked.

It really worked. And I'm telling you, heaven's going to be populated with people from every kindred, tribe, tongue, and nation who've heard the message and received it and have been saved for time and for eternity. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

This was the manner of his delivering. Hard to believe that Paul was up there with his knees knocking. But that's what it was.

That's what it was. His knees were knocking. I think one of the greatest preachers that has come upon the scene down through the history of the church was Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

I think he was preaching when he was 19 years of age. He was really a trophy of the grace of God. If you read his books today, I mean, it's really marvelous.

The flow of vocabulary. But I want to tell you something. Before he got up to speak sometimes, Charles Haddon Spurgeon vomited blood.

That's what it cost him. I think of that when I read these verses of the apostle Paul. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

When you're in that situation, you say, Lord, if I could just be strong and well and in good health, I could be so much more effective for you. God says, no, my strength is made perfect in weakness. My grace is sufficient for you.

My strength is made perfect in weakness. I tell you, God chooses the most unlikely people to perform his purposes. And this should be an encouragement to some of you here.

Nah, just a nothing, you know. God couldn't use me. That's the kind of people he can use.

Nothing. Zero. Ciphers.

But the question is, are we available to him? Or do we just sit in the back and sulk and watch others moving ahead for God? I was with you in weakness, in fear, and much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not what persuasive words of human wisdom. He wasn't always preaching apologetics, although I'm sure he did preach that.

Evidences of the Christian faith in demonstration of the spirit and of power. Marvelous, isn't it? A message that seems foolish, going out to people who are the lowliest people in the world, preached by a man who's weak and base and despised and accomplishing wonderful, wonderful results. This is the way God works.

The way he works in demonstration of the spirit and of power. Why? So that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. You see, that's just exactly what they were doing in Corinth.

They were concentrating on their human leaders. And they were following certain men. Paul says, don't be ridiculous.

Don't have your faith in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. You know, that's still the same message. The message hasn't changed a bit.

And it's still going out to the same people. You know, if you want to have an effective ministry for God, go to the poor people of the world, not the wealthy. Don't go to the neighborhoods where the people are posh and living in luxury and in ease.

They're not interested. Go to the poor people. It says that in Scripture.

The common people heard him gladly. The poor have the gospel preached unto him. God has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, these promise to them that love him.

And what about the rich? Don't they deserve to hear the gospel? Everyone says, you won't get the same response from them. Here and there, not many, doesn't say not any, not many, will respond to the gospel message. So the message goes out today.

Maybe there's somebody here and you've never really repented of your sins. You've never wept before God because of those sins that nailed the Son of God to the cross of Calvary. And you've never by a simple act of faith said, Lord Jesus, I believe you died for sinners.

I believe you died for me. The best way I know how, I take you as my Lord and Savior. If you've never done it before, why don't you do it today? That's what Paul's talking about here.

You say, will that work? Never failed yet. You won't be the first.

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