

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

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[0:00] Good evening. Be in the New Testament this evening in the book of 1 Corinthians chapter 1.

! I've never ever envied Paul having to write to the Corinthian church.! Paul addresses a lot of things with the Corinthians.

! And a lot of the reason is because of the culture. That the Corinthian church sat in the midst of. The city of Corinth was known for philosophy.

It was known for commerce. It was known. It had a lot of clout amongst the other cities that were around it. It was also highly known for its immorality.

And that's a lot of what Paul had to address to the Corinthians. In both 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. But these things were, you know, again, they were part of the culture that was around the church.

[1:05] And the church was right in the middle of all of this. The problem was is that that immorality had found its way into the church. Not only the immorality, but the philosophical views of the culture that was around, all in Corinth and around the church had infiltrated the church.

You read about that in this same chapter. We're not going to read about that tonight. But you read where many of the Corinthian believers were saying, well, you know, I'm with Apollos and I'm with Paul and I'm with Cephas.

And some of them even claimed superiority because, you know, they said, well, I belong to Jesus. But they were talking about as far as what teacher or philosopher as they saw it, they followed. Folks, if we're born again, we all belong to Jesus. If we're born again, we all belong to Him. But again, they were claiming superiority and this was causing division within the church.

Not only that, but many other things that had infiltrated the church. Again, I do not envy Paul for having to write this letter to the church at Corinth.

[2:17] But in this chapter, in chapter one of first Corinthians, we see these things that I just talked about. But we also see Paul bringing the Corinthian believers back to the basics, the basics of the gospel, the superiority of Jesus Christ and the importance of the cross of Jesus Christ.

And he tells them, the Corinthian believers, he says that the cross or he teaches that the cross is of utmost importance. At the cross, the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.

And again, it's no different now, 2,000 years later, as it was then. But the preaching of the cross to them that are saved is the power of God. And again, that's no different now.

But again, the culture had infiltrated the church. And that's what Paul was having to address to these Corinthian believers. We're going to read the last few verses of 1 Corinthians in chapter one this evening.

So 1 Corinthians chapter one, beginning at verse 26 says, For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.

[3:34] But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. And God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. And base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to naught things that are.

That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Back to verse number 26. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not by many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.

What is Paul doing here in this verse? As I explained in the introduction, if you would like to call it that, a lot of the outside culture had infiltrated the church.

He had gone back to the cross of Christ. He had gone back to the simplicity of the gospel of Jesus Christ, showing these Corinthian believers that this indeed is the reason that they were saved to begin with.

[4:51] It wasn't because of philosophy. It wasn't because of intelligence. It wasn't because of superiority of this human or the superiority of that man or whatever the case was.

But it was Jesus Christ and the fact that he had hung on a cross. He had bled and died. He had given his life a ransom for many. This is what Paul had told them in the former parts of this chapter. But here he says, for ye see your calling. What is he doing here? He is calling back to their remembrance something. He says, for ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.

Now notice, he doesn't say no wise men. He doesn't say no noble men. He doesn't say any mighty men. But he says not many of those folks.

And this makes me think of Jesus Christ himself in the gospels when he says it would be easier for the camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter in to the kingdom of almighty God.

[5:53] It's not that rich people can't be saved. It's not that smart people can't be saved. It's not that those that are mighty cannot be saved. But those which are rich and those which are smart and those which are intelligent and those which think in their own minds that they are mighty, they are harder to reach with the gospel because they have learned to depend upon something else.

And whatever that something else is has taken it has taken them along for years, maybe decades, whatever the case is. And they have grown dependent upon those things.

They have grown dependent upon their bank accounts. They have grown dependent upon their own strength. They have grown dependent upon their own brains. And they refuse to believe in something as simple as the perfect, spotless lamb of almighty God being sent here to take their place on the cross.

Give his life for them that they could have life and life more abundantly. Hallelujah. That's what the problem is. Is people are dependent too much upon self and too much upon other men instead of depending upon the man that hung and bled and died.

The man that was promised in Genesis chapter 3 and is promised throughout the rest of the scriptures up until the time of the gospels when he was crucified. He was buried.

[7:16] He resurrected. He has since ascended to the father and he has promised to come back one day after a while for all of those that have believed on him, for all of those that have repented of their ways and believed on him, they will have life.

But for those that have not believed, for those that have rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ, they will have eternal damnation and nothing more than that.

But man has a hard time accepting that man has a hard time. Folks, I'm speaking to you from experience. I thought I was smarter than God. I thought I was smarter than the Bible.

I thought I had had more intelligence than these people that wrote this book and then the people that believe in this book. But praise be unto God. He took me out to the woodshed one day, wore me out, and I ain't been the same since and nor will I ever be the same.

But Paul here says for ye see your calling. Ye see your calling. Do you remember where God brought you from? In other words, hey, you flip over just a few more chapters in 1 Corinthians, you see a big long list of nasty wicked sins that Paul lists.

[8:24] He lists fornication. He lists murder. He lists all these nasty wicked things as far as the human mind is concerned. And he says, as such were some of you.

As such were past tense. You were like this. You were a fornicator. You were an adulterer. You were a liar. You were a thief. You were a murderer. You were this.

You were that. But you are not anymore because you have been raised to new life in Christ Jesus. Hallelujah. Amen. He says, for you see your calling.

You see your calling. And he calls them brethren. So we know he's writing to believers here. I'm sure there were Jewish believers in the Corinthian church. There were Jewish believers in all the regions that were around.

But this was being addressed mainly. Mainly to Gentile audience. For you see your calling. Brethren. How that not many wise men after the flesh.

[9:22] Now, he added that after the flesh. Why do you think that would be? Many wise men that think themselves to be wise. Why would he have done that? Folks, we know from Proverbs.

Two times at least I can think of in Proverbs. We read that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. So, Paul is not here saying those that fear the Lord can't be saved.

He's saying those that are wise after the flesh. Those that are wise in their own minds. Those that the world sees as wise. Those that the world sees as having a reputation of some kind.

Those that the world sees as these things. Folks, I will tell you now. Don't you worry one bit about what the world thinks about you. Don't you worry one bit of how they look at you.

Whether it's cross-eyed. Whether it's down their nose. No matter what the case is. If you belong to God. If you are an heir to God. And a joint heir with Jesus Christ. As the scripture says in Roman 8.

[10:18] Don't you worry one bit about how the world looks at you. We're supposed to be different. We should be different. We don't make ourselves peculiar.

God makes us peculiar. When we live according to what is written in this book. We will be peculiar to the world. We will be different from the world again.

What he was addressing was the church. The Corinthian church was allowing the influence of the world into the church. And the world has no business influencing the church.

I'm not saying the world should not be able to enter into the church. Hey I'm all for everybody coming through the doors to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. But they should not influence the church. They should not have positions in the church.

They shouldn't be pastor. They shouldn't be deacon. They shouldn't sing. They shouldn't be Sunday school teachers. None of that. If they are of the world. Only those which are redeemed should be in those positions.

[11:15] Again for you see your calling brethren. How that not by many wise men after the flesh. Not many mighty. Not many nobles are called.

Well folks there's only one other side to that coin. We're about to get into that. Verse number 27. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world. To confound the wise.

And God hath chosen the weak things of the world. To confound the things which are mighty. And base things of the world. And the things which are despised. Hath God chosen. Yea and things which are not.

To are not to bring to naught. Things that are. God hath chosen the foolish things of the world. The foolish things of the world to do what? to confound the wise.

All of this here is speaking of how God operates and how God works. And folks, this is not something new that Paul was writing here. He is just informing them.

[12:14] He says, but God hath chosen. That's the key to every bit of this. All of these two verses here. We read twice. God hath chosen. And in verse 28, we read again, hath God chosen.

That's the key to it all. This is the way that God has chosen to operate. God chose to save your weak soul. God chose to save your helpless soul.

God chose to do these things. God chose to send His Son into the world so that we ourselves could be saved. And this is not something new to God.

It was not something new to the New Testament church. It is something that Almighty God did in the Old Testament and continues to do now in this very day. that we live in.

We are incapable of saving ourselves. We are incapable of helping ourselves as far as salvation is concerned. As far as anything eternal is concerned.

[13:12] We are helpless. And quite frankly, we are hopeless outside of God. God chose to do these things. You think of all the people in the Scriptures that you can, that God used in this exact same manner in these two verses.

He chose to use Moses. Moses said, Hey, I'm not able to do this. I speak with a stutter. I'm not capable of standing before Pharaoh. God sent him anyway.

He sent him with Aaron. But He sent him anyway. And God used Moses. A man with an inability in Moses' mind. A man with an inability. And He used him to deliver all of His people through the Red Sea and continue with them 40 years out into the wilderness until they got to the promised land.

God chose to do that. God chose to use a man like Moses. God chose Noah. Noah was a preacher of righteousness.

Preached for 120 years to a bunch of people that done nothing more than mock him. But God chose that. God chose him. God chose Gideon. That's one of my favorite examples.
[14 : 25] God chose Gideon. A man who saw himself as insufficient. God chose him and 300 other men to defeat the Midianites and the Amalekites in the valley.

Y'all remember that story from the book of Judges? You remember that account? Judges 6-7. The angel comes to Gideon and says, I think sarcastically thou mighty man of valor. Because Gideon was threshing wheat at the wine press. Somewhere wheat wasn't supposed to be threshed. But he was hiding from the enemy. But he was informed then that God can move powerfully through him.

He began with 32,000 men. God said, you tell them men that have fear in them, you tell the men that don't want to do this to go on their ways.

They reduced it down to 10,000. 22,000 men went their ways. Reduced it to 10,000 against an army that the Bible describes as grasshoppers in the valley. And it describes that army's camels in the exact same way.

[15 : 33] 10,000 men against that. And God says, that's still too many. That's still too many. He says that Israel can't vaunt itself against me. That they can't raise themselves up and say it was because of our military might that we were able to accomplish this.

So Gideon is told, you take these men down to the water and those who lap it like a dog out of their hands, those are the ones that you'll keep. The rest of them you send home.

10,000 men went down to the water. 300 of them stayed. And God used 301 men, 300 men plus Gideon, to defeat an entire army that had come against them.

But He used a man that saw Himself as insufficient and insignificant. God constantly does these things. Hey folks, Jesus Christ called a bunch of fishermen and a publican to walk with Him for three plus years.

He uses those that the world overlooks. He uses those that the world doesn't think is important. And He uses us to do great and mighty things. I'm not saying that God will call you to walk out here and call fire down out of heaven.

[16 : 41] I'm not saying He will call you to perform some great miracle. But God uses us to do the most powerful thing that man could possibly hear in his ears.

And that is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to every living creature because it, the gospel, is the power of God and to salvation.

Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! You want folks to get saved? Let them hear the gospel. Amen. Let them hear the good news. Let them hear the good news. Let them hear the good news that Jesus Christ died for sinners.

But God constantly chooses. He's chosen this modus operandi of His. He has chosen this motif of His.

In His wisdom, He has done this. Folks, people look at the cross of Jesus Christ. People did it when it was going on, when the crucifixion was happening.

[17 : 39] And people do it now. They will read in the Bible. They will hear the preached Word of God. They will read it for themselves in articles or what have you about the crucifixion of Christ.

And they will look at it and think that it is foolishness. They will look at it and say, there is no wisdom in this. There is no intelligence in this. What wise God would do such a thing?

The God who is the God of all wisdom would do something like that. The God who knows everything that He is doing. The God who knows the beginning from the end and the end from the beginning.

He knows what He is doing. And that is where my faith and my hope and my trust is in. Not in self. God constantly chooses what the world sees as weak and what the world sees as insignificant and what the world overlooks.

Why does He do that? That brings us to verse 29. That no flesh should glory in His presence. God does this so that I nor you nor Moses nor David nor Peter nor Paul nor John nor anyone else that you know of nor Mamaw nor Papaw nor Mom and Dad so that no one can glory in the presence of Almighty God.

[19 : 02] None of us will be able to stand before God and say you are in debt to Me. I earned My way here. I earned My way to you. I earned My way to heaven.

I earned the salvation of Mine. No! No man will be able to do any such thing. God chooses to confound the wise of the world with foolishness that no flesh should glory in His presence. That we cannot say I did this. Folks, we will all stand before Christ one day. Paul says we must all stand at the judgment seat of Christ.

But folks, after that, after that, there's going to be a time when all the redeemed are before Christ and none of us will be able to say because of Me I am standing here before Him.

All of us will come before Him. We might have one crown. We might have three crowns. We might have a dozen crowns. I don't know. But we will all come before Christ.

[20:09] None of us will be able to boast that we got ourselves there. None of us will be able to boast that this is my crown and I'm keeping it. None of us will be able to boast of any of these things. Those crowns belong to Him.

We ourselves belong to Him. He redeemed us. He paid for us. And He bought us with His own blood. He deserves all the glory. He deserves all the honor.

And He deserves all the praise for everything that He has done. Those crowns that we will have will be cast at His feet. They are His. They are His.

That no flesh should glory in His presence. Verse 30, But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus who of God has made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

But of Him are ye in Christ. Not of yourselves. It is a work of God that has brought you into Christ. And without Christ, without Him, He told His disciples Himself in John 15, Without Me, you can do nothing.

[21:16] Without Him, we can do nothing. That wasn't just to those that were gathered around Him at that time. That is to anyone who has called themselves a disciple of Jesus Christ since, even up until this very day that we are presently in.

We can do nothing without Jesus Christ. It is through God. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus. And folks, there is no better place for us to be.

There is no safer place for us to be. There is no more peaceful place for us to be. There is no better place to be than in Jesus Christ.

And at that, in the final day, when I stand before God, I will be in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. I will be in the holiness of Jesus Christ.

And that is why I will be able to stand before God. Not of my works. Not of anything that I have done. But all because of what He, Jesus Christ, has done on my behalf as a rebellious sinner.

[22:17] As someone who has rebelled against the laws of God. Jesus Christ died for me. As Paul says in the letter to the Galatian church, He loved Him and He gave Himself for Him.

Folks, He loved me and He gave Himself for me. And it is because of Him that I will be able to stand before God. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom.

Christ is the wisdom of God according to the Scriptures. Christ is the ultimate display of the wisdom of Almighty God. Again, the world will look at that and they will say there is no wisdom, there is no intelligence, there is no good in this, there is no smarts in this, there is nothing in this that appeals to me.

And I will tell you why. It is because that doesn't appeal to the flesh. The gospel of Jesus Christ strips away every bit of self-pride that man could possibly have.

The problem is people reject the gospel because they don't want to let go of that pride. They don't want to let go of self. They want to say, I had something to do with this. I had something to do with my salvation.

[23:25] I deserved it. No, none of us deserve it. Christ is the wisdom of God and righteousness. By God, Christ has made our righteousness. By God, Christ has always been righteous.

The scripture isn't saying otherwise here. He has ever been righteous. There was not one point in Jesus Christ's life, no matter what the world might tell you, no matter what some denominations might tell you, there was never a point in the ministry of Jesus Christ on this earth that He ever sinned, that He ever done anything that was unrighteous, that He ever did anything that was unholy.

He is righteous. He has always been righteous, and He ever will be righteous. Hallelujah. If He wasn't, you and I would be here without hope. You and I would be without hope.

But there's people out there that will tell you Christ sinned. There's people out here that will tell you that Christ sinned during His earthly ministry by different means, different ways. Folks, that is

contrary to what the rest of Scripture teaches.

Not just in the New Testament, it teaches all the way through the Old Testament. He was going to be a perfect sacrifice. He was a perfect Savior, and He is a perfect Savior. That God has made Him our righteousness.

[24 : 41] And sanctification. Folks, this goes right back to the first line of this verse. But of Him are ye in Christ. If we are Christ, and we are in Christ, we are sanctified by God in Christ.

We are set aside for the work of God, for the cause of God, and for the purpose of God. And it is all in Christ that that is made possible. Outside of Christ, you and I are pretty much useless to God. Now, God can use those who are lost. God can do whatever He wants to, for He is sovereign over this entire universe. He can use anyone He wants to. He used Pharaoh, and Pharaoh was an unsaved man.

He can use whomever He wants to. Whenever He wants to. But to be sanctified for the cause of God in Christ Jesus. That is to be set aside for God's purpose.

What are you set aside for? You are set aside for the purpose of God. You might have a special calling on your life. You might have a specific calling on your life. Some are preachers. Some are teachers.

[25 : 45] Some are singers. Some do this. Some do that. But folks, we all have a purpose. The Great Commission was not only given to preachers. The Great Commission was given to all the disciples of Jesus Christ.

We are to tell everyone that we can about the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every living creature however that we can.

Hey folks, it has never been easier than it is now to tell someone about Jesus Christ and about the gospel with the internet, with email, with all these other technological things that we have at our disposal.

They don't even have to know what your face looks like and you can tell them about the gospel. And yet there are many Christians out there that refuse to do so. That refuse to partake in the Great Commission that God has given them.

Folks, it is an honor. It is an honor to tell someone about Jesus Christ. to tell someone that there was a man that came, lived a perfect sinless life, gave himself upon a cross, was buried, was resurrected three days later and he now sits at the right hand of majesty making intercession and mediating on behalf of all of those that repent of their ways and believe on Him.

[27 : 03] It is an honor to tell people that. And we should all do our part to do that in sanctification and redemption. What is redemption?

Redemption is buying back with a price. God has redeemed us back to the first line of that verse in Jesus Christ through the price that Jesus Christ paid with His own blood.

It is in Christ and only in Christ that we are or that we can be redeemed. And folks, quite frankly, it is only in Christ that we can remain redeemed.

It is not of our own works. It took God to save us. Not my own works. And it will take God to keep me saved. Not my own works. My works. My righteousnesses.

My good deeds. Anything that I've done. Anything that I've accomplished in my life is all for naught as far as eternity goes. But as far as eternity goes, what Christ has done, that's what counts for eternity.

[28 : 09] And that's what counts for life and life everlasting. And that's how I'm redeemed. I'm redeemed in Christ and I remain redeemed in Jesus Christ.

Verse 31 will be done. That according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. That takes you back to verse number 29.

That no flesh should glory in His presence. No flesh should glory in the presence of God. And these things are done that according as it is written, and you can find that Scripture in the book of Jeremiah, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

God says in the book of Jeremiah, and I'll paraphrase it, but God says in the book of Jeremiah, He says don't let man glory in himself. Don't let man glory in his own things, in his own accomplishments, in his own works.

But if a man glorieth, let him glory in this. That he understandeth, and he knoweth me. Sayeth the Lord. That's paraphrased, but that's basically what God says there in Jeremiah chapter 9.

[29:17] Let a man glory in that he understandeth, and he knoweth me. He understands, and he owes me. What must we understand? First off, we must understand that we are sinners before we will ever get saved.

It must be shown us, and we must comprehend that we have offended the thrice holy God of the universe. We have offended the creator God. We have offended the maker and master of it all. We must understand that. But then, we must understand that God has made a way that we may not be left in that shape. That we may not be left in the shape of sinners.

That we may, that we can be redeemed. That we can be sanctified. You go back to the other verse there. All these things happen in Jesus Christ, and that is all an act of God.

Folks, this boils down to the new birth that Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about in John chapter 3 when he said, you must be born again. When we are born again, we are placed in Christ, and that is where he becomes our redemption.

[30:22] That is when he becomes our sanctification. That's when he becomes our salvation. That's when he becomes our way, our truth, and our life. That's when he becomes all of these things.

That's not to say he's not Savior beforehand. But to be our Savior. But to be your Savior. Your personal Savior. You must see that you are a sinner. You must see that.

And you must see that He is the Savior. And you must repent. And you must believe on Him and His Gospel. That according as it is written, He that glorieth, let Him glory.

in the Lord. Church, do not glory in yourselves. Do not get it in your mind that you have accomplished something. Because God accomplished it.

That is exactly what the Corinthian church was getting into with all these philosophies from the outside people coming in to the church. And folks, it is so easily done.

[31:21] It is so easily done. Say, look how God blessed me. Look at the family that God has given me. Look at the cupboards of food that God has given me. Look at the cars that I have. Look at the house that I own.

Look at the life that I live. I must have done something good for God to have blessed me like that. No. No. God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.

The wise of the world, those that are wise according to the flesh, and we read in that first verse tonight, they look on stuff like that. They say, how can this be?

How can this be? How can this person have this attitude? My goodness, their wife's sick. Their husband's sick. They're sick. Their mom's sick.

Their father's sick. Their children are sick. Whatever the case is, that person's been surrounded by death their entire lives. How in the world could they walk around with a smile on their face?

[32:26] How could they have joy? I'll tell you why. It's because I am found in Christ. And Christ is my joy. He is my redemption. He is my sanctification.

He is my salvation. He is my everything. And if He is your everything, the world will look on you when negativity comes in your life. And if you're reflecting the joy, and you're showing the joy, you're being the true salt and light that God has called you to be.

The world will look on that in confusion. They'll be confounded. Not because Spencer says so, but because the Bible teaches that. They will be confounded and confused because of the joy that you have.

God bless you, church. That's this evening's message.