

Series: 1 Corinthians
Title: God Choice of Useless Things
Text: 1 Corinthians 1: 25-29
Date: July
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Man's fleshly wisdom, might and nobility is useless in the calling of God's people. That is the point of our message tonight.

REVIEW

The apostle Paul is correcting the division among the Corinthian brethren which they were having over their pastors. Some were even saying they were of Christ so they did not even need a preacher. All of this was wrong. As Paul corrected their error he said, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." (1 Cor 1: 17) Then Paul began giving reasons why Christ saves through the preaching of the gospel.

- The first reason we saw is because "it is written." God saves through the preaching of the gospel because God declared he would in the old testament scriptures. (1 Cor 1: 19)
- The second reason is because it is the wisdom and pleasure of God. (1 Cor 1: 21)
- The third reason is because the preaching of Christ crucified is the means whereby God calls out his elect among Jew and Gentile, making Christ the Power and Wisdom of God to those he calls. (1 Cor 1: 22-24)

Then the apostle introduces a new argument, showing why God has chosen to call his people through the preaching of the gospel. The argument is derived from those God chooses and calls to preach and believe Christ.

1 Corinthians 1: 26: For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 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; 28: And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29: That no flesh should glory in his presence.

GOD HATH CHOSEN

First, notice who did the choosing? Three times in our text we read "God hath chosen." God is sovereign to make his choice—to choose who he will save, the means by which God will save them and sovereign to bring it to pass.

Psalm 115: 3: But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Psalm 135:6: Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

Daniel 4:35: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Ephesians 1:11: [God] worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Isaiah 46: 10: Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: 11: Calling...the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

This is offensive to sinners because our flesh hates God to do as he will. Sinful flesh hates to be told salvation is by God's chosen way for God's chosen people only! We see how the world regards God's authority by how they regard authority in the earth. We see the videos of police & the protests of their abuse of authority. No one should abuse their

authority, some do and they should be punished. But, a citizen also has a responsibility to submit to the powers that be. If we resist, it is the policeman's job to subdue the unruly, lawbreaker. When men protest the powers that be, they rebel not only against man, but against God's authority and teach children to do the same. Scripture is clear, "There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." (Rom 13: 1) When we see such rebellion against earthly authority it only serves to remind us of what is in man's heart by nature toward God.

Nevertheless, man may rebel in this earth but the only way sinners shall be saved is the way the sovereign God has chosen which is through the preaching of Christ crucified, using nobodies with no power. God will be exalted by this means. He says, "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." (Ps 46: 10)

Therefore, God's choice, God's way, God's chosen means is best. Our text says, "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (1 Cor 1: 25)

Isaiah 55: 8: For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9: For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

WHAT DID GOD CHOOSE AND WHY? FOOLISH THINGS

First, God chose foolish things, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world..." (1 Cor 1: 27)

This includes the preaching of Christ, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe..." (1 Cor 1: 18, 21)

This means of public preaching was chosen by God to declare that God chose his Son and chose a people in his Son. God chose to exalt his Son above every name and to make every knee bow before him. This world says "Foolishness!"

God chose for his Son to become the GodMan, born of virgin, born and raised poor, uneducated by this world's teachers, without form or comeliness so that no man would see anything in him and desire him. Yet, Christ is God's Prophet, Priest and King for his people. This world says, "Foolishness!"

God chose for his Son to die on a bloody cross to declare his righteousness. On the cross, God declares that he is just and the Justifier of every child he saves. He chose Christ to be the righteousness of his people. It is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by Christ, the Righteousness of God, that God's elect are made righteous. This world says, "Foolishness."

God chose for his Son's body to be buried in a grave, then three days later, to resurrect his Son to his right hand to make him Head over his church, to give Christ all power over all as both God and Man. This world says "Foolishness."

God chose the foolish means of public preaching—preaching which declares Christ and him crucified—to quicken his chosen, spiritually dead child, to make Christ all unto us. This world says "Foolishness." Some call it foolishness by saying, "That's just one way that God saves." But God says it is the only way.

Romans 10: 14: How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15: And how shall they preach, except they be sent?

Now, to further show that our calling has nothing to do with the wisdom, might or nobility of our flesh, he speaks of us as foolish things—both the preacher God uses and his people he calls, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that

not many wise men after the flesh,...*are called*...But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world..." 1 Cor 1: 26, 27)

Notice, the word "things" is used to show that in our flesh God's elect are so sinful and useless we are not worthy to be called "men", only "things." It is also shows how the world regards God's people, his church. The religious leaders spoke of Christ our Lord this way, "And they began to accuse him, saying, "We found this...perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King." (Lu 23: 2) The word "fellows" is added by our translators. They called Christ "this!" So the world regards Christ's people as "things."

He says "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh,...*are called*." (1 Cor 1: 26) There is wisdom we get from men. These are "wise after the flesh." Then there is the wisdom of God. These are those in whom Christ is made Wisdom by divine revelation.

When you observe God's church, past and present, the preachers Christ sends and the people God saves through their preaching, the church God uses to spread his gospel, "ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh...*are called*...But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise." (1 Cor 1: 26, 27)

God passed by almost all the learned scribes and Pharisee's—the apostle Paul was an exception. Christ chose and called uneducated fishermen to be his preachers. Through their preaching, God chose and called sinners and publicans. The same is true in our day. There are not many wise after the flesh among God's people.

Why did God choose foolish, unlearned, sinners? "To confound the wise." (1 Cor 1: 27) God did this on purpose to confound men who seek God's acceptance by their fleshly wisdom, their learning and knowledge. As long as men attempt to come to God by "what they know" they will remain confounded

WEAK THINGS

God chose weak things, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that...not many mighty,...*are called*...God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." (1 Cor 1: 26, 27)

Those mighty in the flesh are the wealthy and influential—"not many mighty,...are called."

Luke 18:24: [The Lord Jesus said] How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 25: For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Psalm 49: 6: They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; 7: None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: 8: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) 9: That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption. 10: For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. 11: Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. 12: Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. 13: This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah. 14: Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. 15: But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.

The majority of those God chose to save are "weak things"—poor, without money, without position in the world, without influence over anyone. It is foolish to think, "If God would only save a few rich men then we could do so much more spreading the gospel far and wide." No, God will remove rich men and use poor weak sinners to show that our power is Christ, not men, not us.

When the second temple was being built (a picture of Christ's true church being built) God gave his preacher Zechariah a word to give to the governor, Zerubbabel, to teach him how God's house is built, "Then he answered and

spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Zech 4: 6)

Why did he choose weak sinners to preach the gospel and why does God call out the weak?—to confound the mighty: to confuse, to put to shame the mighty who trust in their power and riches.

BASE THINGS

God chose base things, “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that...not many noble,...*are called*:...[God chose] base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.” (1 Cor 1: 26, 28)

Noble means noble birth, well-bred, from known, influential families—“not many noble are called.”

Instead, God chose “base things”—those of lowly birth, the ignoble. God chose “things which are despised”—so lowly that the rich and noble look upon them with contempt. God chose “things which are not”—people that the world calls “nobodies.”

There is church in Carolina whose sign says, “The church where everybody is somebody.” Christ’s church is the church where everybody is nothing.

Why did God chose to call nobodies into his church? “To bring to nought things that are.” (1 Cor 1: 28) God is using the preaching of Christ crucified to bring an end to pagan religions, to man-made governments and civilizations and to all the self-righteous works of men. Every time, God calls one of his lost sheep out of this world, God uses his nobodies to bring this world’s somebodies to nothing. And the world is too busy to even recognize it. Scripture says, “Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish! for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you!” Acts 13:41.

When God has called out his last lost sheep through the preaching of Christ crucified then all these things will be brought to nothing.

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

The only things that will remain are God’s chosen people, created in righteousness by Christ Jesus, born of God’s holy Spirit, those eternal things—“which cannot be shaken [shall] remain...we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved.” (Heb 12: 27-29)

THE PREEMMIENT PURPOSE

Why did God choose foolish, weak, base things to use to preach and promote his gospel in the earth and pass by the wise, mighty and noble of this world? “That no flesh should glory in his presence.” (1 Cor 1: 29)

Man chooses those who would be most helpful to him. God chooses those to whom God can be most helpful.

So God has chosen this foolish means of preaching and these lowly things which he uses to preach, by which God calls out his people, so that no flesh shall glory or boast or brag in God’s presence.

As Christ’s church, we cannot boast that we did anything to call another sinner and build God’s church or sustain it—no preacher of Christ’s will make that boast and no child of God will make that boast. We are merely an instrument in the hands of our sovereign Head, Christ Jesus.

Isaiah 10:15: Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.

God's church is like an ax in the hand of Christ our Head. The apostle Paul said, "By the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1 Cor 15: 10)

Neither will one who is called by God boast that his righteousness and conversion was of himself. Our calling is not by our own wisdom but only by Christ our Wisdom. We were not made the righteous and holiness of God by our own might but only by Christ the Power of God. Our birth is not noble because we gave ourselves life but we are saved only by Christ the Life.

Jeremiah 9: 23: Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: 24: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things...

Those graces of God just mentioned? Yes. But also these things our text speaks of. His humbled people who give him all the praise and glory, who glory that they understand and know Christ by Christ. God says, "in these things I delight, saith the LORD."

Amen!