

Text— 1 Corinthians 1:21-31

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Sinful human pride with its worldly wisdom has been troublesome throughout human history. For example, prior to our sermon text, the apostle Paul wrote to the early Christian congregation at Corinth, as recorded in 1 Corinthians 1:10-15, “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.”

Hence, there were arguments taking place among the people concerning which preacher they followed, rather than the entire congregation keeping its focus on Jesus Christ and following Him as Lord and Head of the Church. So, divisions were occurring in the congregation because the people were looking more at the messengers of the Gospel of Christ, rather than looking with firm, focused faith at the message of the Gospel: Jesus Christ, the only Savior and Lord.

My friends, we must all be on guard against sinful human pride with its worldly wisdom, for the truth is that we are ALL sinners who constantly need Jesus Christ the Savior, since Ecclesiastes 7:20 clearly states, “there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.”

Accordingly, it’s important that we be reinforced in the truth regarding how individuals obtain and retain salvation. Therefore, our sermon text can be of help to us as it emphasizes:

“GOD’S WAY OF SAVING SINNERS”

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) What is God’s way of saving sinners
- 2) Why God’s way of saving sinners was and is necessary

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Verse 21, ----- (1 Corinthians 1:21)

Think about the opening verse of our sermon text, for there we note that there is a big difference between God’s wisdom and worldly wisdom. The wisdom of this world holds that the preaching of God’s Word – especially the Gospel of Christ – is foolish, since worldly wisdom views mankind as simply wonderful and able to achieve anything by its own endeavors, for in 1 Corinthians 1:18 we read, “the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” Oh, thankfully, we who have been given faith in Christ by God the Holy Ghost working in and through the Gospel, are saved by that God-given trust and confidence in Christ—that faith which personally receives the forgiveness of sins and salvation earned for us by Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, pride-filled human beings trust in their own so-called wisdom, such as is evident in the followers of man’s science-falsely-so-called. For example, while the death-rate was higher during the recent COVID pandemic, we heard the president of the United States, along with many so-called medical experts, repeatedly use the phrase, “trust the science.” But what happened? Man’s science did NOT actually conquer COVID, for one vaccine was rather quietly pulled off the scene as it did more harm than good, while a number of recipients of other vaccines found themselves hospitalized. Numerous people died, whether vaccinated or not; most people with COVID recovered, whether vaccinated or not. So, the truth is that God in His grace and mercy has given relief from the COVID pandemic; but sadly, few are

those folks who actually thank and praise the Lord for His grace and mercy, although, thankfully, there are a number of people who do thank and praise our gracious God.

However, more important than relief from COVID is the relief the Lord God provides to people from the ravages of sin, for Romans 3:23 and 6:23 relates, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; [and] the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Yes, Holy Writ relates, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 4:9-10; 2:2) Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, is the atoning sacrifice – the slaughter sacrifice – for all the sins of all people, for He shed His own holy and precious blood in full payment for all sins while nailed to the tree of the cross.

Therefore, God has graciously provided us with the Way to avoid being condemned to the suffering of never-ending death in hell when we depart this life, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:16-18) Thus, we see it is vital to have faith in Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior and Lord, if one would be saved rather than damned.

Accordingly, the individual sinner must come to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and continue in that faith, if he or she would be saved; and, such faith is itself a gracious gift of God, for our sermon text opens by informing us: *after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God,*

it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Oh, worldly wisdom does NOT and CANNOT give anyone a right knowledge of the true God. Look at all the non-Christian religions, for they are products of worldly wisdom with their gods that are nothing but idols. Psalm 135:15-18 states the facts: "The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them." Yes, worldly wisdom does NOT lead to knowledge of the one true God, but rather leads into idolatry of all sorts, including worship of self, or man's science-falsely-so-called, or other sinful human beings, such as sports-stars and the like. Nevertheless, all idolaters look to their own works to save them, while the truth is that all the works of naturally conceived human beings are tainted with sin, no matter how good they may appear.

Verses 21-24, -----. (1 Corinthians 1:21-24)

Consider God's way of saving sinners. We've already noted that God the Father sent His only begotten Son into the world to redeem the world; and, that Jesus has paid for all the sins of all people with His holy and precious blood which He shed while nailed to the cross of Calvary. Additionally, we've noted that faith in Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior and Lord is vital if an individual would be saved rather than damned. Furthermore, we've observed that faith in Jesus Christ is itself a gracious gift of God, which it most certainly is, since our sermon text declares: *after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

The Jews were sign-seekers, while Jesus and His apostles walked on this earth. The Greeks were at that time the great thinkers of the age, with their constant seeking after worldly wisdom. Nevertheless, God in His true wisdom used and still uses the preaching of Christ crucified – the glorious Gospel – to convert sinners to saints by gifting them with faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord: the very faith which personally receives the forgiveness of sins and salvation which Christ has earned for all people. It's as we read in the book of Romans, where the apostle Paul wrote by inspiration of God, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 1:16-17; 10:17) Make no mistake about it: Jesus Christ is the ONLY WAY to God and heaven; personal faith in Jesus Christ is vital if one would be saved, for Acts 4:12 declares in no uncertain terms, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

The reason why Christ being crucified supplied full payment for all the sins of all people is that Jesus Christ is BOTH TRUE MAN AND TRUE GOD, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."— reports Colossians 2:9. Jesus had to be true man in order to take our place under the Law, and in order to suffer and die for us; Jesus had to be true God in order that His perfect keeping of God's holy Law might be sufficient for all people, and in order that His bitter sufferings, death and shedding of His blood might be sufficient ransom for all the sins of all people, and in order that He might be able to overcome death and the devil for all of us. All thanks and praise be to Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, true God and true man, who is most certainly *the power of God, and the wisdom of God*, the Savior of *both Jews and Greeks*, Jews and Gentiles, people of every race and nationality.

Let us never forget that God saves sinners by

gifting them with faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord: faith which is worked and sustained in their hearts by the Holy Ghost working in and through the Gospel of Christ when preached, for Jesus in His high-priestly prayer – before His bitter sufferings, death and resurrection – while praying for His disciples, also prayed, as recorded in John 17:20-21, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Thus, faith in Jesus Christ is truly a gift of God received by people through the WORD as preached by Jesus' apostles, the very Gospel Word recorded in the Holy Scriptures, given by inspiration of God.

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As we continue to ponder our sermon text to its conclusion, let us see why God's way of saving sinners was and is necessary.

Verses 22-25, ----- (1 Corinthians 1:22-25)

Whether Jew or Gentile, ALL naturally conceived human beings ARE SINNERS in dire need of salvation, for Psalm 14:2-3 says, "The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Therefore, it's clear that ALL people are by nature stuck on themselves and mired in the filth of sin, and consequently need God, since even God's "foolishness" is wiser than men, and God's "weakness" is stronger than men.

The preaching of Christ crucified is necessary to save sinners, for through such preaching of the Gospel the Holy Ghost gifts sinners with faith and sustains them therein; and, to them called thereby into faith, Jesus Christ is seen to be what He really is: *Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God*.

Think about Christ being the power of God and the

wisdom of God. Jesus Christ is amazing, for He is true God and true man, the one true Savior of sinners! God in His wisdom knew that His divine justice needed to be fully satisfied if sinners were to be saved from never-ending death and damnation; and, God knew that it would take divine power to accomplish the redemption of mankind; so, in Jesus Christ the perfect plan of salvation came together since He fulfilled all righteousness and paid for all the sins of all people. Accordingly, all who are called and gifted with faith in Jesus Christ by God the Holy Ghost working through the Gospel, see and know that Jesus Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Oh beloved, God's way of saving sinners was and is necessary because Jesus – who cannot lie – says, in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." No sinful human beings' own works can save him or her, since everything we sinners do is tainted with sin, for Psalm 53:2-3 informs us, "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." And, the Lord says in Ezekiel 18:4, "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Note it well: death of the soul and not only death of the body is what awaits those who do NOT have God-given faith in Jesus Christ, for John 3:36 states, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Yes, never-ending death in hell awaits those who do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ: that's why God's way of saving sinners was and is necessary; *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*

Verses 26-29, ----- (1 Corinthians 1:26-29)

The apostle Paul says to his fellow Christians, his fellow believers in Jesus: *ye see your calling,*

brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

Notice that Paul does NOT say that not ANY wise men after the flesh, not ANY mighty, not ANY noble are called; but, Paul, by inspiration of God, says: *not MANY wise men after the flesh, not MANY mighty, not MANY noble, are called.* So, there are exceptions, even though most of the noble, mighty, and strong after the flesh reject the Gospel of Christ and are stuck on themselves and their worldly wisdom.

The apostle Paul continues, by saying: *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 nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

Think about what our text is getting at here: God does NOT use the things which worldly-minded folks consider brilliant, strong, high and mighty to save sinners; rather God uses means which the world considers foolish, weak, base and hated to convert sinners to saints. Indeed, the world considers the Holy Bible and the preaching and teaching of it foolish, for the worldly-minded folks joke about Jesus and the Bible, while poking fun at those who believe it and teach it. And yet, God uses His Word – the Holy Bible – and those who preach and teach it aright, to convert sinners, granting them faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord, and keeping them in that faith. The result is that no flesh – no converted human being – can glory, can boast and brag, in God's presence, for Ephesians 2:8-10 clearly states, "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." So, God's way of saving sinners was and is necessary in order that no sinful human being can rightly glory in His presence,

since God does the saving— ALL OF IT.

Verses 30 & 31, ----- (1 Corinthians 1:30-31)

The closing verses of our sermon text really emphasize why God's way of saving sinners was and is necessary, for to all believers it is said: *But of him – that is, OF GOD – are ye in Christ Jesus, 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.*

Fellow Christians, we are Christians because God called us to faith in Christ, gifted us with the same, and keeps us in that faith, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."— declares Philippians 2:13. And, since we sinners have no righteousness of our own by which we can stand holy before God, Christ Jesus' perfect righteousness is imputed to us who believe on Him by God's power, for Jesus Christ is thereby *made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* Indeed, we are redeemed by the blood of Christ and declared holy and righteous in God's sight because we have God-given faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord. And, since such is the case, we certainly are to glory in the Lord and NOT in ourselves, for it is written in Psalm 105:1-3, "O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD." Yes, ALL praise, honor, and glory be to our gracious Lord God— Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Fellow Christians, let us be ever grateful for God's way of saving sinners, for if He did not save us in His way by His grace and powerful works, we would all be lost and damned, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."— declares 2 Corinthians 5:21. Let us therefore daily and sincerely repent of our sins; let us continue to cling to Christ Jesus in heart-deep

faith as our personal Savior and Lord; and, let us go forward persisting in reading, hearing, and studying God's pure, preserved, Holy Word, since we know God's way of saving sinners. Amen.

m.e.l.