

“Sophia Meets Jesus!”

I. INTRO:

- A. Swindoll said, “In the beginning God created man in His own image. The competition began when man insisted on *returning the compliment!*”
1. Human intellect **vs.** Divine wisdom; **no comparison.**
 2. The mind of an ant **to** the mind of a dolphin; **no comparison.**
 3. PC **vs.** Mac; **no comparison.**
- B. Corinthians is a church that was struggling with being **cool &** being w/**Christ**. Struggling with **what others thought & what Jesus taught**. **A theology of glory & A theology of the cross.**
1. **A theology of glory** - So many just want to be rich, cool, beautiful, successful, powerful, & desire a relationship with God...to help them achieve this end! **They want to be all that they can be!** God is like the best Self-Help guru ever. **And to quote the philosopher Charlie Sheen, “He’ll make you a Winner.”**
 - a) That’s often the **junk** sold as Christianity today!
 2. **A theology of the cross** - Jesus wasn’t hip, cool, rich, or powerful (politically speaking).
 - a) Jesus was humble. He got executed. He suffered.
 - b) **Jesus doesn’t look like the guy we all want to be!!!**
 3. **So, will you go with the real Jesus...or the One who you really want Him to be?**
 - a) **Maybe its not about our looks, money, fame, & glory. If Jesus was the perfect human being, then we are really messed up on what we’re going after.**
 - b) Paul starts answering these questions here...
- C. **Title: What is wisdom in Greek?** Sophia (σοφία)

II. SOPHIA MEETS JESUS! (18-25)

- A. **The preaching of the cross** - is not the act of **preaching** itself. It is the **Word/logos** of the cross!
1. An eminent professor of theology said to his students in his seminary class, “Gentlemen, I ask you to remember that you are called upon to know something of **the foolishness of preaching, not the preaching of foolishness.**” But he’s wrong.
 - a) The word of the cross **is** foolishness...to those who are perishing.
 2. It stands in contradiction to **all** the **philosophy, education, & knowledge** of this world, **for** the preaching of the cross puts the **sentence of death** upon **them** all.
 3. Christianity **neither flatters human beings nor** presents God in an **easily palatable form.**

- a) Who would have ever expect or invent: a *crucified Messiah* & a *crucified self* as the way to everlasting life?
- B. The story does sound crazy/foolish. It does! (be honest haven't you ever heard yourself & thought...this IS weird!)
- C. *Imagine* if the story of *Christianity* was translated into our modern day:
1. You go up to share your faith at the gym. They say, "Ok, tell me about your God."
 2. Well, my God was born in Murrieta. To a sophomore at Vista Murrieta High School who was a virgin. This virgin girl went camping at Lake Skinner campground & gave birth to God in a tent. Her son never made it to college or to the big city. Never wrote a book, because he was busy putting on tires at America's Tires over on Madison from High school till he was 30. He did miracles, walking across Lake Elsinore. He once stopped in at In-N-Out on Diamond Drive & with his lunch fed all of storm stadium on a packed-out night. He brought a Wildomar man back to life. And then one day they gave Him a lethal injection. But, 3 days later he was seen walking the streets in old town Temecula, then at the Mall, then at the Murrieta library. And...He's God. Want to accept Him?
- D. But to those who are being saved - Christ's death is central to *salvation*, a process which starts with *justification*, advances by *sanctification*, & climaxes in *glorification*.
1. Here Paul speaks to the **2nd phase** - *progressive sanctification*, where we are delivered from sin's power through the life of cross-bearing.
 - a) **Salvation** (free from sin [i.e. Orig.sin]); **Sanctification** (free from sins power); **Glorification** (free from ever sinning again).
 - b) *Death to self* does not mean a morbid, introspective inferiority complex that leads to insecurity. It just means being truly dead to self by depending solely on God. (Swindoll)
 - (1) They no longer have to rely on their own plans/intellect to see them through. They become the most secure people on earth.
 2. In the Roman Empire, people sentenced to die by crucifixion had to **carry at least a section of their cross** through the city to their place of execution.
 - a) This practiced *demonstrated* to all observers that the condemned rebels had **finally submitted to the state**.
 - b) In submission to the Father, Jesus carried His cross to Golgotha & was crucified on our behalf.
 - c) Following Him requires a similar crucifixion - the death of our stubborn wills & selfish desires.
 - (1) Are you **shouldering** your personal cross?
 - (2) Are you **nailing** your selfish desires to that cross & letting them die?

- (a) Or do you find yourself feeding your *selfish desires* like a little puppy you just found & brought home?

E. (19) **Is.29:14** - Why this verse? **Context:** With the ferocious Assyrians poised on Israel's border. Instead of running to **God** for protection, Israel followed human counsel & formed an alliance with **Egypt**.

1. Does an **Assyria** sit crouching on your doorstep of your life...watching...waiting...wondering who you'll call on for help?

- a) Whether the **threat** is a rocky marriage, a depleted bank account, endless hospital bills, or an immoral relationship, there is One whom you can turn to for help.

F. (20) **Wise?**(unsaved Gentile Intellectual) **Scribe?**(Jewish Intellectual) **Disputer/debater?**(Gk Philosopher)

1. [NLT] So where does this leave the **philosophers**, the **scholars**, and the world's brilliant **debaters**? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish.

2. This is what **celebrities** are to American Culture. Actors, athletes, music artists, public speakers, etc.

3. So the **pseudo-intellectualism** of Paul's day needed to be **stopped** & **replaced** with the wisdom of God.

- a) They needed to come face-to-face with the meaning of the cross.

G. Don't be ashamed of Jesus nor proud of yourself.

1. We are not opposed to **Scholarship** - but scholarship should lead to Jesus.

- a) Study & love Jesus!

2. We are not opposed to **Truth** - but Truth should lead to Jesus.

3. We are not opposed to **Sociology** - but Sociology should lead to Jesus.

4. We are not opposed to **Psychology** - but Psychology should lead to Jesus.

5. We are not opposed to **History** - but History should lead to Jesus.

- a) Any & every **discipline** should lead to Him!

6. We're not saying don't **read** - read & love Jesus!

7. We're not saying don't **study** - study & love Jesus!

8. We're not saying don't **be educated** - be educated & love Jesus!

- a) Paul is not denigrating philosophers, scholars, & students...but he speaks against those who use the mind God gave them, to argue against the God who created them.

H. (21) The world through (its) wisdom did not know God -

1. **Brilliant astronomers** chart the orbits & shapes of the stars & planets. **But their telescopes never lead to God.**

2. **Astronauts** some of the finest specimens of humanity, explore our universe. **But they don't discover God.**
 3. **Scientists** peer through their microscopes & record the details of a world invisible to human eyes, scrutinizing, analyzing, hypothesizing, theorizing. **But their spiritual lenses are also microscopic, so they never see God.**
 4. **Intellectual Educators** read & study & probe the classics. **But in all their humanistic research, they, too, never find God.**
 - a) No, the world through its wisdom has not come to know God.
- I. **Wow, so what does it take to find God? (21b)**
- J. (22-25) **What are you looking for?**
- K. The Jews request a **sign** for verification!
1. **They demand a *victorious Messiah***, heralded by miracles, who will conquer their enemies & restore the glories of David's kingdom.
 - a) **Instead**, the Jews are presented with a man who refused to give them the signs they sought. **And while claiming to be their king, would up naked on a cross, laid in a borrowed tomb.** No white horse. No shining lance.
 - b) **How could the Jews believe that this Jesus was their long awaited Savior?**
- L. The Greeks seek after **Wisdom!**
1. **They look for** a proud ***philosopher-king*** who will satisfy their intellectual curiosity.
 - a) **Instead**, they are told about a ***divine ruler*** who humbles himself to be born a Jew, grows into manhood virtually unrecognized, & spends 3 years speaking mysterious parables & healing all kinds of illnesses.
 - b) **He ends his brief ministry betrayed by His own people & executed by crucifixion, the most despised form of death.** This scandalized the Greek mind-set.

III. **GLORY IN THE LORD! (26-31)**

- A. (26) **Who were the Corinthian church made up of? See 6:9,10,11.**
1. **We've all seen art made from *discards*.** It could be old thimbles, piano strings, rusted clock gears, bent paper clips, scratched door hinges, & cabinet knobs. **Each part is virtually worthless.** But the hands of a craftsman have turned the useless odds/ends into an extraordinary piece of art.
 - a) God is such an artist that He can **take & mold our worthless lives** & turn them into ***priceless works of art!***
 2. But Paul says sometimes we forget our "**junkyard beginnings**".
 3. We think God performed a great work on us **because** we gave Him ***high-quality material*** to work with.

- B. **Not many**, but not, **not any** - Lady saved by the letter “*m*”. She was a noblewoman (highborn).
1. Out of His grace, God stoops & saves the nobodies, the nothings, the junk.
 - a) Thus, the **Artist**, not the *art*, should get the honor/glory!
- C. Getting saved is strange, you just all of a sudden “get it!” When someone doesn’t “get it”, it’s not because they are stupid, or because you didn’t explain it perfectly. They’re not stupid, they are **blind!**
1. **But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 2 Cor.4:3,4**
- D. (29) **Pride is self-deification.**
1. **For God so loved you...but** not because you are ***intrinsically lovable!***
 2. **As the Lord told Jeremiah Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” 9:23,24**