

SUNDAY 28.04.2024

THE CROSS

1 COR 1:17-25 NIV



- ▶ 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest  
‘The cross of Christ be emptied of its power.’

► 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”



20 Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him.

► God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. 22 Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,



► 24 but to those whom God has called,  
both Jews and Greeks, Christ the  
power of God and the wisdom of God.  
25 For the foolishness of God is wiser  
than human wisdom, and the weakness  
of God is stronger than human  
strength.

# Introduction

There are three Biblical uses of the term 'Cross' according to The Bible Dictionary.

- ▶ a) The wooden instrument of torture,
- ▶ b) The cross as a symbolic representation of redemption and,
- ▶ c) Death of the cross, i.e., crucifixion.



- ▶ Crucifixion was one of the most cruel and barbarous forms of death known to man. It was practiced, especially in times of war, by Phoenicians, Carthaginians , Egyptians and later by the Romans.
- ▶ So dreaded was it that even in the pre-Christian era, the cares and troubles of life were often compared to a cross.



- ▶ While dealing with issues that were threatening to divide the Church at Corinth, Apostle Paul begins by saying “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.” (1 Cor 1:17).

► The Greek and the Jews could not understand, because to them the cross meant humiliation, suffering and excruciating pain. For them the cross was a cruel instrument of death, it was not a piece of jewelry. Anyone who faced the cross never came back alive.



► Paul responds to them in verse 18,  
“The message of the cross is  
foolishness to those who are perishing,  
but to us who are being saved it is the  
power of God. (1:18).

*Why is this message foolishness to  
those who are perishing?*



This is because “Christianity is the only major religion to have its central focus on the suffering and degradation of its God. Most of other religions will never present their god as a suffering god, a god who cannot even rescue himself from the cross.

This was the one who was to come and rescue the Jews from the Romans, but the same god would be later arrested and die on a Roman cross as a sacrifice for human sinfulness, This did not make sense to Greeks and Jewish people.



From a pagan perspective, strong gods required service from people in order to be rewarded. Only the weakest of gods would serve mortal humans, especially in death.



- ▶ The difference is that the Jews demanded miraculous signs as verification that God was at work and on the other hand, the Greeks sought human wisdom by means of logic and skillful speech. Paul reminds them that “we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to the Jews and Gentiles.” (1:22).

► Paul invites us to find true wisdom, Power, and holiness in Jesus. As believers we are made righteous and holy in Jesus alone. Having been sanctified, we are called to live holy lives. Holy living requires that we rely fully on the Lord's wisdom, and not on the wisdom of the world.



► That's why He says "24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. (1:24-25).



► Our source of power for godly living remains in the cross and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul continues to say,

► “Rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:7-8)

# Conclusion:

- ▶ **The cross represents Surrender and self-denial.**
- ▶ Until we come to that place of surrendering ourselves to the cross, when we do that, we allow God to take over our wisdom and power. Christ, because our sin surrendered himself to the cross.



► Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. (Matt 16:24-25)