

Small Groups @ TBC

Sermon Discussion Notes

Date of Sermon: September 16th 2018

Speaker: Sally Heath

Title: The Wisdom in Weakness

Introduction: In the verses immediately before our passage today Paul begins to touch on the issues in the church in Corinth. The church members had begun to divide themselves into factions based on various leaders whose teaching they claimed to follow: Paul, Apollos, Cephas (another name for Peter), or Christ. Paul is horrified and in verse 13 he exclaims, 'Has the Messiah been cut up into pieces? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptised into Paul's name?' (Tom Wright's translation). This was part of the culture they were used to. Corinth prided itself on its intellectual life and when a visiting intellectual teacher came to Corinth crowds would turn out to listen to them. These travelling teachers of wisdom were keen on making disciples for themselves and their followers often quarrelled and scrapped among themselves. It seems that Paul saw the similar factions and rivalries based on human wisdom in the church in Corinth, to be the root cause of the divisions which the rest of the letter deals with. He wants them, instead, to look to Christ crucified, through whom God has revealed another kind of wisdom that radically subverts the wisdom of this world. So Paul himself, rather than being the leader of a faction within the church, based on who he baptised, was sent, by Christ, 'to preach the gospel - not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power' (1:17).

Review: Invite one or more who have heard the talk to give their own brief review.

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5

Reflect :
1:18-25

- Reflect for a moment on verse 18 and imagine yourself hearing about Jesus being crucified for the first time.
 - In what ways might people think it was a foolish message?
 - In what ways do you know it to be the power of God?
- Paul knew that the message of the cross would scandalize (NIV's translation 'stumbling block' in v23 is the Greek word '*scandalon*') the Jews and be seen as foolish (Greek word is '*moria*' from where we get the word 'moron') by the Greeks.
 - Read Deuteronomy 21:22-23 to understand something of why the Jews saw it as scandalous.

Leaders: feel free to be selective and creative with your use of these notes.

Don't feel you have to use all of the material, but
do try to keep the shape of Review – Read – Reflect – Respond
and **DO make room for the 'And Finally' questions!**

Thornbury Baptist Church:

Following the Way of Jesus: Loving God - Loving One Another - Loving Neighbour & World

- What would you say is the world's wisdom today?
- Would you describe it as weak? If so, in what ways?
- In what ways is God's wisdom different?
- Do you find it easy to follow God's wisdom rather than that of the world?
- Paul said that the Jews looked for signs and the Greeks for wisdom. What do you think people today look for from God - are there things that people have said to you would make them believe in him?

1:26-30

- What does this passage tell you about the way in which God makes choices?
 - Between you try and come up with other examples of God making strange choices (there are lots, but you could look at Joshua 6; Judges 6; Judges 14-16; Matthew 9:10-11; Matthew 10:2-4; Luke 6:20-26; Luke 19:1-10; Acts 9:1-6).
 - What ideas does the passage give us about why God chooses in this way? (You may also like to look at Jeremiah 9:23-24, which Paul refers to in verse 31.)
 - What do you understand by verse 30?
 - Often we concentrate on what Jesus' death has done for an individual. How might this passage help us to view the results of his death and resurrection more broadly?
 - What encouragement and challenge do these verses hold for you as an individual and for us as a group of God's chosen people?

2:1-5

- Why reason does Paul give for having come to the Corinthians knowing nothing 'except Jesus Christ and him crucified'?
 - How can this encourage us in our witness to others?
 - When witnessing to others how much of your message would centre on the cross? What else might you include?

And finally:

As you conclude, ask each person:

- What is the main thing you are taking away as an action point?
- How can we pray for you?
- Is there anything we can check on next time we meet?

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