

ANSWER ONE: THE CROSS

1 CORINTHIANS 01:17–25

Introduction

Remember, this section of Corinthians is dealing with division within the church. Note the contrast between “words of human wisdom” or the “human wisdom of words” and the “cross of Christ” (v. 17). The “wisdom of human words” is plural, hinting at differences and division within the fellowship of the church. The “cross of Christ” is singular, suggesting unity of spirit. The cross alone is the answer to a divided church, not words of human wisdom. Human wisdom can never solve the divisions within the church, nor within the world, not by itself. Why? Because love — love among all persons — is the only remedy for division, and the greatest demonstration of love ever witnessed upon earth is the cross of Christ. It is the cross that reveals the love of God for an antagonistic world, and that challenges man to love his fellow men. The cross of Christ is the answer both to the divisions among men and to the problems that plague men and their world.

- I. The cross is the primary mission of the preacher (v. 17).
- II. The cross can be emptied of its power (v. 17).
- III. The cross is the power of God (v. 18).
- IV. The cross destroys the wisdom of men and makes foolish the wisdom of the world (vv. 19-20).
- V. The cross is the wisdom and power of God to save those who believe (v. 21).
- VI. The cross answers man’s search for God (vv. 22-24).
- VII. The cross proves that God’s way is wiser and stronger than man’s way (v. 25).

Another Outline: The Cross and Man

1. Man can make the cross ineffective: by cleverness of speech (v. 17).
 2. Man’s view of the cross (v. 18).
 - a. The “lost,” the “perishing”: foolishness.
 - b. The “saved”: the power of God.
 3. Man attempts to find God by wisdom (Isa. 29:14; 33:18) (v. 18).
 - a. His wisdom passes, is transitory (v. 19).
 - b. His attempt failed. He did not know God (cp. Rom. 1:20, 28) (v. 21).
 4. Man is saved by the foolishness of preaching (v. 21).
 5. Man seeks for God (v. 22).
 - a. The Jew: seeks a sign — stumbles over the cross.
 - b. The Greek: seeks wisdom — concludes cross is foolishness (v. 23).
 - c. The called: finds Christ and discovers the cross is the power and wisdom of God (v. 24).
 6. Man proves less wise and weaker than God (v. 25).
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I. *1 Corinthians 01:17 Primary Mission: Preaching the Cross*

The cross is the primary mission of the preacher. The minister of God is to preach the cross. Paul declares:

1 Cor 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel — not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

This means two things.

1. The *message of the gospel* is the cross of Christ. The *content* of preaching and witnessing is to be the cross. The *main subject* of our lives and conversation is to be the cross of Christ. All the other subjects of the Christian life are due to the fact that we have been reconciled to God and brought near Him by the cross of Christ. The cross demonstrates the love of God, the fact that He accepts us and allows us to *walk* with Him day by day. In all our preaching and witnessing, the glorious love of God revealed in the cross is to be the dominant theme.
=> The preacher is to preach the cross.
=> The believer is to bear witness or testify to the cross.
2. The minister of God should never let the rituals of the church take the place of the cross in his ministry — no matter how important they may be. Regardless of their importance — and none are more important than baptism — the central focus of the preacher’s message and ministry is to be the gospel, that is, the cross of Christ (v. 17).

The point needs to be constantly driven home to our hearts: the main focus of our lives, conversation and ministry is to be the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ — the cross that demonstrates the glorious love of God. The cross is the primary mission of the preacher, not the rituals and ministries of the church.

Thought 1. It is easy to let ritual, ceremony and form replace the cross in the church. It is also much easier to administer rites and ceremonies than to spend hours in diligent study and to preach the cross to a selfish world that rejects the demand for self-denial.

Note something else: the demands upon the minister’s time by other functions of the church are often so consuming that he finds himself slipping from his primary call to study, pray and preach the gospel. The minister of God must not let this happen. He must keep his priorities straight: he has to, for no one else will do it for him. He must focus upon the cross; he must make the cross the primary subject of his life and preaching.

Mark 3:14 *He appointed twelve — designating them apostles — that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach.*

Mark 16:15 *He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”*

II. *1 Corinthians 01:17 Emptying the Power of the Cross*

The cross can be emptied of its power. How? By preaching the gospel with “words of human wisdom.” This means at least two things.

1. A preacher can become more concerned with eloquence than with the cross. He can focus upon...
 - flowery speech
 - fluency
 - descriptive terms
 - expressive words
 - persuasive words
 - enticing arguments
 - charisma
 - appearance
2. A preacher can also become more concerned about the content of his message and its points and arguments than he does about proclaiming the cross. He can focus upon...
 - having a good, dynamic, interesting sermon.
 - presenting a new or novel idea.
 - sharing an intriguing position.
 - stirring thoughts about some speculation or philosophy.

Note what Scripture declares: the man who preaches the gospel with “words of human wisdom” makes the cross of Christ of no effect. He voids or empties the cross of its power. He focuses attention upon the flowery, descriptive presentation or else upon the new idea or dynamic power of the sermon. When people leave the church, their attention is not upon the gospel and the cross — their attention is upon the *preacher*. The cross is emptied of its power. No life has been changed, not by God.

Thought 1. No preacher or teacher should set out to impress people with his style, delivery, fluency, charisma, ideas or anything else. The minister and teacher have been called by God to preach the cross and the cross alone, not self and not the new and novel ideas and speculations of men. The minister and teacher of God must not forget the forceful declaration of Scripture:

1 Cor 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the gospel — not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

1 Cor 2:1-5 When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power.

1 Cor 9:16 Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

III. 1 Corinthians 01:18 The Cross: The Power of God

The cross is the power of God. Note two significant points.

1. The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing (see *Perishing*, 1 Cor. 1:18). In Greek “the message” (ho logos) is literally “*the Word* of the cross” (see *The Word*, Jn. 1:1-5). A sharp contrast is being drawn between the “words of human wisdom” (v. 17) and “the Word of the cross.” The world’s wisdom includes many *words*, that is, many ways to find the truth and meaning to life. But the Word of the cross is the *only way* to the truth and meaning of life. Just why the preaching or the Word of the cross is foolish to those who perish is discussed later (v. 22-24, point 5). For the present, the point is to show...
 - that the men of the world who do not come to God through the cross of Christ are in a *state of perishing* (see *Perishing*, 1 Cor. 1:18).
 - that the lost do not like the message of the cross, that is, the message that man is saved through a crucified Redeemer. They count the message as foolishness.
 - that the lost do not like the simple way the message is proclaimed.
2. The message of the cross is the power of God to those who are saved. No other message on earth...
 - Can reconcile men to God and put them under His daily care.
 - can give men the *perfect assurance* of God’s daily love and care and of living eternally with God.

No other message has changed lives like the message of the cross of Christ. No other message has revolutionized societies and communities and families like the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ is the *power of God* to save men (see *Salvation*, 1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 1:16).

1 CORINTHIANS 01:18 SALVATION AND PERISHING

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. 1 Corinthians 01:18

Men are placed into one of two categories here, *perishing* or *being saved*. A man goes through life having one of these two experiences: he is either perishing, moving ever downward toward the grave; or he is being saved, moving ever upward toward eternal life. In the Greek, both words are continuous action; that is, a man *is perishing* or *is being saved*. The words are not static; a man is not sitting still. He is ever “perishing,” more and more being gripped by the flesh and being conditioned to accept a perishing, dying world; or he is ever “being saved,” more and more being freed to walk righteously and godly in this present world. The man who is saved is

being conditioned to break loose from a perishing, dying world and to look for the glorious appearing of the new world. (See *Salvation*, Rom. 1:16.)

1. The terrible word perishing means to be lost, to be utterly destroyed, to lose eternal life, to be spiritually destitute, to be cut off.

a. Perishing means to be in a lost state in this world. It means to be...

- aging, deteriorating, decaying, dying. (See *Disease, Sickness, Corruption*, Mt. 8:17; notes, 1 Cor. 15:50; Col. 2:13; *Sin, Death, Corruption*, 2 Pet. 1:4.)
- without life (purpose, meaning, significance). (See *Grace*, Jn. 1:4; *Life in Jesus Christ*, Jn. 10:10; *Eternal Life*, Jn. 17:2-3.)
- without peace (assurance, confidence, security in God's keeping). (See note, Jn. 14:27.)
- without hope (of living forever). (See *Deliverance from Death*, 2 Tim. 4:18.)

b. Perishing means to be in a lost state in the world to come. It means...

- having to die
- facing judgment
- being condemned
- experiencing all that is hell
- suffering separation from God and from all loved ones

(See *Hell Fire*, Mt. 5:22; *Hell Torment*, Lk. 16:24; *Death*, Heb. 9:27.)

2. The great word *salvation* is used in Scripture to describe at least three experiences for the believer.

a. The *once-for-all experience* of salvation. It is an experience that has happened sometime in the past: "Your faith *has* saved you" (Lk. 7:50). It is the initial act of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is receiving Christ into one's heart and life as Lord. It means being saved or delivered from sin, death and hell; and being given the assurance that one will never be separated from God — either in this life or in the world to come. (See *Life in Christ*, Jn. 1:4; *Life in Christ*, Jn. 10:10; *Eternal Life*, Jn. 17:2-3.)

John 17:2 "For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him."

2 Cor 2:15 For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.

Eph 2:5 Made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.

Eph 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.

2 Tim 1:9 *Who has saved us and called us to a holy life — not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.*

- b. The *continuous experience* of salvation. It is an experience that is occurring right now, in the present. “[You] who *are being saved*” (1 Cor. 1:18). It is a description of God’s work day by day in the believer’s life. It is the Holy Spirit of God working within the believer. (Cp. Rom. 6:14; 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 2:20; Ph. 1:19; 2:12-13; 2 Th. 2:13.)

=> To guide and teach him and to deliver him through all the trials and problems of life.

John 14:16-17 *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”*

John 14:23 *Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”*

=> To fill him with a heart of love, joy and peace — all the fruit and resources necessary to live life to the fullest.

Gal 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

=> To conform him more and more to the image of Christ.

2 Cor 3:18 *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

=> To stir and equip him to live and witness for Christ day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute and moment by moment.

Acts 1:8 *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

2 Tim 1:7-8 *For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.*

- c. The *redemptive experience* of salvation that is to occur in the future. “Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed” (Rom. 13:11). This future reference to salvation points to the day of redemption — to the day of Christ’s kingdom — to the day when Christ shall usher in His kingdom upon this earth

— to the day when God will create a new heavens and earth and bring about His perfect will and rule throughout the universe.

Rom 8:21-23 *That the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*

1 Cor 15:42-44 *So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.*

1 Pet 1:5 *Who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.*

2 Pet 3:10-13 *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

(See Kingdom of God, Mt. 19:23-24.) □

IV. 1 Corinthians 01:19–20 Destruction of the Wisdom of Man

The preaching of the cross destroys the wisdom of men and makes foolish the wisdom of the world. This is a verse quoted from the Old Testament (cp. Isa. 29:14; 33:18). How does the cross destroy and make foolish the wisdom of men and their world?

1. The cross exposes the fallacy of man's reasoning and wisdom. Man seeks to conquer evil through science, technology and the religion of human effort. Man tries to use everything at his disposal to conquer nature, disease, suffering, corruption and death. Man wants a life that is full and free; but he wants it on his own terms, that is, he wants all these things in such a way that will allow him to continue...
 - to do his own thing.
 - to live as he wishes.
 - to lust.
 - to gain position and power.
 - to gain recognition and fame.
 - to be comfortable and to hoard and bank, even if large numbers of people are devastated and dying from hunger, disease, loneliness and emptiness.

And all the while, man wants acceptance and recognition for his achievements.

What the cross does is shatter this reasoning: it exposes a severe problem with man: the problem of sin, of a depraved and selfish heart. The cross is God's Son, the Perfect Man being put to death by the rest of the world. Men killed the Son of God because man is evil. Man is just not willing to live as Christ said; therefore, he put Christ to death.

2. The cross exposes the fallacy of man's search for love, joy, peace and all the other spiritual qualities of life. Man wants to live a full and free life, and he wishes the same for other men — at least to some degree. But in all his searching man discovers something. Science, technology and good works do not bring the love, joy and peace for which he longs, nor do they give the perfect assurance of knowing God — of really knowing Him to such a degree that a person is *absolutely sure* he is going to live with God eternally.

However, the cross does give this assurance. Thousands of genuine believers who have trusted Christ and His death upon the cross to save them will testify that they have absolute assurance of living eternally with God. The cross destroys the idea that the fullness of life comes from science, technology, education and even “good works.”

Eph 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.*

3. The cross shows that the answer to man's problems and utopia is the way of sacrifice. The answer is not through...
 - power and fame
 - selfishness and greed
 - human works and efforts

No man can reach God and find truth or solve the world's problems without love and total sacrifice. This is what the cross is all about. Common sense tells us that we are short of God's glory; we are not completely righteous or just, and certainly not perfect. Therefore, there is no way that we can be acceptable and be allowed to live in the presence of a loving, just and perfect God. Very simply, we are not like Him. There is only one way we can ever become acceptable to God: God will have to love us enough to provide a perfect sacrifice for us. And remember He alone can provide the perfect sacrifice, for He alone is perfect.

This is the glorious message of the cross: God loves us enough to save us; He has offered a perfect sacrifice for us. Upon the cross Jesus Christ, God's own perfect Son...

- took our sins upon Himself.
- took our punishment for having sinned upon Himself.

God sacrificed His own Son for us, and it is through His sacrifice that God saves us. God accepts men when they approach Him through the cross, that is, when men believe that God loves them so much that He would sacrifice His Son for them. God

takes that man's faith and counts it as righteousness or perfection. The man who believes becomes acceptable to God (see *Justification*, Rom. 5:1).

How does this destroy and make foolish the wisdom of men and their world? The cross is not the way men want to approach God. Men want to be acceptable to God without having *to love and sacrifice themselves completely*. Yet, if they accept the sacrifice of Christ as the truth, they have to sacrifice themselves even as He sacrificed Himself; they have to give all they are and have to reach and help the people of the world. Therefore, they seek to approach God through...

- their own reasoning
- their own thoughts
- their own philosophies
- their own religions
- their own works
- their own understanding
- their own speculations
- their own wisdom
- their own efforts

But men fail. Every human effort other than the cross always has and always will fail. No effort of man has ever solved the world's problems of sin and evil, disease and suffering, selfishness and greed, death and judgment. No man has ever penetrated the spiritual world to find out what God is like. Only Christ and His cross can change men and give them life — life that is both abundant and eternal. *And the fact has been proven in life after life down through the centuries.*

The cross destroys the wisdom of men in this: it shows that the way to solve the problems of the world is the cross — not science, not technology, not education and not religion. All the problems of the world could be solved (physical, material and spiritual) if men would come to the cross, which is the perfect demonstration of love and sacrifice.

Thought 1. Just imagine what the world would be like if all men loved and sacrificed all they were and had to solve the problems of the world — loved and sacrificed just as Christ did.

V. *1 Corinthians 01:21 Wisdom and Power of God*

The cross is both the wisdom and power of God to save those who believe.

1. The cross is the wisdom of God. The term the “wisdom of God” means the cross, the way God has chosen to save the world. Note again the emphasis that the world by its wisdom has not known God. As stated in the previous point (v. 19-20), man cannot be saved by science, technology, education, religion — not by any human effort of goodness. No matter what man does or how wise he gets, he will never be able to become perfect, not in love and justice. Despite all that man may achieve, he will still fall “short of God's glory” (which is perfection).

The way for man and his world to be saved is not by the wisdom of men, but by the wisdom of God, which is the cross. If men would turn to the cross in its perfect demonstration of love and sacrifice, then men would love and sacrifice like they should to meet the needs of mankind.

Love and sacrifice are God's means of saving the world. Therefore, it is the person who believes the preaching of the cross that is saved. When a person believes that Jesus Christ died for him — when he gives all he is and has to Christ — God saves that person and uses him to reach the lost and destitute of the world.

2. The cross is the power of God to save those who believe. The cross alone changes the lives of men to love and sacrifice themselves for God and for men.

Eph 2:13-14, 16 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility... and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

VI. 1 Cor. 01:22–24 Answer to Man's Search for Utopia

The cross answers man's search for God. The world has made three mistakes in looking at the cross.

1. The Jews or religionists of the world feel they are the chosen seed of God, that they reach God by having a godly heritage and by being religious and good enough to be acceptable to Him. They think they are to work as diligently as they can to bring the Kingdom of God and man's utopia to earth. Most religionists are just like the Jews were: they develop a system of thought whereby the Messiah is to come to earth when they have prepared the earth for Him. And when He comes, they say He will come with great signs of power and majesty and bring a golden age upon the earth.

Thought 1. Note how the emphasis of the religionist is *his* works and labour for God:

=> It is man who prepares the way for the Messiah's salvation upon earth instead of the Messiah who prepares the way for man to approach God.

=> It is man who brings the glory of God and utopia to earth instead of the Messiah who ushers in the kingdom.

The cross — a crucified Saviour redeeming men — is bound to be a stumbling block to religionists. The ideas of the cross are just foreign to a religionist, the ideas...

- that he cannot do enough good to be acceptable to God.
- that the penalty for his sins had to be paid for by the perfect sacrifice of God's Son.
- that he must trust in the perfect sacrifice of God's Son for his sins.
- that true belief in God's Son means that he sacrifices all he is and has to save a world of desperate and lost humanity.

When the religionist looks at the cross and sees the ugliness of sin and shame, punishment and death, blood and suffering instead of glory and majesty, triumph and victory, he is repulsed; and he recoils and withdraws from the truth that God's

Son had to die for his sins. The religionist does not want to be thinking upon the negative factors of sin and death; he wants to focus upon the positive things of ritual, ceremony, religion, works and benevolence — just so he is not expected to give everything.

Mat 11:6 *“Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me.”*

Mark 6:3 *“Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him [that God could be Man].*

1 Pet 2:8 *And, “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message — which is also what they were destined for.*

Rom 9:31-33 *But Israel [religionists], who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling stone.” As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”*

2. The Greeks made the mistake of thinking of God as “apatheia.” *Apatheia* means more than apathy. It means a total inability to feel. God was thought to be too far away and uninvolved in human affairs to feel. Therefore, to think of a god who became a man and felt the pains of death upon a cross was foolishness to a Greek mind. It was simply nonsense. It was beyond anything that the human mind could grasp.

The Greeks also greatly admired “a wise man.” The wise man was a man who could speak persuasively with flowery speech about earthly affairs and human wisdom, and make them seem eternal. Therefore, the preaching of the cross with its blunt message seemed crude and uncultured. It was laughed at and ridiculed rather than listened to and accepted.

The world, generation after generation, makes the mistake of stumbling over the simplicity of the cross. Man feels that he has to use his own wisdom and energy to achieve anything in this world, or else he just does not achieve. Therefore, the world fails to understand that the cross is the expression of God’s love for a lost world, and that the message of the cross is simple faith in God’s love. The world does not have to exercise human wisdom in order to be saved. The world just cannot understand this, so it stumbles over the cross.

Thought 1. How many look upon the cross...

- as crude and uncultured?
- as a bloody, repulsive religion?
- as lacking rational evidence? The very idea that a man could die and arise from the dead is foolishness.

Mark 6:3 “Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him [that God could be Man].

Rom 1:22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools.

1 Cor 3:20 And again, “The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.”

Col 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles [elementary teachings] of this world rather than on Christ.

3. The called of God find Christ. There are some who pay attention to the pull of God’s call and movement in their hearts. They heed and obey the call of God: kneel and sacrificially surrender their lives to Christ. And when they do, two things happen.

a. They discover that Jesus Christ is the power of God (see note 3 and *Salvation*, 1 Cor. 1:18).

John 17:2 “For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.”

b. They discover that Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God. They discover that Jesus Christ brings to their heart and lives...

- deliverance from the sin and restlessness of their souls.
- the knowledge of God and the infilling of love, joy and peace.
- the guidance and direction of God as they walk through the trials of life day by day.
- perfect assurance of living eternally with God.
- the greatest purpose and meaning in life possible: that of reaching and ministering to a world that reels under the weight of calamity and desperate needs — no matter the cost.

Col 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

Rom 11:32-33 For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

VII. **1 Corinthians 01:25** *Cross: The Wisdom of God*

The cross proves that God’s way is wiser and stronger than man’s way. It is wiser and stronger because it saves men. The fact is it could save the whole world if all men would surrender themselves to the *Christ of the cross*. How could the cross of Christ do such a phenomenal thing? By its example, demand and power to change men from sinful and selfish beings to loving and sacrificial creatures. When a man truly bows before the cross,

he surrenders *all he is and has* to Christ, and Christ makes him into a new creation. The man arises and goes forth to do all and to give all he can to save and meet the needs of a world that reels under the weight of its starving, diseased, and lost masses.

Thought 1. Just think what would really happen if only one million people within one nation bowed before the cross, giving all they were and had to Christ! What would happen if they really sacrificed themselves totally to Christ as Christ did for them?

Rom 1:16 *I am not ashamed of the gospel [the cross], because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.*

Gal 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Gal 6:14-15 *May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.*

2 Cor 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ [identified with the cross], he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ■*