

WEEKLY ENCOURAGEMENT

from Johnny Hunt

IT'S STILL THE CROSS

PART ONE

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

I. INTRO

- In **v.17**, Paul clarified the nature of his mission, namely, to preach the gospel. He proceeded to identify the central feature of preaching the gospel, namely, the cross of Christ. For 2,000 years, the sign and symbol of the Christian faith has been an old, rugged cross. It is the message of the cross which is the heart of the gospel.
- Some of the Church's greatest hymns and songs are about the cross.
 - "The Old Rugged Cross"
 - "At Calvary"
 - "At The Cross"
 - "When I Survey The Wondrous Cross"
- Paul made a tremendous statement concerning the cross in **Galatians 6:14**, "**But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**"
- It was said of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "All of your sermons sound exactly the same. Why is that?" Spurgeon responded, "Because I just take a text, anywhere in the Bible, and then make a beeline straight to the cross."

II. THE DYNAMICS OF THE CROSS | VERSES 18-19

- **message of the cross**—Word or "logos"—the whole totality of truth contained in and revealed through the cross. The cross is the heart of the gospel and the central theme of Christianity. The word of the cross includes the entire gospel message and work, God's plan and provision for man's redemption. Christ's work on the cross is the pinnacle of God's revealed word.
- **Romans 1:16**, "**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.**"

A. THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE CROSS | VERSE 18a

- **foolishness**—similar to the word, "moron"—absolute nonsense; absurdity. That anything significant should be accomplished through the death of a carpenter of Nazareth was sheer absurdity to the Greek mind. That one man (even the Son of God) could die on a piece of wood on a nondescript hill in a nondescript part of the world and thereby determine the destiny of every person who has ever lived seems stupid. It allows no place for man's merit, man's attainment, man's understanding or man's pride.
- This is how the cross is viewed by unbelievers who rely on their own wisdom.
- Pray God moves unbelievers before we try to move them.

B. THE FORCE OF THE CROSS | VERSE 18b

- **power of God**—one group is asking, "How could the blood of such a person remove sin, give righteousness, and guarantee hope beyond the grave?" **Answer: the power of God!**; the dynamic of Jesus Christ and the cross. The vindication of the cross is not wisdom, that it makes sense; but power, **it works**. It changes lives. It makes saints out of sinners, preachers out of blasphemers. The cross is the manifestation of God's power at work in a life.
- "The way of the cross leads home." – Pastor Johnny

C. THE FACT OF THE CROSS | VERSE 19

- Paul quotes from **Isaiah 29:14** as an illustration of the power of God, the same type of power displayed in the cross.
- **written**—it stands permanently written; this verse simply affirms that when man has achieved his greatest mastery in areas of his intellectual pursuit, God ultimately overshadows that earthly wisdom as to bring it to nothing.

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- This verse is an event in Israel's past. When the Assyrians threatened Judah, the counselors of the Jewish king advised an alliance with Egypt. The prophet Isaiah opposed and appealed to trust in God alone. Isaiah was mocked. Egypt never came to the rescue, but God did. **Results:** 186,000 Assyrians slain by one of God's angels. Men have devised their own programs of personal and social redemption in which they trust themselves and not God. For instance: church membership, baptism, good works, etc.
- **REMEMBER: Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."**
- **It's still the cross! Preach, teach and share the cross!**