

## **BBC – 5/18/25 - Home Bible Study Outline – “Things NOT, Confound things that ARE”**

**1 Corinthians 1:25-31** (v.28) *And base things of the world, & things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.*

God loves to *confound* the world’s sinful thinking with His truths & blessings they consider *foolishness*.

- The world prides itself on human *wisdom, strength, & nobility*. But God converts what the world deems: *foolish* to wisdom; *weak* to righteousness; *base* to sanctification; & *despised* to redemption!

The Corinthian church, located in southern Greece, was steeped in the proud Greek culture of human philosophical sophistication. Acts 17 recounts Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey to Greece, where Paul ministers in its capital, Athens, at the seat of Greek philosophical debate, Mars Hill (*court of Areopagus*). There Paul appeals to their thirst for intellectual learning, by preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- In spite of the Greeks’ proud tolerance for learning ‘new doctrines’ (Acts 17:19-21), some openly mocked, a few others said they’d give consideration, but only a handful believed (Acts 17:32-34).

Discussion: *Why is human nature so open & tolerant to human philosophies, but resistant to God?*

After Paul moved on from Athens to Corinth, he reasoned with both Jews and Greeks in the local synagogue (*perhaps at first of general philosophical topics*), but it wasn’t until he was joined by Silas & Timothy that he began to openly proclaim the Gospel of Christ (Acts 18:1-5). Once Paul focused on Christ, the people altogether rejected him. So much so, that Paul moved on from the synagogue to a next-door building where he was allowed to teach (Acts 18:6-8). However, it appears that Paul was still suffering from some intimidation because the Lord had to speak to him about his lingering fear (Acts 18:9-10). Then, over a 1½ year period of fearlessly declaring the full Gospel of Jesus Christ, Paul, with God’s enablement, founded and developed a new and thriving Corinthian church.

- However, the Enemy, not so easily backing away, stirred a Jewish insurrection against the Church. Under authority of the local officials, they persecuted and jailed believers. Right in front of the uncaring government Deputy, the synagogue’s chief ruler Sosthenes (*a converted believer & ‘co-author’ with Paul of 1 Corinthians*; see 1:1) was beaten by the people (Acts 18:11-18). After Paul’s departure, the Corinthian church thrived but continued to be affected by both; internal factions, and the area’s prevailing culture, which Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians chpt.1.

Discussion: *What are the benefits and risks of openly declaring the full Gospel of Jesus Christ?*

Paul addressed the divisive factions that had developed within the Corinthian Church (1 Cor.1:10-16), and then went on to address the broader cultural issue of the prevailing philosophical thinking that was hindering their spiritual stability (1 Cor.1:17-31).

- Paul declared that what the world sees as the ‘foolishness’ of Christianity is actually a display of the power of God, and that the ‘foolishness’ of preaching is the means by which God uses to save!
- Paul continues, stating that God doesn’t call many who are: self-‘wise’ (*in their fleshly worldly views*), that view themselves as ‘mighty’ (*prideful egotists*), nor ‘noble’ (*seekers of own reputation & influence*).
- Rather, in what the world deems ‘foolishness’ God brings forth wisdom; in ‘weakness’ He imparts righteousness; to the ‘base’ He renders sanctification; & to the ‘despised’ He grants redemption!

Here’s what God says about these four gifts (*wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, & redemption*):

- **Wisdom** = the proper application of knowledge. God counsels us to attain knowledge (Prov. 18:15); then encourages us to ask Him to give us the wisdom to properly apply that knowledge (James 1:5).
- **Righteousness** = the perfect balance of all God’s attributes; revealed to us by faith (Rom. 1:16-17). God is perfect, holy, true & just, while equally merciful, long-suffering, full of grace and goodness!
- **Sanctification** = cleansed, legitimized, set-apart to holiness, anointed & consecrated to service.
- **Redemption** = purchased back, atoned of guilt, restored, and redeemed from the curse of the Law. Now we belong to Him, our bodies are His temple (Heb 12:14; Gal 3:13; Rom 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:19-20)

Discussion: *How then will we respond to God’s 3 questions? – Ezek. 33:10-11; Rom. 6:1-2; & Heb. 2:3*