

Sermon Notes
The Unlikely Glory of the Church
1 Corinthians 1:26-31 February 8, 2015

The Cross & The Calling: Unlikely Glory

Just like the cross of Christ crucified, so too with God's calling of His people. He removes and actually obliterates our pride and points to the Lord's exaltation.

The cross was (and is) an unlikely demonstration of power and wisdom. In the cross, there is an unlikely glory, it is not the way we would do things, and it is rather particular.

God's calling is also an unlikely demonstration of power and wisdom, and is parallel to the cross with a particular glory, certainly not the way we would do things, and is also rather particular.

Calling

What is this "calling"? This is _____.

Calling in the Bible can be general or specific. Some use the terms external or internal. Our passage is referring to the specific, internal call, what may be called a "wake up call."

A Matter of Glory

In any setting of presumed sophistication, raw accomplishment, and apparently unlimited understanding, there can be a whole lot of glorying going on. We tend to glory in (take pride in) our accomplishments... However, *none* of that is taken into account in the Lord's choice of us. Deuteronomy 7:7-8

The reality of the Lord's choosing (election) tends to raise some large bumps of opposition. The mere fact that God *chooses* is an immediate challenge to our pride. Our own sense of self-deity is knocked to the ground. Everyone has expectations about how God _____ do things, and how God _____ things.

What Has God Done? (1:26-30)

Paul says to the Corinthians, and the Lord says to each of us, "Consider your calling." That is, "Take a look" (βλέπετε)! Start with you; who you are, where you have been.

Not this, not those, not that!

Not many wise; *not* many mighty (powerful or prominent); *not* many noble (well-born). The Lord says this, and yet these words are taken up and used by mockers and antagonists. For example, the antagonist Celsus:

Their injunctions are like this: 'Let no one educated, no one wise, no one sensible draw near. For these abilities are thought by us to be evils. But as for anyone ignorant, anyone stupid, anyone uneducated, anyone who is a child, let him come boldly.' By the fact that they themselves admit that these people are worthy of their God, they show that they want and are able to convince only the foolish, dishonourable and stupid, and only slaves, women, and children. (Celsus, in Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 3.44; in Fee, 81).

What others see as the shame of the church, the Lord says is the glory of the church.

God's choosing actually causes the foolish things to humiliate the "wise" and the weak things to humiliate the "strong." The Lord has also chosen that which is despised and, with a reference to creation, that which is not in order to bring to nothing that which is.

Note: the Lord does not say "any", but rather "many." The Corinthian church did have some prominent citizens (Erastus was the city treasurer, Romans 16:23).

This is not a statement intended to demean the Corinthians, but rather to exalt the wondrous grace of God. Through both the cross and the Lord's choosing of His people, He has completely ruled out any place for _____ in one's own accomplishments.

Why Has God Done This? (1:29, 31)

So that no flesh should glory in His presence (1:29)

This is the Lord's calling and the Lord's work that any of us are "in Christ Jesus" (1:30), who is the wisdom from God, and this wisdom is seen as:

Righteousness—because the wisdom of the world cannot make us right.

Sanctification—because the power of the world cannot make us clean.

Redemption—because the nobility of the world cannot release us from slavery

We are called to boast (1:31)

We are citizens of an enduring city, built by God (Hebrews 11:10)

