

The Wisdom of God: God's Choice

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Preacher: Brady Owens

[0 : 00] Well, all right, 1 Corinthians chapter 1, we're going to look at verse 26 through 31. Let's finish up chapter 1. And let me read the passage first, and then we'll dive in.

For consider your calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful. Not many were of noble birth.

But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

And because of him, you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that as it is written, let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord. I think it's important to kind of start here thinking about the idea of discovering purpose. It could be a tool.

[1 : 14] It could be a button inside the dash of your car. Now, when you discover what this purpose of this thing is, it helps you know how to use it.

You know, I am notorious for using tools not for their stated purpose. You know, taking a screwdriver and using it as a hammer, you know, or any number of things.

Matter of fact, I've broken several tools using it as a hammer when it wasn't a hammer. What we have in our passage here is a similar thing where in verse 31, you'll notice that it says, so that.

And let me just make a plea here. In verse 31, right there is a word in the Greek, and it is almost always translated in most translations as either that or so that or for the purpose of or something like that.

If yours doesn't show that, I might would be looking for a new translation because it's really helpful to see so that because it helps you know the connections between things.

[2 : 27] And when it says so that, this particular place is saying for the purpose of or in order that. That's the literal translation of the one word that's there.

And he goes on to say, as it is written, let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord. So that tells us Paul's objective and what he said in verse 26 through 30.

Everything that he's going to tell us about, everything that we're going to read about and try to study and understand has the end goal of us boasting in the Lord and not anything else.

And if you'll think about it, the church has all these divisions, right? And the divisions are because you've got everybody very, very proud of their spiritual pedigree, right?

Somebody says, I'm of Apollos. And somebody says, I'm of Paul. Another says, I'm of Cephas.

Another says, I'm of Christ. They think that they're more spiritual than somebody else because of who they became a Christian under, who they follow because they don't think the gospel's enough because they're looking for somebody who's eloquent with words of wisdom, right?

[3 : 50] Does that ring a bell kind of where we are? That's the problem that's in Corinth. They think to themselves that Paul, as an apostle, is really not worth their time anymore, that they've graduated from Paul and they're looking to other teachers to help them.

And so they think that they're more spiritually mature. As a matter of fact, they call themselves the spirituals. And you'll see that Paul addresses them throughout the letter. So here they are with all these divisions.

Excuse me. They have all these divisions. And Paul is trying to put them in their place to say, listen, no more divisions. And one of the things that he does right here is he says, here's one thing that's going to help solve the division problem.

And the end goal of this is to boast in the Lord. Okay. Now, what he does then is he shares with them two truths that help them know how to boast in the Lord or leads them to boasting in the Lord.

And the first one has to do that, that God has chosen for his glory. God has chosen for his glory. In verse 26, it starts with this way.

[5 : 08] It says, for consider your calling, consider your calling. That word calling there, we have talked about it several times in Corinthians because he's used it a few times.

This has to do with an act of God where he uses the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit to call sinners to believe for salvation.

So in other words, the gospel goes out and a person feels convicted. That conviction is the calling of God, calling them to repent and believe.

And so that's what he's saying. You consider your calling. Consider the moment that you were converted. Consider the moment that God reached out to you with the gospel.

And called you in order for you to be saved. Then he goes on to say, but here's the thing about you. Not many of you were wise. Not many of you were powerful.

[6 : 14] Not many of you were of noble birth. So he gives those three things, right? Wise, powerful, and noble birth. So he's basically saying that according to the flesh, according to the way humans look at things, you guys were unimpressive.

You were not worth very much. There was not a lot about you that was commendable. That's what he's telling them.

So consider your calling because you have been called, but this is how you were. Nobody thought anything. He goes on to say then that what happens, that in verse 27, he says, but God chose what is foolish.

Okay? So you're not wise. You're foolish. So God chose what's foolish. He chose you. He chose you people, foolish people. And then he says, he did that in order to shame the wise.

And then he says, God chose the weak in the world to shame the strong. So you're not powerful. You're weak. So not only are you not wise and not powerful, but you're foolish and you're weak.

[7 : 27] And God has chosen the foolish and the weak, right? And then he says, God, in verse 28, God chose what is low and despised in the world. You weren't of noble birth.

Instead, you were low and despised. So do you see what he's doing there? First, he's saying that they're not very commendable, but then he's saying that that's exactly the kind of people that God has chosen in order to save them.

He's chosen people like this, and he's done so to kind of confound the world, to confuse the world, because most people in the world would think to themselves, well, here's a man.

Here's a man worthy of God, right? Here's a man who's, you know, got a good heart. Here's a man who's a good man, and surely this is the kind of person that God's got. It reminds me in the Old Testament when Samuel was told to go anoint a new king, and all of Jesse's sons marched out in front of him, and he was looking at each one of them, and they were all big, strapping, tall, you know, kingly looking men.

And God says, I don't look at the outward appearance, but I look at the heart, right? It's a very similar kind of thing here, where he's saying that God has chosen, and what this choice is, you've got to connect the dots here.

[8 : 49] The calling is their salvation, and the choice is a choice that God makes before creation in order to issue that call to them. He doesn't just willy-nilly call everybody at once.

There's a specific call for you at a specific time in your life. He knows when the best time is for that. And so when God chooses, he's electing these people so that they would be saved.

I want to read to you from Ephesians chapter 1, Ephesians chapter 1, where Paul picks up the same theme in Ephesians chapter 1.

And it's in the very beginning of the chapter, beginning in verse 3. And he says, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us, same word, even as he chose us in him or in Christ, before the foundation of the world.

That's when this choice took place. And what's the result of this choice? That we would be holy and blameless before him. You can't become holy and blameless before God without being saved, right?

[10 : 07] That's the way that works. He goes on to say, in love, he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, not according to anything else, but it's just according to what God wanted to do.

me let me put it even more practically like i do not hold like if we think of heaven as our reward for following christ and one day we get there and we think of like well what what's it going to look like it's like my my space in heaven is not bigger than yours because i'm a pastor right we we're on the same playing field i just have a particular job that i've got to do because he's called me to do that um but that doesn't make me better than you we're we're we're the same we're the same somebody else any other thoughts or questions in the middle of this michelle you look like you started to have a question no okay anybody else jill you good okay all right yeah yeah yeah it is it is and it and it is humbling when you think to yourself so i like to think about like an image of say say a prison okay you got a prison you got you got prisoners in there every one of them guilty every one of them should be punished and god chooses to save some he's not being unjust to the rest of them for them to get what they're getting but but how gracious is he being to you when he saves you because everybody deserves death and hell and yet he saved me and i'm not sure that i mean you know as i do the cost benefit analysis i'm just kind of going like lord you could have chosen better than me you know like i mean there's there's some other guys out there that would be so much better but that's not the way he works yeah oh yeah oh yeah it's it's mind-boggling it's mind-boggling well that's the first part right so this is what paul says in order to sort of take out the division he's going to come to the second thing and it has to do with god's choice still but here instead of it being for god's glory and the boasting and what god has done now it's about the good that's done to us because of his choice right you look at verse 30 and he says because of him you are in christ jesus and i just sort of made mention of this and i'll just look at this again though the little pronoun him can't refer to the corinthians it can't refer to paul and it can't really refer to jesus because then the sentence doesn't make much sense because if it's jesus then you've got because of jesus you are in jesus christ you know that's just a weird way of writing that so i just don't think it's that i think him is the father so because of the father you are in christ jesus because the father you are in

christ jesus what what that's referring to is he's referring to god's choice what god has done god's initiation god's power god's god's uh right to save because of the father you are now in christ you're saved and if you're saved then christ has become to you what does he say he says who has become to us wisdom from god so jesus is the wisdom of god and if we are in christ we have christ and if we have christ we have wisdom he goes on to say kind of what this wisdom is that it's this righteousness sanctification and redemption and we're going to define those words in a second but i want you to think about this this way and it may not make a lot of sense today and you may not think to yourself why why are you splitting this hair but down the line eventually this will make sense to you somewhere okay but i want you to think about this idea of having this wisdom from god or having this righteousness from god or having this sanctification i want you to think of this salvation that we get from god and i want you to picture it like a wrapped up christmas gift with a bow right and generally the image that we will have in our heads is that we've trusted we've trusted in christ and his death and his resurrection and so then god gives us this gift right and what happens is that we tend in that image that image separates the gift from jesus as though it's something outside of himself but the truth of the matter is is that he is the gift so when we john john said it in his gospel this way he says as many as receive him when you receive christ you're receiving salvation he is the wisdom so if i have christ i have wisdom he is the righteousness so if i have christ i have the righteousness he is the sanctification he is the redemption he is the salvation so if i have christ i have the gifts they're not separate from him in the sense that he can give it to me and and they're separate from one another and that this is important because it it has to do with where our trust is where our hope is and here he gives us then these three things this righteousness this sanctification and redemption so let's talk about these three words to see what this wisdom from god is what this gift looks like and i want you to think about salvation in terms like this salvation past i was saved salvation present i am being saved salvation future i will be saved right these three words line up with that righteousness is the past sanctification is the present and redemption is the future now let's talk about righteousness righteousness is a word that means a right standing with god i have a right standing with god i have a moral right standing with god i meet his standard of perfection and moral law how do i have that righteousness i have that righteousness through what we call justification justification that's a big important bible word you should just go ahead and learn it and just get used to it right justification is the legal process whereby god declares us to be righteous

so you can imagine a courtroom scene where there you are as the defendant guilty of the crime yet when god brings the sentencing he declares you righteous he doesn't declare you not guilty he doesn't declare you innocent but he declares you righteous now you're not really righteous but he's what he's doing now you can switch from a courtroom scene to thinking about a banker and accounting and financial terms your bank account is overdrawn because of what you owe god because of how much sin you have that he credits the righteousness of jesus to your account so now your account is maxed out with with with everything it could ever have right so another way to think about it is that this represents the hard heart of the sinner before they become a christian and when i repent of my sin and trust in jesus god credits to my account god declares me righteous the righteousness of jesus covers me it's now it's now over so when the father looks at me he doesn't see me he sees the righteousness of christ this is the moment that we all talk about when we say to to one another say well tell me about when you got saved right if you were to ask me that question i would tell you that i was 18 years old i was sitting on the tailgate of my truck i was at lake of the ponds near marshall texas and i had been struggling for two or three weeks with understanding where my my spiritual state and in that moment i trusted the lord jesus christ and god declared me righteous and covered me with the righteousness of christ and from that day on i have been saved and everything that's going to follow i have because i've been saved and that's salvation passed that's that righteousness so because of the father we're in christ and we have this justification okay now sanctification i am being saved so if we go back to this image here with with my hands if this is what it is to be saved then sanctification is the process where i conform to the image of the righteousness of christ right so i'm becoming like him well this process takes time this process will go from the day you're saved until the day you go to be with the lord this is the whole of your life this is where all of us are right now and this process involves two things it involves me working and obeying god and it involves god and his work justification there's no work for me to do all i do is believe right repent and believe and both of those are gifts from god so he gives those to me so that i can do that so there's no work for me to do here there's work for me to do i have to obey god's law right i've got and as i do then i conform to the image of jesus i become sanctified which means to be made holy matter of fact um paul says it this way in philippians chapter 2 he says therefore my beloved as you have always obeyed so now not only in my as in my presence but much more in my absence work out your own salvation with fear and trembling that's your responsibility you are to work out your

salvation that workout is uh is a mathematical term it's like solving an equation right you you got to work it out you got to figure it out you got to get into the details of it you got to get to the nitty-gritty of it and work that out okay and the way that we do that is we obey god's law so you think about the 10 commandments right as you obey the 10 commandments you are obeying god you're growing in holiness because the second half of this verse is for it's god who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure okay so we've talked about this before my struggle with my anger over the years has been one of the big problems the 10 commandments addresses that right in the 10 commandments it says you shall not murder jesus showed us that that murder commandment means more than murder it means anger right so as i seek to obey that commandment to put my anger aside i'm having to actually do things i'm having to think about certain things i'm having to pray and ask god to help me while i am trying to avoid anger god is at work in me to will and to work to will means to desire to work means the power to do it so as i'm avoiding breaking that commandment the reason i want to is because god's working in me and the power to do so is because god's working in me i'm not avoiding that by pulling myself up by my bootstraps and doing it in my own power does that make sense that there's that there's a it's really important to grasp the difference between righteousness and sanctification justification and sanctification because so many people will get them confused and there are some denominations that will even say that in order to be justified you've got to do work and they bring what's here here so that now you're earning your salvation i mean you can't you can't do that so you have to keep that and this separate from one another and one of the biggest things that god tends to use to help us in this process is suffering because it's in the crucible of suffering where we have opportunity to lean and depend upon the lord to obey those commands that seem impossible while we're under the flames you know when the flame of suffering comes and it is trying to just cook us and what's coming out of us it all this sin wants to pop out right just like it would with with gold or anything else that gets heated up all that draws as that's happening it would be easy for me in the middle of suffering to pop off in my anger and most people would understand that and most people be like no i get it yeah i would

be in the same boat as you but what's supposed to happen is i'm still supposed to obey even under suffering and how can i do that only by the power of god only by the power of god oftentimes that's what you'll hear if you ever hear me say this i'll say i'll say this to michelle michelle will say it to me we'll say it to you sometimes and that you might be going through something and we'll say well that's good for your sanctification it's because what we mean is the suffering you're enduring is something god has put in your life in order to grow you go ahead sometimes sometimes as i as if i think about it all and i get it in my head i do i'm just like okay

[31 : 49] we're gonna be good sometimes i'm not thinking about it and it's and so i'm not calm but it's really not because i'm of that it's just because i'm being selfish in the middle of it yeah and we should we should want to suffer for that sake not not avoid it you know not avoid it so that's the past that's the present so what's the future whoo redemption this is good stuff now here's a couple things about this word redemption um when you look at paul's writings paul's about the only person that uses this this word last night we were talking about this and i was looking at some things paul is pretty much luke uses at one time but after that it's all paul if you think paul wrote hebrews but that's another story he uses it in a couple of ways one is to talk specifically about what jesus did on the cross right in him we have redemption through his blood so he's kind of capsulating as a general thing but through the blood of jesus but another way that he uses it is to talk about the day of redemption right that there's coming a day of redemption you know the old song the old hymn your redemption draws nigh right that's built on that that theme that there's coming a day of redemption and i want you to see and understand something about this day of redemption and in the book of romans chapter 8 beginning in verse 18 paul gives us a glimpse of this and i want to walk through this passage just kind of slow we'll just read verses 18 through 23 and i want you to hear what this redemption is okay he says first of all in verse 18 for i consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us now that's hard to believe sometimes but the suffering that we experience is nothing compared to the glory that's coming okay the glory will outweigh all the suffering that we go through that's a great statement but paul how is this true well verse 19 says for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of god now he's shifted and he's talking about the creation that's the earth that's the trees that's the animals that's the stars the suns the universe all of creation it is longing longing with eagerness for the day that the sons of god are revealed so that's the end times when everything's going to come about so it's longing for the end well why verse 20 for the creation was subjected to futility not willingly but because of him who subjected it okay the person who subjected it is god the futility that word futility is also the word vanity if you've ever read ecclesiastes and you didn't understand it come back to romans 8 verse 20 read it and let it inform how to understand ecclesiastes but what happened is that at the fall when adam and eve sinned god cursed the ground remember that he cursed the ground not because the ground did anything but because of adam's sin so god subjected all of creation to this futility to this vanity to this vaporness of life and so that's where creation is now it's under a curse that's why there's so much in this world that hurts us right we you think about the the things that that that are spoken of in ecclesiastes

how he talks about you know a man will work all of his life and make up all this stuff for what to die and leave it to someone else who squanders it this is a vanity or he talks about how i tried to make myself happy with all of these various things and i found it was vanity and striving after the wind there's a lot about this life that just sometimes feels so vaporous so vanity filled and even the creation is cursed in such a way as this is why animals attack us this is why hurricanes happen because the creation is subjected to futility by god because of the fall of adam so if we keep reading then he subjected it in hope verse 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain freedom of the glory of the children of god so one day all of creation is going to be set free this future redemption is not just us but it's the whole creation is going to be set free from this curse right and then he says this for we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now and not only the creation but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons that is the redemption of our bodies the redemption of our bodies what he's saying is is that somewhere out in the future there's coming a day when because of what christ has done upon the cross all creation is going to be set free from this futility from the curse and our bodies are going to be redeemed this corruptible will put on the incorruptible this mortal will put on immortality and then we'll come to pass the saying death is swallowed up in victory oh death where is your victory oh grave where is your sting the

sting of death is sin the power of sin is the law but thanks be to god through our lord jesus christ who gives us the victory that day is coming that that's as much a part of our salvation as everything else and all of this starts with god choosing us we're all in the same playing field and because of his choice of us we have righteousness we have sanctification we have redemption he's his choice of us gives us so much good so much good and and and he gets back to his main point in verse 31 right where he says so so that all of this is true that christ is going to become to us wisdom righteousness and sanctification and redemption so that as it is written let him who boasts boast of the lord so that we come all the way back to so that as we get this good we continually boast in the lord we continually lift up god and and display and have the confidence in our hearts about who he is that magnifies him that praises him that that glorifies him when we have that confidence in him when he is our boast and not our spiritual heritage um the takeaway from this is that this this humbles us and how can a church live with disunity when they know this about their salvation that all of this good brought to us by god is not because of us even our sanctification that we work for is god who's at work in us as it matches what jonah says right he's in the belly of the fish and in his prayer he says salvation belongs to our god it matches what the author of hebrews said where he says that jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith what he means there is like the author and the publisher if you think about that that's the beginning and the end right of our faith paul says i'm confident of this that he who began a good work in me will bring it to perfection completion at the day of christ jesus this is it's not just that he's chosen us and that's it but but look at the good he's done us man that ought to humble us and destroy every faction and disunity within us and so i pray that god would grow us in our understanding of this and help us as we look at his word to learn more about our salvation it's more than just one day i'm going to heaven right it's more than that