

01-18-2026 Message



1 Group

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¹⁸For 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.

¹⁹For it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5 (NIV)

²⁰Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

²¹For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him,

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5 (NIV)

God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

²²Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

²³but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

²⁴but to those whom God has called,

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5 (NIV)

Both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

²⁵For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

²⁶Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called.

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5 (NIV)

Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.

²⁷But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5 (NIV)

²⁸God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ²⁹so that no one may boast before him.

³⁰It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5 (NIV)

³¹Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

¹And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5 (NIV)

²For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

³I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling.

⁴My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words,

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5 (NIV)

But with a demonstration of the Spirit's power,

⁵so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5 (NIV)

What is the most recognized symbol in the world?

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We are so accustomed to seeing the
symbol of the cross that we have
forgotten the shock of it.

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Paul's "hymn of the cross"

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The cross was seen as weakness and defeat by both the Jews and the Greeks.

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¹⁸For 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 1:18 (NIV)

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1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV)

Christianity is the only major religion
to have as its central event the
humiliation of its God.

Bruce Shelly, *Church History in Plain Language*

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²³But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling
block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,
²⁴but to those whom God has called, both
Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God
and the wisdom of God.

1 Corinthians 1:23-24 (NIV)

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1 Corinthians 1:23-24 (NIV)

Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral
between two candles, but on a cross
between two thieves just outside the
city gates, near the city garbage heap.
The kind of place where cynics mock,
thieves curse, and soldiers gamble.

George MacLeod, *Christ Crucified*

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THREE QUESTIONS:

- What is the message of the cross?
- What is our response to the message?
- What are implications of the message for me?

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What is the message of the cross?

23

¹⁸For 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 1:18 (NIV)

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1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV)

The message of the cross is Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, all for us.

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³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (NIV)

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1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (NIV)

THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS:

- Jesus died for our sins on the cross

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²He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 2:2 (NIV)

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1 John 2:2 (NIV)

THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS:

- Jesus died for our sins on the cross
- We need a savior

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²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
²⁴and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Romans 3:23-24 (NIV)

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Romans 3:23-24 (NIV)

THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS:

- Jesus died for our sins on the cross
- We need a savior
- We can be forgiven because of the death of Jesus

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¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

John 3:16-17 (NIV)

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John 3:16-17 (NIV)

THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS:

- Jesus died for our sins on the cross
- We need a savior
- We can be forgiven because of the death of Jesus
- Jesus' death was God's plan to reconcile us

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²¹Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

²²But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—

Colossians 1:21-22 (NIV)

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Colossians 1:21-22 (NIV)

What is our response to the message?

1. Seen as foolishness to those who are perishing

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¹⁸For 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 1:18 (NIV)

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1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV)

The wisdom of this world is foolishness
in the sense that it cannot answer the
fundamental questions of meaning.

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How is it we live in a world where we
know how almost everything works
and the meaning of nothing?

Carl Sagan

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²³but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

1 Corinthians 1:23 (NIV)

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1 Corinthians 1:23 (NIV)

- Stumbling block to Jews
- Foolishness to Gentiles (Greeks)

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The Jews could not imagine a messiah
who would suffer and die.

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³¹He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

³²He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

Mark 8:31-33 (NIV)

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Mark 8:31-33 (NIV) 1 of 2

³³But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

Mark 8:31-33 (NIV)

³He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

⁴Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering,

Isaiah 53:3-11 (NIV)

Yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.

⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was
on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Isaiah 53:3-11 (NIV)

⁶We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,

Isaiah 53:3-11 (NIV)

And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

⁸By oppression and judgment he was taken
away.

Yet who of his generation protested?

For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was
punished.

Isaiah 53:3-11 (NIV)

⁹He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and
cause him to suffer,
and though the LORD makes his life an
offering for sin,

Isaiah 53:3-11 (NIV)

He will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his
hand.

¹¹After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will
justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

Isaiah 53:3-11 (NIV)

¹⁹For it is written:
“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;
the intelligence of the intelligent I will
frustrate.”

1 Corinthians 1:19 (NIV)

This is a reference to Isaiah 29:14...

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Pericles funeral oration, 400 BC

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What is our response to the message?

2. It is experienced as the power of God to those who are being saved.

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¹⁸For 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 1:18 (NIV)

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1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV)

¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the gospel,
because it is the power of God that brings
salvation to everyone who believes: first to
the Jew, then to the Gentile.

Romans 1:16 (NIV)

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Romans 1:16 (NIV)

WHAT ARE IMPLICATIONS OF THE MESSAGE
OF THE CROSS FOR ME?

- An indictment of my own self-righteousness

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WHAT ARE IMPLICATIONS OF THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS FOR ME?

- An indictment of my own self-righteousness
- A declaration of God's love for me

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WHAT ARE IMPLICATIONS OF THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS FOR ME?

- An indictment of my own self-righteousness
- A declaration of God's love for me
- A declaration of the seriousness of sin

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³All have turned away, all have become corrupt;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.

Psalms 14:3 (NIV)

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the
glory of God,

Romans 3:23 (NIV)

WHAT ARE IMPLICATIONS OF THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS FOR ME?

- An indictment of my own self-righteousness
- A declaration of God's love for me
- A declaration of the seriousness of sin
- The cross means we cannot save ourselves

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¹³For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,
¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:13-23 (NIV)

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Colossians 1:13-23 (NIV) 1 of 6



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WHAT ARE IMPLICATIONS OF THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS FOR ME?

- An indictment of my own self-righteousness
- A declaration of God's love for me
- A declaration of the seriousness of sin
- The cross means we cannot save ourselves
- The cross demonstrates God's love for us

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⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8 (NIV)

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Romans 5:8 (NIV)



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The Gospel is that I am so flawed that Jesus had to die for me, yet I am so loved and valued that Jesus was glad to die for me. This leads to deep humility and deep confidence at the same time. I cannot feel superior to anyone, and yet I have nothing to prove to anyone. I do not think more of myself nor less of myself. Instead, I think of myself less.

Tim Keller, *The Reason For God*