

The preacher of the cross: 2:1-5

Are there any difficult words here?

What is Paul's strategy for preaching?

Why does God use such a "weak" and "foolish" way to save people?
(1:19, 27, 29; 2:5)

What kind of Christian preachers should we listen to today?

How does Paul's example of preaching the gospel encourage us to speak about Jesus with our non-Christian friends and family?

Memory verse

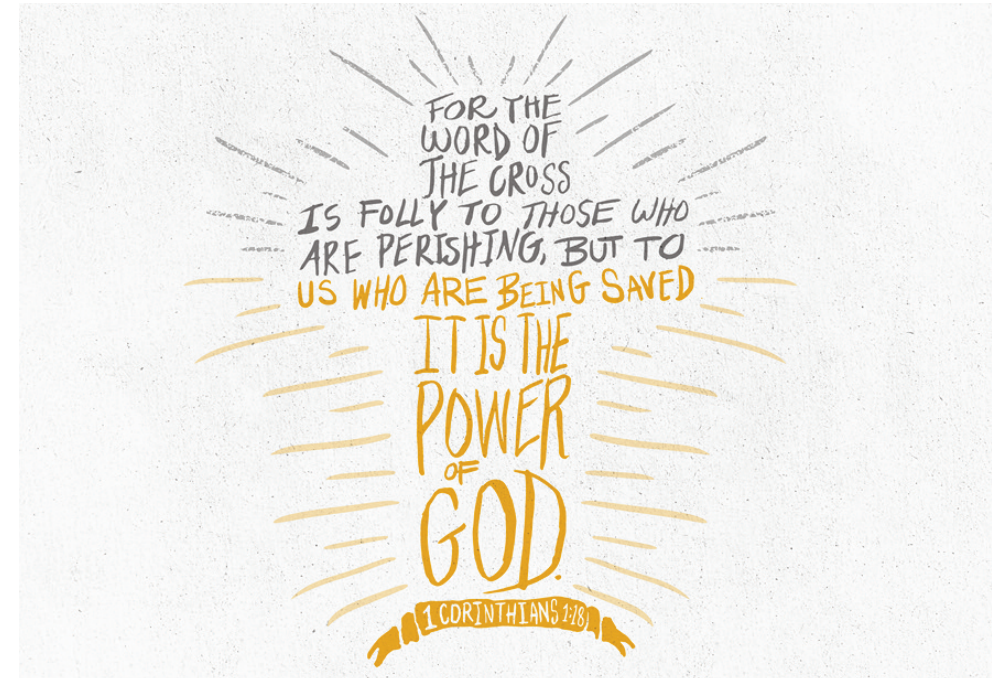
"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18)

Talk notes

Further reading

You can read **1 Corinthians 2:6-16** at home.

Next **Saturday 5/8** at Engine Room we'll learn from **1 Corinthians 3**. Be there!



God's "foolish" gospel

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5

Icebreaker

Imagine if you were the president/prime minister, and you could decide who can come to live in your country. What kind of people would you allow to become a citizen of your country? What criteria or qualifications would they need to fulfil?

The story so far...

This semester in FOCUS we are studying the book of **1 Corinthians**. This is a letter, written by the apostle Paul to the church in Corinth, in around AD55. Corinth was a prosperous, multicultural city with lots of religions and lots of immorality! The Christians in this city were loved by God and gifted in Christ, but they had lots of issues which Paul addresses in this letter.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 to remind yourself of one of the big problems in this church.



Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5

The message of the cross: 1:18-25

Are there any difficult words here?

Paul talks about the “message of the cross” (**v18**). What does this mean?

Paul says humanity is divided according to how people respond to the cross (**v18**).

What do different groups think of the message of the cross? (**v22-24**)



Jews:



Greeks/Gentiles:



People called by God:

Crucifixion: In New Testament times, criminals were punished by being nailed to a wooden cross and left to die. It was terrible and shameful to die in this way.

God spoke about this kind of punishment hundreds of years before when he said “Anyone who is hung on a tree is under God’s curse” (Deuteronomy 21:23).

How is God’s wisdom and power different to the world’s?

Can you think of situations today where human “wisdom” goes directly against what God says in his word?

The people of the cross: 1:26-31

Are there any difficult words here?

These verses talk about people who were “called” or “chosen” by God. What does this mean?

What kind of people in society were the Christians in the Corinthian church?

Why did God choose people like this?

How do these verses describe you?

In our society, what do people think is impressive and wise?

What do they think is foolish and weak?

• at Monash?

• in your home country?

What kind of boasting does God want? (**v31**)

Why? (**v30**)

perishing: dying.

stumbling block: something so offensive or shocking that people refuse to accept it

Jews: Jewish people of the nation of Israel

Gentiles: all non-Jewish people (eg. Greeks)

called: chosen to be a Christian; saved by God

nullify: to bring to nothing, or destroy

righteousness: being in a right relationship with God

holiness: being set apart for a special purpose

redemption: being bought at a price; freed from slavery

eloquence: fancy and impressive speaking