

1. Our LifeLines verse for September 25 will be Matthew 16:18.
2. LifeLines will meet through Monday, November 13!

LifeLines September 18, 2023

Today's Scripture: 1 Verse

1 Corinthians 1:18

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

WHY WE'RE HERE

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All scripture is inspired by God & is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, & for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

CONTEXT

(Remember that 1 Corinthians is really Paul's second letter to this church.)

Paul was concerned about division in the church at Corinth. (Imagine that!) This letter is a frank discussion of the sinfulness of the church & issues that impacted them. Several sources, including Apollos, Chloe & Stephanus, had relayed the church's problems to Paul. Paul wanted to provide a model for how they should handle the problems caused by sinful ways, so he spoke to them of *the cross*.

In his letter, Paul contrasted "the cross" with the wisdom of the world. He wanted them to recall Jesus' teachings of how God uses the weak & humble to accomplish His work.

DIFFERENT VERSIONS (Versions not listed are similar to the NRSV.)

AMP

For the message of the cross is foolishness (absurd & illogical) to those who are perishing & spiritually dead (because they reject it), but to us who are being saved (by God's grace) it is (the manifestation of) the power of God.

CEV

The message about the cross doesn't make any sense to lost people. But for those of us who are being saved, it is God's power at work.

GNT

For the message about Christ's death on the cross is nonsense to those who are being lost; but for us who are being saved it is God's power.

GW

The message about the cross is nonsense to those who are being destroyed, but it is God's power to us who are being saved.

MSG

The Message that points to Christ on the Cross seems like sheer silliness to those hellbent on destruction, but for those on the way of salvation it makes perfect sense. This is the way God works, & most powerfully as it turns out.

NCV

The teaching about the cross is foolishness to those who are being lost, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

NiRV (New International Reader's Version)

The message of the cross seems foolish to those who are lost & dying. But it is God's power to us who are being saved.

NLT

The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God.

SELAH

BREAKING DOWN THE VERSE

For the message about the cross... Think of all the cross means! Add to this list: resurrection, forgiveness, atonement, salvation, the revelation of God to mankind, eternal life with God. The *message* Paul refers to is literally the *Word of God*! To the Jews, especially, the cross was the tree of shame & horror. To them, a crucified person was accursed of God. Only spiritual eyes can truly grasp the message of the cross.

On the cross, Jesus took all the sins of the world – past, present & future, paying the price for all humanity. At the cross the devil was defeated. So were the powers of darkness, sin & death!

is foolishness...Foolish – think absurd, illogical. The original Greek term for “folly” comes from the same root word appearing in English as “moron.” These are people who believe God’s plan is idiotic, stupid. Some say, “That’s too easy a solution for the problem of sin!” We know crucifixion was a symbol of shameful crimes. The pagan culture thought it foolish for Jesus to conduct Himself in such a way that He was rejected by His own people & crucified like a common criminal. Why would anyone worship such a god? Why would anyone, especially someone claiming to *be* God, die on a cross & sacrifice themselves for anybody?

The message is foolishness because some love their sin & don’t want to change. Others are deceived & misled because some churches have abandoned the message of the cross. Some don’t read or know scriptures that prophesy or point to & explain God’s plans & ways.

Most of humanity has failed to come to know God because of their human wisdom. Many things are hidden from unbelievers. Non-Christians, even if they believe in a god, consider it foolish that God would crucify His own Son for anybody’s sins. God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.

to those who are perishing...The perishing are the unbelievers; those who reject Jesus’ teaching; those who choose not to accept Christ as their Savior & Lord. The sensual, covetous, proud & ambitious see the gospel as opposing their favorite pursuits. The gospel will always be foolishness to those on the road to destruction - even though at the cross, the whole world has the opportunity to be reconciled to the Father.

but to us who are being saved...All who are saved have accepted Jesus as our Savior. We who are saved believe in our heart & have confessed with our mouth that Jesus is Lord. Jesus came as the true Son of God & redefined power by displaying strength through weakness, humility & relying on the Father.

it is the power of God...It is powerful because it’s the manifestation of God’s power. Only God has the power to save, & He demonstrated both power & wisdom. It is wisdom because, more clearly than anything, the cross says

God's love for us has *no bounds*. Christians believe the crucifixion and the resulting resurrection to be God's most powerful act. We know Jesus wasn't overpowered or outmatched. God purposefully sacrificed His own Son *for us*, & Jesus surrendered His life *for us*. His life wasn't taken from Him. He gave it freely. These were intentional, willing acts of love so our sins could be covered & forgiven. God wanted nothing to separate us from Him throughout eternity. The cross became the recognized badge of Christianity.

SELAH

RELATED VERSES (Add other related verses as you think of them.)

Genesis 22:13-14, And Abraham looked up & saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went & took the ram & offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place - "The Lord will provide;" as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

Habakkuk 2:4, Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right within them, but the righteous live by their faith.

John 3:17-18, Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. Those who believe in Him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

John 14:6, Jesus said to him, "I am the way, & the truth, & the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Romans 1:16-17, For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first & also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith."

Romans 8:38-39, For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. (Who's love? Where is it found?)

Romans 10:9, Because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord & believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

1 Corinthians 1:17, For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, & not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

1 Corinthians 1:20c-21, Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe.

1 Corinthians 1:22-24, For Jews demand signs & Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews & foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews & Greeks, Christ the power of God & the wisdom of God.

1 Corinthians 1:25, For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, & God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5, My speech & my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit & of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

1 Corinthians 2:14, Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, & they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 3:19, For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness."

2 Corinthians 4:3, And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

Galatians 2:20, And it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me & gave Himself for me.

Galatians 3:13, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us – for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.”

Ephesians 2:8-9, For by grace you have been saved through faith, & this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 3:20-21, Now to Him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to Him be glory in the church & in Christ Jesus to all generations forever & ever. Amen.

Philippians 2:4-8 (portions of), Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited...He humbled Himself & became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.

Colossians 1:19-20, For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him God was pleased to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of His cross.

Colossians 2:13-14, And when you were dead in trespasses & the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with Him, when He forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross.

1 Peter 2:24, He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed.

SUMMARY

Just as Abraham looked up to see a sacrificial ram sent from God as a replacement to offer for *his* son, we look up to see the Son of God sent as *our* replacement. It is written, “On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.” God chose Mount Moriah for Abraham’s sacrifice (the site of today’s Temple Mount) & nearby Golgotha for His own.

It’s an interesting thing about the cross – it saves us, & it separates us from much of the rest of the world. For some, it is like a great divide. Paul

divides the world into two groups of people: those who are perishing & those being saved. The perishing are destined for eternity apart from God. Those of us being saved are destined for an eternity of sharing God's glory!

Our God works through the cross of Christ. In *His* wisdom, God decided that *human* wisdom would *not* be the way of salvation. Rather, faith would be the deciding factor. Faith, in all its divine "foolishness," saves! As Christians, we see that the cross isn't foolishness at all – it *is* the *power & wisdom of God*. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

CONCLUSION

God decided (probably before the foundation of the world) that He would redeem His people through the most despicable death imaginable: crucifixion. It was a scandal, a stumbling block, foolishness, shameful, & an indignity.

In & through the cross, we are saved! Without the powerful, beneficent act of the cross & resurrection, we would be lost & without hope. That's how the gospel triumphs! The cross doesn't just represent Christ's death. It represents our own death to sin & damnation, & it represents a new & welcome birth to our glorious inheritance as children of God.

Let us pray for the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of those who are blind to the wisdom & power of God. May their spiritual eyes be opened! May they also see the message of the cross as God's loving invitation to walk in newness of life in *this* life, on this earth & throughout eternity with Him in the next.

Let 1 Corinthians 1:18 be a *LifeLine* for you!

SCRIPTURE IS OUR –

LifeLine!