**Sermon Title: The Foolishness of the Church in a Christ-less Culture**

**Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 18-23**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to avoid the infestation of behavior that causes divisiveness in the church.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 3 steps that exterminate divisiveness in the church.**

**Introduction:** In this section of Corinthians 3, Paul provides the root cause for the division in the Church. It is human pride, pride in who they are and what they know. Corinth was a cultural center of intellectual fertilization that was dominating the church.

**I. The 1st step is to beware of self-deception. V.18a**

**II. The 2nd step is to beware of human wisdom. Vv.18b-20**

**III. The 3rd step is to beware of glorying in men. Vv.21-23**

**I. The 1st step is to beware of self-deception. V.18a**

This church like the church today, was guilty of a very serious problem, which was based on a very serious deception, they wanted worldly recognition. They wanted to be known for their intellect and education as their basis for being able to understand the world and God.

The result of this was that people began to follow their own ideas, philosophies and rationalizations, resulting in a disregard and dismissal of the Will and Word of God. They began to boast more in their own wisdom and promote men with unusual abilities, education and talents. People began living by their own ideas, determining truth by their own wisdom, and exalted the wisdom of men over the wisdom of God.

**Luke 18:9** Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

**1 Corinthians 10:12** Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

**Galatians 6:3** For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

**Revelation 3:17** "Because you say,`I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'-- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

**Proverbs 28:26** He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But whoever walks wisely will be delivered.

**II. The 2nd step is to beware of human wisdom. Vv.18b-20**

A. Human wisdom is dangerous because it is **superficial**.

(**1 Corinthians 1:19-20**)

1. No man can understand the world and God if they leave God out of the picture.

2. No man has ever seen God at any time.

**John 1:18** No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*

**1 Timothy 6:16** who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen.

3. No man can know God apart from God revealing Himself.

**Romans 1:22** Professing to be wise, they became fools, **Colossians 2:8** Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

**James 3:15** This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic.

B. Human wisdom is not **true** wisdom. (**1 Corinthians 2:1-2**)

**John 12:48** "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him-- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

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

**1 Corinthians 1:21** For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

C. Human wisdom is **foolishness** to God. V.19-20

**John 3:16-17** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. **17** "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

**1 Peter 2:24** who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness-- by whose stripes you were healed.

**1 Corinthians 1:23-25** but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeksfoolishness, **24** but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. **25** Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

**1 Corinthians 2:6-7** However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. **7** But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

**III. The 3rd step is to beware of glorying in men. Vv.21-23**

We must renounce the temptation to find our boasting in men, rather than boasting in God. To glory or boast in men means to trust men, to look to men as the answer and source of life and blessing.

A. God has **provided** all things to believers.

**John 10:10** "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

**2 Corinthians 9:8** And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may have an abundance for every good work.

**Ephesians 3:20** Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

B. Believers belong to **Christ**, and Christ belongs to **God**.

C. Let no man **glory** in men. V.21

**John 5:44** "How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that *comes* from the only God?

**Romans 12:16** Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

**1 Peter 1:24** because "All flesh *is* as grass, And all the glory of manas the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away,

**Psalm 10:3** For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire; He blesses the greedy *and* renounces the LORD.

**Some notes taken from: The Preachers Outline & Sermon Bible I & II Corinthians. pp.62-66**