**Seeing Through the Façade**

***18****For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.****19****For it is written,*

*“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
    and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”*

***20****Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?****21****For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+cor+1&version=ESV#fen-ESV-28368b)*] to save those who believe.****22****For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,****23****but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,****24****but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.****25****For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

***26****For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards,[*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+cor+1&version=ESV#fen-ESV-28373c)*] not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.****27****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;****28****God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,****29****so that no human being[*[*d*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+cor+1&version=ESV#fen-ESV-28376d)*] might boast in the presence of God.****30****And because of him[*[*e*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+cor+1&version=ESV#fen-ESV-28377e)*] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,****31****so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 1:18-31, ESV)*

 In order to recognize and cut thru the facades of the world, preaching Christ, who is God’s wisdom personified is a must.

 May the Lord bless you all dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as we talk today about faith and a topic generally related to spiritual life. The world, in other words the unbelieving populations around the globe, have built a large façade against faith in Christ. That façade has two parts: first, that a crucified Savior is a stumbling block and folly. In Christ’s era, the sight of a crucified person was so terrible that people would speak of it with horror and great disgust. Why? It was because the method of death was not only excruciatingly painful, but also because the man’s honor was destroyed before his body ever was. The condemned was publicly shamed and humiliated (since they stripped them) before his suffering was over. Knowing this, today’s message is a key to cut through and to conquer the façade of unbelievers that is built on wrongly sourced wisdom. To better define it, the façade of the world is its unbelief and its reasons for being that way. It is the Gospel that cuts through and illuminates peoples’ true spiritual states. Let’s see, then, how the concept is explained and the uses of this truth in our daily lives.

 The Gospel cuts through peoples’ facades, illuminates and clarifies people’s true spiritual statuses. In Christ’s times, the world was generally known as the Roman empire and its surrounding neighbors. Primarily, it was a Greek speaking world at that time, except for the people living in the Holy Land, which at that time was called “Palestina”, or Palestine. There was a big difference in worldviews between the Greek-speaking and Hebrew/Aramaic speaking world. The Greek speakers were generally influenced by the thinking of Athenians and the Greek philosophical approaches to life, while the Jewish world was more influenced by the spiritual, mystical, and miraculous experiences of its history. The first tended to examine issues with the head, while the Jews and Middle Easterners in general “thought” more with their hands (and hearts).

 When we speak about facades, we would say that the Greek-speaking or Greek-thinking world was holding up human wisdom as its “rejecting wall” against Christ, while the Jewish world held up its own conception of military and political power as a reason to reject the Gospel.

 For the Greek-thinker, a crucified person cannot be someone important and the possibility of rising from the dead for such is even more absurd, given that the crucifixion is a sign that they are a fool to begin with. For the Jew, it was impossible that a king be accepted if they were cursed to hell because “whoever hangs on a tree is cursed.” Against the Cross of Christ, one was saying, “That is foolishness”, while the other said, “that is a stumbling block”.

 So, how can someone break through that façade and believe in Christ, when you have these two objections? Listen to this story:

“*When I was a young fellow, seeking Jesus, the way was all dark to me. I could not understand how to be saved. Oh, if somebody had sat down beside me when I was a lad, and told me the simple way to be saved, I think I would have walked in it! I remember one day I was alone, and for hours and hours this was my prayer: `Lord, deepen my feeling. Lord, make my eyes to be fountains of tears. Lord, fill me with remorse and misery and condemnation!" I prayed like that, supposing that if I reached a certain point of awful, deplorable remorse and regret and wretchedness of spirit, surely Jesus would then take pity on me. Why, that was not the way for me to come to Jesus. The way for me to come to Jesus was to come to Him, and say: "Lord Jesus, here I am, a sinner, and I cannot save myself. Thou halt taught it, and surely Thou knowest. I have found out in myself and by myself how weak and frail I am, how insufficient I am to save myself. Lord Jesus, Thou doest the saving, Thou sayest it, and Thou sayest: 'Come to me without delay, and I will come to you, and I will save you.' Lord, I turn from every evil way, and I give up to Jesus, that He may save me His way, and I give up right now. Dark or bright, no matter what comes, I will give up to Jesus." Oh, if I had come like that, when an interested boy, I would have found Christ, as I did find Him when my feet were turning into young manhood's morning. I did find him, when quietly one night, sitting in an audience like this, an earnest preacher pleaded that Christ must be given His own way to save the soul; that the soul, needy and helpless and unable to save itself, would make honest surrender to Christ —utter surrender. I sat back there as you sit back there before me now, and I said, "Lord, it is all as dark as it can be. I do not see through it. I am drifting with the current. Lord, save me!"”*

Therefore, the way to recognize and break through a façade is tied to coming to Christ. When we humble ourselves and completely surrender ourselves to the Lord Jesus, no human wisdom or explanation of power can stand as an obstacle to belief in front of us. Facades come from pride – and the Cross of Christ stands against that and illuminates peoples’ hearts. When we accept Christ, we enter into light – but if the facades of human wisdom and power are used as obstacles in the way of the Gospel, then we will have chosen our own eternal condemnation.

Thus, I also, would like to earnestly plead with you: surrender yourselves completely to Jesus. Let it not be with just your lips. May it be with your whole heart and soul – so that no human wisdom or power can withstand the work of the Lord in this world.

May the Lord touch each heart that hears this message today. The Lord bless you all. Amen.