

# 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Sunday 8/9/2015

Every fiber of my being wants to go sit down in that seat in the second row right now. Whenever Bob asks me to do this, I want to come up with the great American sermon that will change lives. Desiring it is half the battle; I am halfway there, but we are going to leave disappointed, I guess.

I pondered what I would do today. I was going to do this a month or so ago when I was out of the country and I could not do it, so I had to dwell on this for another couple of months. It is about the same place it was two months ago; I have no progress.

Have you ever wondered why God saves people? Think about it. Why would God love us? Why in the world would a loving God—well, a loving God would love us—but why would a perfect, competent, holy God want anything to do with me? If you knew who I was, and some of you barely know me, you really do not know how bad I am. If you knew who I was, God would not love you. It is just not possible. It just does not make any sense.

Now, we love God.

*1 John 4:19*

*We love him, because he first loved us.*

Why? I did not do anything. I met God at my dirtiest, most vile point in my life. I did not meet Him when I got clean. I was dirty, rotten, sinful, and prideful. There are still a lot of those things, but I was not at my best when I met Him. Why would God love me? So we love Him because He first loved us. All right, why? Why did He save us? What is the point? There is not anything particularly special about me, unless you ask me or my mom. She might think I am special. She told me I was. By the time I was twelve, I thought I was eight feet tall and could do anything because, of course, I could do nothing wrong. But that was not true.

Why did God go through such an effort to offer us salvation and fellowship? Why? It does not make any sense. We are taught in discipleship that God desires to have fellowship with us. Twenty-some odd years in, I do not get it. I do not get it. There are some people who do not want fellowship with me. There are people I do not want fellowship with, and that is only because of my sin and theirs. But why would God want to have fellowship with us?

You can see it evidenced in the Bible all throughout history: God reaching out to His people, and His people either grabbing His hand or smacking it down. Then He goes, "Well, that is cool. I will stick it out again." Not me. You slap me once, I am done. I do not get it because I think of God like me. I guess that is the flaw in my philosophy: God is nothing like me, because if God were me, we would all be going to hell for sure. There is just no way.

So now God loves us. We love God. God desires fellowship. What are we supposed to do with that? So here is the great sermon on what our purpose in life is. I will solve it right now, and you all will leave here today all charged up. Everyone that ever lived, that was ever born, was created for a purpose and has to glorify God. That is why we are here. I do not understand why, and I am not sure we ever will until we reach that judgment seat of Christ or in that moment in the

twinkling of an eye when we have the mind of Christ. We might know then. We might get glimpses of it now. It is like you are looking at a passage in the Bible, and you almost think you get it until something else comes in, and you can see it barely. You just get a glimpse of it, but you cannot completely comprehend it.

But we are here to glorify God.

*Matthew 5:16*

*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

There is a great purpose in life. If you had no purpose, that is a great purpose. We are called to glorify our Father in heaven. Not all of us answer that call. There is a problem right there. Again, why would God not just destroy us? He would be just and right to do it. There is just no reason why He should not wipe us out and start all over again. He could do it if He wanted to.

*Matthew 9:37*

*Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;*

We are all created for a purpose. We do not all fulfill that purpose. Some of us fulfill that purpose some of the time. But why would God keep us around if we did not? I do not know. The laborers are few, and that is not a complaint. It is not a slam against this church, any church, or anybody. It is just a fact. God said it, not me.

*Matthew 9:37*

*Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;*

There are always a few who do the most, and the most do the least. That is just the way it is. It is the same at work, the same at church. It is the same on baseball teams and football teams. There are a couple of stars, and the rest of them are supporting players. That should not be that way in church. I hope to show that it is not that way in church, that every man, woman, and child ever born was born with a purpose in life to glorify God. Some people get it. Some people do not. Some people care, and some people do not care. Some people do not even know. The sad part is, maybe a lot of Christians, churchgoers, regular churchgoers, do not get it.

We are blessed to have a church that teaches a doctrine that we can trace right back to our Bible and not to some guy's idea somewhere. We are blessed to have that, but not everyone is blessed to have that. Regardless of our inability, our limitations, our weaknesses, or whatever other excuses we might have in our life, we are all charged with that specific charge to glorify God. Even just how we do that is a matter of our personal relationship with God through the Holy Spirit and how the Holy Spirit leads us to do those things.

Here is what is important: it is not something that is decided by someone else. It is not something that is decided by how much fun I will have doing it. It is not decided by how much notice I am going to get. It is decided by you and the Holy Spirit and what God has given you out of your Bible, how you glorify God. That is a personal relationship between you and Christ. You can get

instruction here at church. You can get instruction in accountability groups, Bible studies, and discipleship. There are all kinds of avenues to get that instruction.

I would venture to say this: "Therefore knowing the terror of the Lord we do persuade men." You are going to show up one day, especially us in the Bible-believing, doctrinally sound church, at the judgment seat of Christ. He is going to ask you, "What did you do with what I gave you?" To stand there and go, "Well, I did not do anything," is going to be an awful thing.

Now, there is a philosophy that you should be in everything all the time. We are a sign-up church. I think I will put a sign-up back there to give Bob Gregg five bucks. I will retire. If people just sign up, and they will not know what it is for, it is good. It is what is good and right about our church. The problem is, they are all thinking, "I would not give that guy five cents." Well, I am done here. You will pay me to stop talking. I am going until two o'clock. It will take me a while to correct this doctrine we have been getting for a while.

You ever notice Bob Alexander leaves every time I preach? That guy does not show up. Every time I preach, he is nowhere to be found. He just cannot handle the truth about the Son. Do not tell him I said that. Maybe if you do, you will never see me up here again.

Anyhow, we are not supposed to be in everything all the time. That is a fallacy of church, that you are in everything all the time. You are supposed to be in everything that God tells you to be in. We kind of look down on people that are not involved in everything all the time. We tend sometimes to think our ministry is more important than yours. Of course, mine is more important than yours. The rest of you, you are all about the same. It is not like that. It is not like that.

Listen to me. I am not making an excuse to not be involved in ministry. We are all called to ministry, every single one of us. If you are a blood-washed, Bible-believing Christian today, you are called to ministry. Do not try to escape. "Oh, God just did not give me that talent." That is a bunch of dung. The Bible calls it dung. It is the Bible, where the Bible allows me to cuss, says Bob. It is dung. You are called to ministry. I am not making an excuse to not be in ministry. If the Lord calls you to ministry, get in and do not get out unless God calls you out.

I had a friend of mine get called out of the ministry. I do not know what happened. He got called out. Nothing wrong. He never did a thing wrong. This guy is the cleanest guy I have ever met in my life. He was called out of ministry the way he was called in. He was called in in a thunderbolt and said, "Get in." He got in. I met that guy in 1993, and it changed my life. A while ago, God said, "Get out." It just was not working anymore. He got out. He did not force it. He got out. He will not be out of ministry forever, but he is out of that one. It was a shocking thing that a guy would be that in tune with the Holy Spirit of God, that when God tells him to get in, he got in. It was time to get out. He got out. He would rather get out than do damage to what God is doing in his ministry. That is basic Christianity 101, guys. If we do not get that, there is something wrong with us super Christians here at Old Paths Baptist Church. We should get that. We should get it.

God desires fellowship. He desires to be glorified, and we do that through ministry. Which ministry is it? Ephesians chapter 4 tells us He gives some this and some that: some apostles, some prophets, some pastors, some teachers, some hot dog cookers, some vacuumers, some

clothes gatherers, some homeless feeders. He gives us some. Not every one of us is every one of those things.

You consider those homeless ministries. They are important. Have you ever seen anyone get fed or clothed without it? It is a big deal. These teaching and discipling ministries, have you ever seen anyone grow without them? They are important. Have you ever considered the evangelism ministries? Have you ever seen anyone reach without an evangelist? It just does not happen. I mean, we do not have the Holy Spirit telling Philip to run over to the Ethiopian eunuch anymore. Oh, but wait, we do. We have us being told to run over there and reach those people that we are introduced to through ministry. Those are obvious examples, but we tend to not see the ones we cannot see.

How about prayer? How about prayer warriors? Is not that a ministry? Well, they do not show up on, you know, they are not there down at a turn around, tune up, whatever that place, turn around, restart. They are not at, well, so what? Maybe they are not in that ministry. Maybe they are. There is nothing wrong either way, as long as they are in ministry. Those prayer ministries, have you ever seen anyone get saved without it? I will tell you what, for every one of us that got saved, there was probably a little old lady somewhere that prayed for you, and a mom, a dad, an aunt, a friend, a little girl I met when I was seventeen, prayed for me. It took me thirty-some odd years, took me twenty-some odd years to make that one right. That prayer works. It is a ministry. It is too bad you cannot see it, right? Oh, but you can. You can.

*1 Corinthians 8:3*

*But if any man love God, the same is known of him.*

You want to know how you see it? Look at a family. Look at their kids. Look at their friends. Watch what God is doing in their life, and then try to tell me that there is not a ministry going on in that family. Oh, but they do not show up on this, and they do not do that. And they are not discipling thirty-seven people. Oh my gosh, they are going to lose their salvation and go to hell. No, there are all kinds of ministries. But when we see people doing ministry and not doing the ministries we want them to do the way we want them to do it, what do we do? We tend to, we will just say, look down on them.

I have always asserted that the finest tool in every Christian's toolbox is the ability to point out the flaws in other Christians. They lack the ability. We lack the ability to point out our own. We like to point out the flaws in other people. We like to point out the flaws in other churches. Sometimes rightly so. Do not give me your own. Do not give me your own. But that love only seems to be surpassed by the love of slamming our own people. I mean, we eat our own. It is like familiarity breeds contempt, does it not? We are more polite to the lost world than we are to ourselves sometimes. That is wrong. We are supposed to glorify God. We are not supposed to be bickering and fighting and accusing. Who accuses, right? Is not there an accuser out there? Why are we acting like the devil instead of the Holy Spirit of God? We are supposed to be edifying each other, preparing each other, helping each other.

If you see somebody that is not involved in a ministry you think they should be, instead of telling somebody else about it, "Oh, that Bob, you should be here. Oh, boy, I cannot believe he is not here." Why do you not tell me? I do not have a specific instance here. I am just saying, tell the person that you think. Talk to them. Go to them as a brother or a sister in Christ. That is not my message, by the way. Still not sure what it is going to be. I will be on the next page, I am sure.

This message started out as a devotion that I did a while ago. In fact, I did this message, and I did not have a chance to do it. I had a devotion; it was really a devotion I put together, and I was focusing on some of the people that I ministered to. Turns out a lot of people that we ministered to are not at their best, right? You go down to the mission, you go down to Restart, you go down to Tune Up or Turn Around, whatever that place is called. They are not at their best, right? They are not at their best. They are down and out. They are under pressure. It is easy to judge their lives, is it not?

"Hey, if these guys love God, maybe they would not be in trouble, right?" It is easy to say that. The only problem is that is not real. Now, maybe if you were not insane, your life would be better off. That might be true. But why do you not try telling that to Paul during one of his shipwrecks, or one of the times he was in prison, one of the times he was being beaten or stoned? Tell him, tell Paul that. Tell one of those Albigensians or those Cathars or the Huguenots or the what's-its or who's-its or Hussites and Musites and Fussites and lions and tigers and bears. Tell that to those guys. "Hey, maybe your kids would not have been fed to the pigs if you were not insane." That does not work.

When we try to categorize and stereotype people who do not do things the way we want them to do, and their life is not as good as we think it should be, we say, "Well, you are insane." I have heard the story. "You are insane. That is why so-and-so is in trouble." Really? Okay. Might be true. But I doubt that we lack, I doubt that we have the discernment to know that. You look at some of these people's lives today, tell that to Jesus Christ. Say, "Dude, maybe you would not be on that cross if you were not insane." Right? He was having some trouble. People hated His guts. They hated His guts. His life was not going the way we thought it should go, but it was going exactly the way He wanted it to go. He was doing exactly the right thing. Turns out people who do right suffer probably and possibly more than people that do wrong. I do not know if that is an axiom of truth or not, but tell that to Jesus Christ. "Hey, Jesus, maybe your life would be better off if you were not insane." Do not try that. I am obviously lying here.

But the point is, who are we to make a judgment about their love for God based on the circumstances of their lives? Get into their lives, start to know their lives first, and figure out what is going on. Maybe they are suffering, I do not know, because of the sin of somebody else. Have you ever seen a homeless women's shelter? Do you think they are all there because of their own problems? Not all of them. Some of them might be, but not all of them. That is not what my message is about either.

My message to those type of people is, no matter how old we are, how young we are, how smart we are, how strong we are, it does not matter. We are all here to glorify God and to show that light that we have to other people through the good works that we have through our ministry.

That is what my message is about. It is about the fact that many are called, but few answer that call. The people that we might think are call-worthy are not exactly the people who you might think God thinks are call-worthy.

Throughout history, God has chosen people to glorify Him that you would never expect. Think Abraham in his old age. Abraham had a hard time leaving the things of the world behind. I do not know if any of you can relate to having a hard time leaving the things of the world behind. You see a guy in ministry, "Oh Bob, he is still doing this, he is still doing that." Really? Okay, cool. I am the only one. I am the only one in my old age that has trouble leaving the things of the world behind. So you guys are all just righteous and holy, and I am just a bad guy. I will pick on myself. I am not good at picking on other people. I was going to go hard on you during the announcements. I was going to preach hell during the announcements. That is just not who I am. I cannot do that. I do not know how. Maybe when I get really old, I could do it.

Moses could not put together a devotion to save his life. He could not put a message together. There is no way he could do it. And God chose him. David was nobody. David was the youngest son of his father. He was not special. He was just David, doing what David did. Samuel, a little boy, a little boy given over to a two-bit, backslidden, no-good-for-nothing priest. Samuel was chosen. And then He got Saul, the killer of Christians, the greatest Pharisee of Pharisees. He makes him the greatest Christian evangelist who ever lived. God chooses people you might not expect. That is going to be the point of my message today: that we are in some pretty good company, a better company than you and I could ever hope to be with before we got saved, that is for sure. Because He chose you and He chose me. If there is anything we all have in common, it is that we all answered that call. We answered the call, and that is where I am going to be today.

Let us look in 1 Corinthians chapter 1. I am going to be in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 today. Good news is, you are probably going to get out of here earlier than you think, unless you do not amen me a lot, and I am going to go long. Amen. Yeah, I know.

Let us go to the Lord in prayer first while we are here. Father, we just thank You and praise You for Your Son, Jesus. Lord, thank You for allowing us to come together today to open up Your Word so freely and so comfortably that we can hear in America today. Even in these days when it is getting a little bit harder, it is still a lot easier here than about anywhere else in the world. Lord, I pray that our hearts and minds would be open to hear what You would have to say today, that I would not be an obstacle for what You might have to say to Your people here today. We pray for our pastor and his family as they are traveling, that they would have a good, comforting, and restful time and return safely to us. Lord and Father, the words that we would hear today, we pray that You would apply them to our heart and that we would not just hear those words, Lord, but we would do those words. We would live those words, and then so let our light shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

## I. The Foolishness of God and the Wisdom of Men

So I am going to read this passage starting in chapter one, verse 18 and ending in verse 31.

*1 Corinthians 1:18-31*

*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.*

*For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.*

*Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*

*For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*

*For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:*

*But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;*

*But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

*Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

*For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:*

*But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;*

*And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:*

*That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:*

*That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

## II. Pride and Misguided Ministry in the Church

In this chapter, Paul is writing to what you would consider a bad church. It is a church that needed correction. It is a hot mess of a church. I would venture to say though that they probably had a fire and zeal that might be unrecognizable to us. I mean, as bad as they were, it cost them something to be a Christian back then. They are getting killed, they are getting slaughtered.

Rome is not real happy with Christianity at this point. But Paul is calling them out anyways, and they are doing some strange things. They are arguing about who they were baptized by, literally.

I mean, we have a baptism coming up in two weeks now, and "Who baptized you?" "Oh really? Well, I was baptized by Apollos. I am sorry you had to go with Danny. Not everybody can get Bob." "Well, Danny did me." "Oh, well, Danny, he is the best baptizer." The conversation sounds stupid, does it not? It is just, "I am of Apollos. I am of Cephas. I am of this guy." Really? Really? They say ridiculous things. It is kind of stupid. Bob does not like stupid. He says it a lot though. He does. They say the strangest things there. They might have said things like this: "You do not lead an accountability group. I am on my fifth one. Look at me." "How come you are not teaching a small group study?" "Oh, someone so never disciples anybody." "Why are you not doing this? Why are you not doing that?" Is not this weird?

Those people in Corinth were a hot mess, and the best they could come up with was not what they were doing, but who did it for them or who was it? It is always about someone else. It is easy to look at these people and decide they are not doing what we think they are supposed to do. Never consider that they might have a whole life of ministry that you are completely unaware of. We see each other on Sundays, Thursdays, so two-sevenths of a week. We do not really see each other that much. There are a whole lot of things going on, folks, that we do not know about. We tend to look after the flesh. God tends to look after the heart.

But this is what these guys in Corinth were doing. They were doing this weird thing, trying to separate themselves not by doing something right, but by associating themselves with something that they considered more right than somebody else. Sometimes there is a valid observation that so-and-so is not doing their part in a church, but those are really obvious. We tend to take that to the next level and try to expand our junior power of discernment ring powers as we go along in life, discerning the hearts and minds of men and women that have been serving God longer than some of us have been alive. I mean, that is odd, do you not think it is odd? That is what the Corinthian church was doing.

We tend to pick the ministries that we think are important, and we say, "Well, this ministry is of Paul. This ministry is of Cephas. This ministry is of Apollos. This ministry is of Bob Alexander. This ministry is of Dan Kanika. This ministry is of Bob Gregg." It is all a hot mess. That would be a hot mess, and we should not do that. Paul is dealing with a lot of things in this church, but the number one mean old adversary, and I will use this phrase, of ninety-nine percent of all Christians is pride. Paul is dealing with a pride problem in the church in Corinth.

I love that phrase, "ninety-nine percent." I love it because I am in the one. I am in the one percent. It makes me feel special. Everybody wants to feel special. You know what? I did math. I hate math. The only thing that keeps me going to work—I am an engineer—the only thing that keeps me going there is I know I will never have to do a differential equation. I do not have to. I am the boss now. I pay people to do that. But I did some math, and I looked up some information. There were 312 million people in the U.S. as of 2014. There are 150 million that identify as Protestant. Forget those. 33 million people identify as Baptist of some sort. 33 million Baptists, and I am using air quotes, "Baptists." So you take that 33 million people who go to a

Baptist church every three Sundays. There are 128,000 Baptist churches in the United States right now. The average size of a Baptist church is 257 people. That is the average, not the mean. The mean is somewhere around 180. So if you think about a church size of 180, that means half the churches are bigger and half the churches are smaller. But let us just go with the average. That is 257 people in a church. One percent of that is 2.57 people. Look around. Look around. You are probably not the one percent. There is a good chance. Let us just say that we have got ten percent. That is twenty-five people. Sorry. This one percent is so rare that you probably do not know who it is.

I say that so we are special. Look, I am not saying we are not special. We are ten thousand times better than the next church I have ever been to, ten thousand times. But we ought to try hard. Do not hide in that one percent because there is a good chance it is not me. There is a good chance it is not you. You need to try harder. There is only, you know why it is so rare? Because it is rare. It is just a rare thing.

### III. God's Choice: The Foolish, Weak, and Base

Paul is dealing with this pride problem, and now in verse 26 is really the focus of the message today. God does something that we ought to take notice. He repeats Himself because we all tend to think that we are important, and we are. But let us not get too big for our britches. Look in verse 26. He says this thing three times in verse 26.

*1 Corinthians 1:26*

*For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:*

"Not many." There are not many special. There are not that many. That phrase is used nine times in the New Testament, three times in this one verse. He is trying to get our attention here and tell us something. There is a reason for everything in the Bible. But one thing seems clear to me in this passage: there are many people who are available, but they are not always who we think they are. We look around and we make judgments about someone by what they look like, or what they do for a living, or how much money they make, or how tall they are, or how good looking they are, or how good they can sing. Not everyone running around saying, "Look at me, watch me serve, listen to me, obey me," are those who are called. Some are called. Not many. Not many.

I do not mean they are not called to salvation. We are all called to salvation. We are all called to ministry, but we are not all called to every ministry that there is. We are called to the ministry that we are called to. "You know your calling," it says there in verse 26. "For ye see your calling." I will get to that later. There is a calling. I am saying that just because there is a ministry and we happen to be in it does not necessarily mean that you or I actually are supposed to be in that ministry, like my friend. He was called out. I believe him. I believe that man. That man has never done me wrong a day in his life. He has done nothing but good for me all his days, and he got called out of the ministry. I was shocked to the core of my being when that happened, but I believe him. He got called out of that ministry, and he got out because he obeyed God. He obeyed when he got in. He obeyed when he got out.

There is not a single ministry in this church that is wrong. Please do not. "Hey Bob, you cannot believe what Bob Gregg said on Sunday." No, there is not a single ministry in this church that is wrong. There is nothing wrong with our ministry philosophy. It is one hundred percent perfect as far as I am concerned. But how many of you are called to every ministry in this church? Do not raise your hands because you are not. Do not raise your hands. How many of you are mighty and wise and noble? Do not raise your hands. One percent. It is a very small amount. 2.7 people. So I am one. So at least 1.57 people left. There are just not a lot to come around. Sorry, guys. Sorry. Sorry. Just think about it. The simple fact is that you are not called to every single ministry in this church. That is between you and God. Get in. When God tells you to get in, get in. If God tells you to get out, get out.

So you see your calling, brethren. There is no doubt that every one of us has been called to ministry. But do you see your calling? If you are in touch with the Holy Spirit of God and you are in your Bible daily, and you know what is going on, and you have been here for a while—Bob says five years or so—you ought to know what your calling is, and you ought to be in it. You chew on it like a dog with a bone, and you never get out. Never get out unless God tells you. Do not let anybody tell you to get out. I mean, people after I preach, people tell me all the time, "Bob, you need to get out." Do not do it. I know. I know. I hear it a lot. Hear it a lot. But for you see your calling, brethren, are you even looking for it? You should be looking for it. Five, six years out. In this church, two or three years in, you ought to be looking for your calling. Seriously, guys.

We get teaching like, if you have ever been to another church, you would have to know what it is like to not get fed. You would have to know. You have to feed yourself. We look for ministry and ministers in the weirdest places, do we not? I call it the Saul principle. We look for the tallest, coolest, smartest guy that can sing better than everybody else, and we say they are the ministry heads, right? That is not real. That is wise after the flesh. That is not what God is looking for. The point I am trying to make here is we may not even know what ministers look like in God's eyes. We should. We should do a study. We did a study in our accountability groups on leadership about a year or two ago. That was a good idea, right? What does a leader look like? He does not always look like what you think because we think differently than God.

We say things like, "You know, if only so-and-so would get a hold of God, he would really change the world." I will not. The world is not going to change. This church, you get on fire. We really reach the world for Christ. Problem is, many are called, but few answer that call. The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few. There is a whole lot of work to be done. There is not a whole lot of people doing the work. It is not always the people you think that are doing the work that are doing the work. They are looking in the wrong places.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12:10,

*2 Corinthians 12:10*

*Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

That is a great leadership quality. Infirmities and reproaches and necessities and persecutions and distresses for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. That is like the antithesis of leadership training book 101 as far as the world thinks of things. But you and I tend to look after the flesh. God looks at the heart. He sees things differently than we do because His ways are not our ways.

You look in verse 25:

*1 Corinthians 1:25*

*Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

God's foolishness beats man's wisdom every time. God's weakness beats man's strength. It is opposite world. You cannot think like we think; you think like God. It is different. It is like telling me that an ace beats a king. I hear there are people that gamble out there. I know they are sinners. They say an ace beats a king. I would not know any difference. That does not make sense. It is the opposite, right? Ace always beats king, except when it comes to the wisdom of God. The wisdom of the world is not the same.

*1 Corinthians 4:10*

*We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.*

I looked it up too. I looked at the Greek and Hebrew just to make sure it does not say, "make an idiot of yourself." No, I am kidding. God's ways are higher than our ways. He sees things differently than we do. When we grab that junior power of discernment ring and run around discerning the hearts and minds of people, I think He does not like that. We ought to stop. We ought to just stop it. I have no specific examples. I am just saying if you are like me, you might tend to look at other people and make judgments of them. Maybe that is not you. Maybe it is just me. Because there is only one junior power of discernment ring in this room.

We start looking around at people in our wisdom and our strength, and we do not make fools of ourselves for Christ's sake. We make idiots out of ourselves for our own sake. We ought to stop that. That is not something brethren ought to do. That is not something that we want to show up at the judgment seat of Christ and say, "Yep, I was real harsh on people. I was real hard on them. I was judging them all the time. I never gave them a chance. I certainly never gave them a second chance. God, I was real hard on them." How about that? I do not think that would get us too far. Our wisdom tells us what we think about others, right? God's wisdom tells us what He thinks about us. I would rather have God's wisdom than mine because I get no satisfaction out of mine. If I declare you an idiot, I get no satisfaction out of that. If God shows me who I am in His eyes, I can get satisfaction out of that.

Look at verse 26. "Not many wise after the flesh. Not many," right? He says, "some, some, not many." You do not see Albert Einstein out there glorifying God. You do not see Stephen Hawking out there glorifying God. You do not see Neil Tyson deGrasse out there glorifying God.

These are some of the smartest men that ever lived according to the world, and they were smart. They are intelligent, but they did not answer that call. Many were called. Not many answered that call. So when you hear the roll call up yonder, you will not hear Neil Tyson deGrasse's name. Maybe you will. Maybe if he gets saved, you will. Maybe not.

So you look through history, some of the greatest preachers and most effective Christians that ever lived were not all that bright, not all that highly educated, and not all that well placed socially either. I mean, you think about it, Moses was not all that smart. I always thought he was kind of dull. I mean, he was kind of a dullard. If you really look at him, he kills a guy, buries him in the sand, and there are witnesses. All right. Well, all right. Everybody knows when you kill a guy, you do not need witnesses. I mean, come on. But he could not talk. In his own account, he could not talk, right? "I am not eloquent in the speech." I got a verse later on. He could not talk. He could not put together a message to get himself out of a wet paper sack with it when God called him, but he answered the call. He answered the call.

Now, how many of us have been sitting in our accountability groups over the last three years looking down our long, devout, super Christian noses at people that cannot put together a message? That should not be. That just should not be. Some guy or some gal in your accountability group has trouble putting together a message. Sit down with them and help them put together a message. Show them how to do it. Earn your seat, man. That should not be. That should be to our shame. That should be to our shame.

*Exodus 4:10*

*And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.*

Moses, a slow-witted, tongue-tied man, was called. And he answered that call. There are not many wise folks. He was not all that bright. Ask his wife, "How are the bloody husbands?" He did not stay that way. He was called to ministry before he ever got speaking ability. He was called to ministry while he was kind of a dullard. He was not all that bright, but he answered the call. But do not think Moses spent six weeks in an Old Paths Baptist Church, got a bunch of notes in his Bible, and ran off into ministry. That is not how it worked. He spent some time. He was called. So are you.

D.L. Moody. He never went to university. He got a university named after him, and I am not plugging Bible college. I am not saying anything good or bad about it, but he has got a Bible college named after him. He never went to university. I would say he reached a few sinners in his day. I would say that. He was not well-placed socially. He was not well educated. He was just a guy that got called by God, decided to glorify God, and so let his light shine before men so that they would see his good works and glorify his Father in heaven. That is all. That is all he did. That seems pretty easy. You have all been called. Some of you might be too wise for that. I do not know.

God did not call many mighty people either. Look in verse 26 again, "not many mighty." But our idea of mighty and God's are not exactly the same. I mean, David. David was a mighty man, not

when he was called. He was a shepherd boy, out tending his father's sheep. That is all he was. He was the youngest son of the family out there tending his father's sheep. He was nobody when he was called, except in God's eyes, and he answered that call. Samuel, again, Samuel was a mighty man, but not when he was called. He was a little boy when he was called. Joshua was just a humble servant. He just did what he was told. He believed God. He was faithful. He believed what he was told. He did what he was told, and then he becomes a great leader of Israel, but not when he was called. He was just nothing. He was nothing.

My favorite is this. In Judges 11:1, this guy named Jephthah the Gilead, the Bible calls him a mighty man of valor. But he started out as the son of a harlot. That was his beginnings, the son of a harlot. So when someone comes along and says, "Well, you are just a small count, no count, no good, no life, nothing. You got no background. Who are you?" "I am mighty. I am noble. I am wise." You remember Jephthah the Gilead. He is nothing more than a son of a harlot. That is all he was.

What the world needs today more than anything is not a bunch of mighty men running around with their King James Bibles full of notes. What they need is a slow, dim-witted, tongue-tied son of a harlot who is called by God. What did you think I was going to say? They were called by God. They answered that call and went out and so let their light shine before men so that their Father could be glorified. That is all they were. God loved that harlot, son of a harlot. Did you ever consider that church is a type of a Gentile woman with a less than stellar reputation? Call it a Gentile woman of ill repute, a harlot. It is a type. We are not faithful to our husband, are we? I do not think so. Not all the time. Sometimes. But even one time makes you unfaithful. So think about it. Jephthah the Gilead, son of a harlot, was called in our Bible a mighty man. That is a pretty big deal.

These people that we read about most of the time, these great stories that we read about in the Bible, they were nobodies. In the later years, they were mostly slaughtered for what they believed and what they did, and they were nobodies. Think about it. Two thousand and some odd years ago, a homeless guy, a few fishermen, a tax collector, a Pharisee, and a physician turned the world upside down. Twelve guys turned the world upside down 2,000 years ago. They did not have a King James Bible yet. They turned the world upside down, and they were mostly nobodies. There was only one mighty Pharisee in there. There was only one highly educated doctor. I guess if you are going for nobility, the tax collector, I do not know. But literally these guys were homeless guys. They went around, they turned the world upside down. Not many mighty are called. God does not need the mighty to get His work done. He uses fishermen, small business owners, humble servants of God, sons of harlots, me and you, to get His work done. He wants to be glorified. He wants to have fellowship. I do not know why. It does not make any sense, but I think it is true.

God did not call many noble there in verse 26. Again, He says, "not many noble." He calls some, not many. I looked, I searched this out. I could not find a single one really. I mean, He did not set up Pharaoh. He did not set up Herod. He did not set up Pontius Pilate. He did not set up Barack Obama. He did not set up George Bush. I cannot figure who He set up to glorify Him. I know He gets the glory out of everything. He called a homeless man, fisherman, Pharisee, you, me,

Gentile women of ill repute. That is who He calls. It is God's wisdom, not our wisdom, guys. He just, He picked us for whatever reason. He calls that lowly man or woman who one day they see in their desperation and realize how low and bad they are. They call on the name of the Lord. He gives them a charge. He gives them a plan. He sets them up in a local church. He gives them instruction, and they answer that call. When they answer that call, He starts giving them tools to do everything they need to do. That is all. That is how it works.

He calls you. You see your calling. He calls you into ministry. It is not someone that someone tells you that you are in. "You are not in this ministry. You need to be in this. You need to be in that." I just do not, that is not how it works. I thought the Holy Spirit guided me in all truth, not you. I missed that memo. But for some reason, somewhere between the day we realize how low we are and the day we have got 1,700 notes in our Bible, we are out there discerning the hearts and minds of men, and we think we are mighty and wise and noble suddenly. I do not know about you, but I am not mighty, wise, or noble. I know who I am. I know who I am.

#### IV. Worldly Wisdom vs. God's Wisdom

Look at verse 27. This is God throwing some irony our way.

*1 Corinthians 1:27*

*But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;*

The foolish confounds the wise. As I was going through this part of the message, I thought to myself, if there was one thing I could get, not be scared to death to get it, be patient. Never pray for patience. If you pray for patience, watch what happens to you. Bad things happen to you. You guys say, "Oh, okay." Never pray for justice because you do not want that. Trust me, you do not want justice.

But I watch people, and I always have, I always will. As I say, I am as guilty as anybody, guys. I am not telling you something that you probably do not even know about me or yourselves. I tend to observe people, and I characterize them. I mostly get it right, but sometimes I get it wrong. I will usually identify someone as a fool or wise right off the bat. I realize, look, I am old. I am old. I get it. I am crusty. I get that. I will look at a guy or a gal there 10,000 years ahead of where I was when I was their age. I mean, you have no idea. Look, sometime ask me, I will tell you, you do not know how bad it was. And they irritate me. So I do what any good super Christian does. I try to irritate them back. I say things like, "Well, I was once where you were, but I grew up. I grew past all that." I can say this because it is me. I can say it because it is me.

I got a few notes in my Bible. Pastor gave me some work to do. I think I was saved for about six or seven days, and I got my junior power discernment ring. I was out there discerning the hearts and minds of all these guys who have been serving God longer than me. I get it. When they did not do it my own special way, boom, "You are a fool." Boom. "You are full of, you are not doing it my way. You are a fool." Okay, cool. But you know what? I was once like you. I grew out of that. No, I get it. I understand it. I can say, because that was me. When I got saved, I got a hold of

my Bible, and I got a hold of the same teaching we are getting here now. It was dangerous for me because suddenly I had all these tools in my toolbox, and I did not know how to use them.

Now give a guy a chainsaw. He does not know how to use a chainsaw. Give it to a four-year-old. Tell him how to start it. Now let him just go nuts with that thing. That chainsaw, there is nothing wrong with that chainsaw. There is something wrong with a guy with a bunch of doctrine in him that does not know how to use it. That was me as a young Christian, running out there discerning the hearts and minds. I had a chainsaw. I had little air guns to shoot nails. Nothing wrong with them nails, but I was throwing them all over the place. I get it. I get it. Patience, patience.

We have this phrase, "You got educated beyond their intellect." That is a true statement. As true as any other statement is, it does not just apply to the worldly education system, folks. It can happen in a Bible environment. You can get educated beyond your intelligence and get a toolbox full of tools that you have no idea how to use, and you are doing damage with those tools. Now I always say this, it is good. Count all the people you led to the Lord. Also keep a list of the people you drove away. Because someday I think you are going to see them at the judgment seat of Christ, not at the judgment seat. You are going to see them at the great white throne judgment, and there will be people that you were the one that was supposed to light them up. You, you were the light that led every man that comes into the world. You were that one person's one chance. That is all God promises is one chance. That was your opportunity, and you blew it. Imagine them looking at you as they march off to hell and saying, "Why did you do that?" They are still going to hell. That was kind of on you, is it not? You have got to watch out what you are doing with your tools. Patience, patience, Bob.

Foolish things confound the wise. I get confounded all the time because I am not wise. So it confounds me even more, but wisdom surely confounds a fool. You just try telling a young Christian, "Show me how to be patient." Just tell me, somebody take me aside after this is over and tell me how to do this. Tell me how to go to a young Christian like me who got a hold of these tools, does not know how to use them after my 6.2 hours of Bible study, running around, discerning the heart and minds of men and women that have been serving longer than I have been alive. How do you do that? How do you tell them that these guys know that the antichrist is a left-handed Jew that lives in Leawood, works at Sprint, drives a Cadillac? They know, they know all these things, but you just try telling them they know some truth, but not all truth. Tell me how to do it.

The foolish things confound the wise. Wisdom in a biblical sense is good, but when you become wise beyond your education as a Bible believer, you could fall into the same category as that fool that gets educated beyond his intelligence outside the Bible. You have got highly educated people. I have talked to them. My dad is one of them. He believes in physics, biology. I had this, it was not my dad. I had this little punk once. Tell you what, some of you know him. He is a punk, and he was trying to debate Christianity with me. He says, "Well, I believe in physics, biology, the multiverse." He knew, I think he was like a second-year college student. I said, "Oh, I was where you were once, but I do not agree with that." So I did what I did, what I, you know, devout Christians do. The wise will come at you and try to outsmart you with their wisdom. They

will do that in the worldly sense. They will do it in a Bible sense too, but the simplest things like Christ died for your sins and He is coming again, they choke on that.

*Matthew 23:24*

*Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.*

Well, that is Christians too. Sometimes just, just someone tell me how to be patient with that. God is a God of simplicity, and people want to make God's Word, God's plan complicated. They want to make it special. We all want to be specialists. That one percent thing. Now there are 1.7 of you that can join me in the club later on. It is, it is, the odds just seem to dictate that we are not that special.

The mighty are confounded by the weak. Verse 27 says, "the weak things confound the mighty." To be confounded means to be confused or bewildered. Webster's used to define it as damned. They have a phrase in there, "That is a confounded lie." That is an odd thing. God is a master of irony. He confounds the wise with foolish things that children can grasp. He confounds the mighty with the weak things of the world. You take America in the 18th century, England was the most powerful country on the planet. This little speck of a nothing had nothing more than the Word of God behind them and somehow managed to prevail against it. I know we left God's Word a long time ago, but when we had it, we confounded England. We confounded them. Our country started leaving God's Word a long time ago. Now we are being confounded. The mighty are being confounded by the weak. We are being confounded by these little third world countries around the world. Why? Well, we left God's Word.

The mighty are confounded by the weak. You see this principle all around the world throughout history where God's people are weak and persecuted. We grow like weeds. When we are strong and safe, we do what we do. What is worse is that many Christians are sleeping right now, and they are dreaming that they are actually doing the right things. We are asleep.

*Romans 13:11*

*And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.*

God confounds the wise and mighty with foolish things. That is irony. It is not just worldly wisdom and might. It can happen to us too.

Look at these noble, these noble folks in verse 28. This is a great verse.

*1 Corinthians 1:28*

*And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:*

"And the base things of the world." These base things are, it is really an insult by today's standard, the base things. It is just simple, despicable, contemptible, inferior. The base things are the lowest things. They are the everyday low common man like, I do not know, David, Samuel, Joshua, Moses, Abraham. Just the regular base people, the lowest. Nobility assumes greatness

because of what they have and who they think they are. The base people acquire greatness because of who we are in God's eyes and what He has given us.

Saul was that king that the Jews wanted because of what he had. He was tall. He was from a good family. He was strong. He was everything they thought a king ought to be. God says, "How about this little shepherd boy over here, David?" He was base, a lowly shepherd tending his father's sheep. You want to know who the nobility among us are? There are people who tell us how great they are by telling you how bad you are. That is the nobility. There is the example of the noble are brought low by the base things. You look at those people and say, "Really? That is how you are going to build yourself up? You are going to build yourself up by tearing me down?" I think that is out of the pit of hell, guys. I think it is wrong. That word, "nobles," is only used seven times in the entire Bible. There are not many noble.

It is easy. We all want to be part of that one percent. We all want to be special. "I am noble. I am mighty. I am wise." Well, okay. You might be. If you are that way in a biblical sense, great. But the noble among us, it is a slam. This is irony. The noble among us are people who tear down others to build themselves up rather than building themselves and those around them up. I think the best thing you can do is be in a room that is smarter than you. If I am the smartest guy in the room, we are in a lot of trouble. This is no way. I hire people at work who are smarter than me because I will never be smarter than me. If I am of Paul, I will never be smarter than Paul. If I am of Apollos, I will never be better than Apollos. If I am of Bob Alexander, I will never be better than Bob. But altogether, we have something bigger than all of those things.

The greatest Christian who ever lived described himself as base.

*2 Corinthians 10:1*

*Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you.*

He is the greatest Christian I could ever think of. He described himself as base and meek and gentle. If you think base, meek, and gentle means mealy-mouthed and sissy-like, you probably got it wrong. Christ is described as gentle and meek. Gentleness and meekness are both fruit of the Spirit. So if that is sissy and mealy-mouthed to you, cool, but it is not. The noble among us are not what they would have us think they are. There are not too many of them anyway, so that is probably good.

Look at verse 28. It says, "things which are not bring to nought the things that are." If you want to get in an argument quickly with a wise, noble, mighty man or woman, challenge them on where they will spend eternity. That is probably not the opening line I want to try with my dad. "Hey, hey, Dad, you are going to hell. What do you want to talk about now?" It is not going to work. A word fitly spoken, right? There is a time and a way to say something to somebody. The wise will just start to impress you with their intellect. He has done this. Now, I cannot give this take to my dad. Oh, well. He has heard it all before. "Well, I believe in physics, mathematics, cosmology. It just proves the Bible is wrong." Okay. "Have you ever read the Bible?" "No."

"Okay. Interesting. I have read that book that you are talking about. You have not read my book, so that is cool." Most of them do not know much about that subject.

But when you approach one of us, one of the wise, mighty, noble ones among us, they will try to do the same thing by impressing you with how many Bible verses they might be able to quote out of context, to defend whatever they are doing. We can defend anything. The noble among us will defend anything, and they will tear you down in the process. They will be a scorner. A scorner will take their sin and turn it into your shame. When you approach someone about a sin and they turn their sin into your shame, "Well, you do it too," then you know what you have run into: a noble scorner. They will say things like this, what they have done with their own might. "Everything I have, God gave me." I used to say this. No. "Everything I have, I did. I did that, right?" I do not suppose Satan could have given me a job or a house or a car or money. Satan cannot do that, right? I suppose Satan probably could. If that does not get you to shut you down, they will pull their noble card on you. They will pull the status card and, "Well, I am of great social status, and you are just a son of a harlot." Okay. Well, I can handle that because Jephthah the Gilead is a mighty man, and God said that. So I will go with what God said over what you tell me every time.

*Romans 1:20*

*For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

Even the invisible things bring nobility low. You just look around. The wise and the powerful men and women and the noble will all be brought to conviction that they are on just by looking around. I love this play on words there. It says, "The things which are not, n-o-t, bring to nought, n-o-u-g-h-t, things that are." Things that are not even there can take down the noble and the wise and the mighty among us. Things that you just look at.

Now, challenge a brother or sister in Christ on whether they are really in the ministries they are supposed to be in. Do not try this at home. Do not go do it. But you see that phrase before, "you see your calling"? You did not see my calling. I might be able to tell you about my calling, but you did not see it. Me and the Holy Spirit were alone one day, and the Holy Spirit showed me out of the Scriptures what my calling was in life. It was not to certain things, and it was to other things. That is a very personal thing between me and the Holy Spirit. I do not know where you come into that equation. See what I am saying? Where am I to tell you what you ought to be doing for God? I do not get that. I cannot find it in the Bible.

Biblical status, nobility, if you call it that, comes from one thing, and that is from glorifying God. In verse 29 says, "that no flesh should glory in his presence." If there is one thing I notice about Christianity from the day I became engaged is that people are seeking status in a church, and they ought not. There should not be a status in the church. It is like a pecking order in a chicken coop, for crying out loud. You read about that in biology class, right? There is a pecking order. There is always the one chicken that does not get pecked, and then anybody else gets pecked behind it. There is a pecking order. It is because we bring worldly wisdom into a church with us.

Remember that guy Abraham that had a hard time leaving the things of the world behind? I do not think we are that much different, but we ought to be. We ought to try to be. I think we bring that worldly wisdom in with us, and there is no place for that in a church because God is the only one at the top of that. There is only one pecking order, and it is all God. The rest of us can peck each other all you want. It will not matter.

There is a reason God calls us lowly, tongue-tied nobodies, and that is where we should know. We know it is because we are not blinded by the worldly things of the world. We are supposed to leave those things behind and not bring them into our Christianity with us, because you know what we really are? We could wind up being like those folks in Revelation chapter 3.

*Revelation 3:17*

*Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

You really ought to take a look at who we are, examine our own selves, whether we be in the faith or out of the faith. Quit looking at me, man. I have got my own problems. At the judgment seat of Christ, if we threw all of our sin in the middle of the room, I am probably going to try to get my own out of there. I do not want yours. You do not want mine. Let us just forget all that stuff. Think about who you are, not who I am, not who He is. Think about what you are doing, not what I am doing, or what He is doing, or what She is doing. Your personal relationship with Jesus Christ should be telling you what you should be doing, and you should be glorifying God through that. Get out of my Holy Spirit business. I have got my own. I have got my own.

Look at verse 30.

*1 Corinthians 1:30*

*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:*

The wise want knowledge. The mighty want power. The noble want status. Those are all nice, worldly things, and I sure like them when I get them. I still have flesh. Do not get me wrong. I get them. But those of us who are low and weak and base instead get wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ. It is kind of a better deal. It just takes a longer time to get that gratification, and we like instant gratification. We get all knowledge, all power, and all status as children of God, joint heirs of salvation.

Now, think about it. Again, if you are a Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or Bob Gregg, or Bob Alexander, or Dan Kanika, or Zach, you will never be more than that. I am of God. I want to be of God. If my glory is in the Lord, there is no limit to what I can be. If I could just remember that when I am getting irritated by a young Christian and try to irritate him back instead of being a grown-up like I am supposed to be, I will glorify my Father in heaven too.

It says in verse 31,

*1 Corinthians 1:31*

*That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

All of us have been called, but not all of us answered that call. All of us are called, but not to everything out there. He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and some teachers, and some hot dog cookers, and some clothes handers-outers, and some... Some. Not all. He called some of us to do that. Not all of us. "Yeah, but pastor beats teacher. Deacon beats door greeter." Does it? "Mom beats dad." Everybody wants to be one percent. Everybody wants to be one percent. There is not enough room for one percent, guys. There is just not enough room for all of us to be that.

I would rather be the low, tongue-tied son of a harlot, nobody, that God got a hold of one day and says, "Bob, do this," and I will go do that. I cannot do a whole lot of things. I have a hard time doing the things that I am supposed to do, and I get distracted. I see shiny stuff. I am like, "Oh, shiny stuff. I want to do that." I have a hard enough time doing what God told me to do, let alone trying to tell you what you are supposed to do with your life. It should be the same with all of us. I do not see how you would have enough time.

Verse 28 and 29 say,

*1 Corinthians 1:28-29*

*And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:*

*That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

So where in the world do we get the idea that one thing is better than another? There is a phrase, "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye are all builded together for inhabitation of God through the Spirit." Have you ever seen a church without a pastor? Have you ever seen a pastor but no flock? How about a deacon with no ministry? How about a homeless guy without a homeless ministry? How about someone that needs to be saved without an evangelist? Which one of those is better? I cannot place my finger on which one of those is more important, but we want status. "Oh, I want to be in charge. I am the head deacon in charge of bloviating." I do not know what I am. You know where it came from? It came somewhere else. It did not come from heaven. It came from the pit of hell.

We are all given what we need to perform the work that God wants us personally to do. We do not have enough time to discern the hearts and minds and thoughts of other men and women and tell them what they are supposed to do. We are not doing what we are supposed to do. I will tell you what, when you have done everything God wants done and you have done it the way God wants it done, you have got some spare time, come and help me. Before that happens, let us focus on our own selves. Let us examine our own selves, whether we be in the faith or out of the faith, and then go do what God tells us to do. We are all given what we need to perform what God wants us to be. It might not be as a pastor. It might not be as a teacher. It might not be as a song leader. God told you to do it forever and never stop until God tells you to stop. But do not stop because someone tells you to. Who are they? Do not start because someone tells you to unless God also confirms that.

We all have a purpose to glorify God and have all of our glory be in the Lord. We do that through the ministries of this church. You cannot do it outside of a local church. So if you are not part of a local church, do not run around thinking you can do it. It is not God's plan. God's plan is a local church. It might not be this local church, but it is going to be a local church somewhere. You do these things by doing what God says. You do it by raising your children to serve and fear and follow God. You do it by honoring your parents, loving your children, loving your spouses. You love the people we minister to, those homeless folks we minister to. You do it by loving God first, and then God will sort out the results. You do not have to be powerful, popular, strong, wealthy people. It is not who God calls. Abraham, David, Samuel. I think the only popular strong guy He picked—well, He did not pick them at all. That is a great example of someone that you are not supposed to be. He calls some, but not many. There is a reason for this. I told you you are going to get out of here a little early. Not much, a little bit.

## V. The Still Small Voice

There is a story in 1 Kings that I love. It is just a great story for me, because when God works, I want to see fanfare, earthquake, fire, smoke, mirrors. "Hey, there is a church in Overland Park." How is that? I could go there. Oh, well. So, look in 1 Kings, chapter 19. There is a great story there. It is a great story, because I want that fanfare. I want the big ta-da moments, and I want the lights to come on, and I just want big things to happen. But it is not how it works. The mighty and the wise and the noble among us. There are just not too many of them. Maybe none of us are them. Maybe that is good. I do not know.

But in chapter 19, verse 11, there is this story.

*1 Kings 19:11-12*

*And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake:*

*And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.*

That is really the antithesis of what my worldly wisdom says ought to be going on when we are doing God's work. A still small voice. That is all we have got to be, is a still small voice. It can cut through any trouble that comes our way. It can reach any lost person with the gospel. It can solve every problem. It does not require fanfare or trumpets or thunder. That still small voice can solve any marital problem. It can fix any child-rearing issue. It can solve any dispute among the brethren, folks, but you have got to use that still small voice to the person you are having a dispute with. What we like to do is, "I am mad at you, so I tell him why I am mad at you." And he will tell someone else, and he will tell someone else, and you will never know about it, and I will stay mad. That is how it works today. A still small voice.

Worldly power and prestige is more of an obstacle than a help. Pride, pride, pride, pride, pride. He called some wise, some noble, some mighty, but not many. Status does not count. All He sees is the heart. That is all He sees is the heart. Thank God. That is all He sees is the heart. In fact, quit looking at people and what they are doing, and look at what you are doing, and do it for God. When you want to know whether someone else is doing what God wants them to do, you can find that out too. It is easy.

*Matthew 7:20*

*Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*

See their fruit. You do not have to ask them a question. You do not have to interrogate them. You do not have to put your junior power of discernment ring on. You have got to look at their life and see what is going on in their life. How can you deny a family who is together, children that are right, husbands and wives that love each other? How can you deny that they are not ministering before the Lord? How do you deny that fruit? You cannot deny that fruit.

*Matthew 7:20*

*Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved is the power of God. Christ died for our sins only through accepting Him as our Savior. Can we glorify the Lord? If you are not saved, you cannot glorify the Lord. No, I am not giving an invitation. Stop counting the people you led to God. Start keeping track of the people you drove away. Man, I will tell you what, that is going to be a horrifying thing, is it not? Think about it. Think about that one guy, that one lady. Oh, that is not going to be good.

Take a moment. Are you where God wants you to be? Are you in the ministry God wants you in? Are you doing that ministry the way God wants you to do it? If you are not, you can change that. You can either figure out you are in the right ministry, you are doing it wrong, start doing it right, or you are in the wrong ministry and get out. I have seen men in the pulpit that should not have been there, and I have seen the damage that they have done, but they believed they were called to that ministry. It was not even close. They were not even close. It was terrible.

Are you building yourself up in the Lord? Are you tearing others down? That is fun, is it not? I like it. I like it because I am not patient. Are you really that mighty? Are you really that wise? Are you really that noble? Really? I mean, in God's eyes, are you that mighty and noble? You might have me fooled. That is just an old fool. I am just an old idiot. You can fool me. I will believe you. No, I will not. The fall from self-righteous indignation is a very painful slide, and none of you wants to feel that. You just do not. There are not that many wise, not that many noble.

What does God truly want you to do? Find it out. Do that. Never stop. Chew on it like a dog with a bone, and never, ever, ever get out unless God tells you to. Whatever people think about it, that is really not important. Consult with the pastor, of course, obviously, but you and the Holy Spirit have got to get a hold of each other and figure out what you are supposed to do. He gave some

apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, some teachers. Figure that out. Get into the right ministry. Do the right things. God will bless that. If you are glorifying God, your glory will be in the Lord, and people will know it. You want to be thought of as somebody in the Lord? Do what God wants, and people cannot help but notice that. Or you can hide inside the one percent. Let me know how that works for you. That will be all today.

Let us pray. Father, we just thank You again for bringing us here today and letting us open up Your Word. I pray, Father, that there are not that many wise, mighty, and noble folks in here that would rest in that one percent level. We would really take stock of who we are, where we are in Your sight, and what You would have us do. I pray, Lord, that we double our efforts in all the ministries that we are in. We would all be in a ministry. I know we are all called, Lord. Every one of us are called. How many of us have answered that call? Father, I know that that is just a personal relationship between all of us and You. Lord, I pray that You would continue to give us open doors of utterance that we could reach the people that You would have reached with Your gospel and that we could save souls, we could change lives, we can serve Your people, and we could let our light so shine before men that they may see our works and glorify our Father which is in heaven. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.