

Connection to Proverbs 14:8-15

One way to define wisdom is “applied knowledge.” If knowledge is not applied, then wisdom is not had. Solomon shows us what applied knowledge looks like, and Paul shows us that this wisdom is found in the cross and not in man’s accomplishments.

Introduction/Opening

Albert Einstein is well known for his intellect. One of his most famous quotes is his definition of insanity: doing the same thing over and over while expecting a different result.

In seeking to live wisely, we must not live in man’s definition of wisdom. No matter how hard we might try, if we keep pursuing man’s wisdom and expect a different outcome, we are engaging in insanity. Instead, we need to understand God’s wisdom and determine practical ways to live in His wisdom on a daily basis. Paul helps us understand how we find God’s wisdom in the cross.

Outline

1. God’s Wisdom is Found in the Cross.
 - a) The world considers the cross—an instrument of sacrifice and shame—to be foolish. God, however, says that the message of the cross is where power is found (v. 18). We get our English word *dynamite* from the Greek word for power. The power and wisdom found in the cross is immeasurable.
 - b) Paul goes on to say that God used what the world considered to be foolish to actually show His wisdom through the message of the cross (v. 21). He also tells us that salvation is found in the message of the cross. So, what the world considered to be foolish is actually wise, and this wisdom from God has the power to save.
2. Man’s Wisdom is Found in Personal Accomplishments.
 - a) Paul quoted Isaiah 29:14 in 1 Corinthians 1:19. He tells the church at Corinth, which was a highly educated area at the time, that man’s wisdom is not going to have a favorable outcome. God will destroy man’s wisdom and set aside man’s intelligence. Both of these statements are written as future facts. This is going to happen.
 - b) The questions found in verse 20 point to where man gets his wisdom. The wise, the teacher of the law, and the debater of this age are all personal accomplishments. The way this shows itself in today’s world might sound like this: I graduated from this school; I hold this position in my firm; I have won these awards. The focus in each of these statements is “I.” God is not opposed to education, awards, or accomplishments. His opposition is found in pride that can be tied to personal accomplishments.

3. Our Response to These Truths

- a) In returning to Einstein's definition of insanity, we need not embrace man's wisdom, but rather seek to live in God's wisdom. This can be accomplished as a church and as individuals. As a church, we should follow Paul's model of preaching Christ crucified (v. 23). Paul was a highly educated man in the eyes of the world, yet he preached a simple message that was considered foolishness. His foolish message is still being studied today and exudes wisdom because it is from God.
- b) We also live in God's wisdom as individuals when we actively rely on His wisdom and strength (v. 25). This wisdom and strength is found only in a relationship with Him through the personal acceptance of the message of the cross. Yes, it might sound like foolishness. It did to those in Corinth. But, it is insanity to keep trying to earn God's favor through personal accomplishments since we will never know which accomplishment puts us over the top. Therefore, we have no peace as a result.

Conclusion

The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing (v. 18). But, it is where wisdom and strength are found (v. 25). If you have been to the cross, have a relationship with Christ, and yet find yourself trusting in personal accomplishments to get you through the day, then return to the cross today. Find hope and strength in the grace found at the cross.

If, however, you have come to realize that you are practicing the insanity of trying to earn God's favor through personal accomplishments, then let today be the day that you stop doing the same thing over and over. Let today be the day that you set aside pride and personally embrace the wisdom of God found in the message of the cross of Jesus.

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