

New Morning Magical – 8-11-20

Who is smart? Who is strong?

Let's get back to 1 Corinthians and Paul's writing in chapter 1:

18 For the word of the cross is stupidity, indeed, to those who are perishing, yet to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

People who are just living and dying without knowing the Father and Yeshua are *"those who are perishing."* You probably know some yourself; they're the ones who roll their eyes at the mere mention of Jesus in a conversation. Their faith is in science, humanism, or even atheism, but they avoid the one true God and they don't want to hear about His Son. To them, Paul says, *"the word of the cross is stupidity"*; it just can't be that everything hinges on believing in a person who we don't even know whether he even existed, let alone be the only avenue to Heaven, to God, or to a life beyond this one. These people are likely to perish and, as we'll see later on, they may just wait until what Paul calls "the consummation." We'll get more into that as we work our way through this letter to the Corinthians.

So, let's pick it up now in verse 19:

19 For it is written, I shall be destroying the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the intelligent shall I be repudiating.

Paul is quoting Isaiah 29:14 here and he's doing it from memory. Paul knew the Hebrew Old Testament well enough to draw on it when making a point like this. This quotation also points out how unimportant and impotent human wisdom and intelligence is, especially when it puffs itself up over God.

20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the discussor of this eon? Does not God make stupid the wisdom of this world?

This is like someone calling out a bully: *"Come on, show yourself, come out and fight like a man!"*

21 For since, in fact, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom knew not God,

This is a major indictment against human wisdom: *"in the [Father's] wisdom...the world through [its own] wisdom [didn't know] the Father."*

God delights, through the stupidity of the heralding, to save those who are believing,

It delights the Father to use something that looks stupid to smart, worldly people, to win to Himself those who are believing. Believing isn't stupid, but the heralding – the preaching – that looks stupid to people who aren't going to believe anyway; at least not until they humble themselves enough to hear.

22 since, in fact, Jews signs are requesting [*that is, some outward evidence that they can see and touch*], and Greeks wisdom are seeking,
23 yet we are heralding Christ crucified, to Jews, indeed, a snare, yet to the nations stupidity,

The Jews want nothing to do with Christ; He's a major snare, or stumbling block, to them. The Gentiles just think the whole story is stupid.

24 yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God,

Now here's the dividing point: "those who are called recognize the Father's power and wisdom behind the heralding of Christ.

25 for the stupidity of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. [That's pretty self-explanatory]

26 For you are observing your calling, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh; not many powerful, not many noble,

Look around you: do you see great theologians or philosophers who believe as you do? How about professors, rich people, or those with lots of initials behind their names?

27 but the stupidity of the world God chooses, that He may be disgracing the wise, and the weakness of the world God chooses, that He may be disgracing the strong,

28 and the ignoble and the contemptible things of the world God chooses, and that which is not, that He should be discarding that which is,

29 so that no flesh at all should be boasting in God's sight.

The Father deliberately chooses that which the world considers stupid to put the wise to shame. He deliberately chooses what appears as weakness, to put the strong to shame; "and

the ignoble and the contemptible things of the world God chooses” – and here’s the cherry on top: the Father knowingly chooses things that don’t even exist to throw out as worthless trash things that do exist. And why does the Father choose all these seemingly nonsensical and contradictory qualities, particularly in those whom He has called to herald the evangel of Christ? *“So that no flesh at all should be boasting in God’s sight.”* The Father sets all this up to make certain that no human being can ever take credit, because it is so obvious that no flesh could have conceived of this plan, let alone carry it out.

30 Yet you, of Him, are in Christ Jesus, Who became to us wisdom from God, besides righteousness and holiness and deliverance,
31 that, according as it is written, He who is boasting, in the Lord let him be boasting.

Paul is quoting Psalm 34:2 here:

Let me bless Yahweh in every season;
His praise is in my mouth continually.
2 In Yahweh my soul boasts;
The humble ones hear and rejoice.
3 Magnify Yahweh with me,
And let us exalt His Name together.

Throughout the Scriptures, it appears that the Father values our appreciation of Who He is. He’s completely secure in Himself, obviously, but He likes it when we recognize Him and accord Him all praise, glory and honor. He is due all these, after all, for apart from Him, there is nothing...literally nothing.

Here is the Father through Jeremiah in Chapter 9:23-24

Thus says Yahweh:
Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom,
And let not the masterful man boast in his mastery;
Let not the rich man boast in his riches,
24 But rather let the boaster boast in this:
To act intelligently and to know Me,
That I am Yahweh, working benignity [*who practices steadfast love the ESV says*],
Right judgment and justice on the earth,
For in these I delight, averring is Yahweh.

This one of those great pictures from the mouth of a prophet that shows you exactly what delights the Father. And wouldn't you agree that having Christ alive inside you makes knowing the Father so much easier, and so much more intimate than Jeremiah could imagine?

Well that concludes the first chapter of Corinthians, but Paul's theme of humility and weakness continues when we pick up the second chapter tomorrow.

Until then,

May Yahweh bless you and keep you;
May Yahweh light up His face toward you
and be gracious to you;
May Yahweh lift His face to you
and appoint peace for you.

AMEN