

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

### "CHRIST CRUCIFIED: THE POWER & WISDOM OF GOD"

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: April 2, 2023

SPEAKER: Chad/Frank

SERIES: Holy Week 2023

PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 1:17-25

## Family Dinner Table

### The Cross of Christ: Hoax or Hinge?

Yesterday was April Fools' Day, the annual celebration of hoaxes and practical jokes. No one likes being called a fool, but Christians have a long history of being called fools for their claim that Jesus was crucified and rose again the third day. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul argues that our hope hinges on the fact that the resurrection was not a hoax.

In his book, *The Cross*, author and pastor Max Lucado emphasizes the pivotal role of the cross: "It rests on the time-line of history like a compelling diamond. Its tragedy summons all sufferers. Its absurdity attracts all cynics. Its hope lures all searchers. History has idolized and despised it, gold-plated and burned it, worn and trashed it. History has done everything but ignore it. How could you ignore such a piece of lumber? Suspended on its beams is the greatest claim in history. A crucified carpenter claiming to be God on earth. Divine. Eternal. The death-slayer. Never has timber been regarded so sacred. No wonder the apostle Paul called the cross event the core of the gospel. It's bottom line sobering: if the account is true, it is history's hinge. Period. If not, the cross is history's hoax. Which is the cross for you, hinge or hoax? Or in the words of Jesus, 'Who do you say that I am?'"<sup>3</sup>

- If we truly believe that the message of the cross is the greatest power to save a world ravaged by evil and sin, how then should we live? (Romans 1:16-17, 12:9-21)
- How can we live the cruciform life, a life that is shaped by the cross? (Gal. 2:20, 5:24)

**PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS**  
PCA Mission to North America,  
denominational partner ministry  
**PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS**  
Christine, supported missionary  
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As we enter Holy Week, the traditional Palm Sunday sermon usually centers around Jesus' triumphal yet humble entry into Jerusalem, riding on the back of a donkey (See John 12:12-19). The Jews of the time expected a Messiah who would deliver them from their Roman oppressors. Instead, we see Jesus entering Jerusalem, not as a conqueror mounted on a warhorse, but as the Prince of Peace who brings salvation (Zechariah 9:9). As we look at today's passage, 1 Corinthians 1:17-25, we learn that in the upside-down Kingdom of God, the power and wisdom of God seems like folly to the world, as the Savior demonstrates honor in humility, power in weakness, and glory by his suffering and death on the cross.

### What the world pursues: eloquent wisdom & miraculous signs (vv. 17-22)

*Those who are perishing live according to the standards of human wisdom and therefore wrongly view the cross as foolishness.* From a human perspective, believing that God would become a man, live a life of poverty and suffering, and then die an ignominious death on the cross in order to save his people from their sins is madness. Even the church is not immune to falling prey to the "wisdom of the world" and unbelief. A joint study conducted by LifeWay Research and Ligonier Ministries revealed that 43 percent of American evangelicals believe that Jesus was a great teacher and nothing more.<sup>1</sup>

- In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis argued: "Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher."<sup>2</sup> How would you answer the person who says that Christ was merely a great teacher?
- Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. What reason does Paul give to us as to why God chose "what is foolish in the world to shame the wise?"
- Read the account of Paul in Athens at the Areopagus in Acts 17:22-34. Who was in the audience? What truth was a stumbling block for the crowd?

### What the church has to proclaim: God sovereignly calls sinners to faith in Christ crucified. (vs. 21-25)

*Those who are being saved live according to the standard of God's wisdom, and therefore rightly view the cross as the power and wisdom of God.* In Matthew 28:16-20, after his resurrection, Jesus announced to his followers that all authority and power had been given to him, and that he was sharing it with them in order that they could create communities—a new kind of family—ordered by Jesus' upside-down definition of power and wisdom, where the least are the greatest and the meek inherit the earth (Matthew 5:2-11). The cross rescues us for redemptive living. The cross of Christ is the new, ultimate exodus whereupon Jesus paid the price to redeem and rescue us from slavery to sin, leading us out of the darkness into the light of the freedom of God's kingdom (Colossians 1:13-14).

- Our sins are forgiven and our debt is paid. Through the cross of Christ we have new life and hope for the future. Like Israel, we have been redeemed for a purpose. We have been redeemed to live as God's kingdom people in the here and now. We are a people who have been delivered for redemptive living in this world. According to Colossians 2:6-15, how do we live redemptively?
- From our studies of the *Ten Commandments*, we learned that living redemptively involves the whole of life. We are to reflect our Redeemer to the world around us. Read Luke 6:20-38. How does Jesus characterize redemptive living?

<sup>1</sup> LifeWay Research & Ligonier Ministries. *The State of Theology: Key Findings*. <https://thestateoftheology.com/> March 28, 2023

<sup>2</sup> Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity*. 1952, London: Collins. 54-6

<sup>3</sup> Lucado, Max. *The Cross*. 1998, Multnomah Books. 5