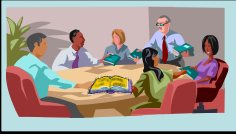

WEEK OF

June 27, 2010

SMALL GROUP

BIBLE DISCUSSION

TOPIC: Our Foolish Gospel

Sermon in a sentence: The preaching of the cross must always be the centre of everything we say and do.

Key Scriptures:
I Corinthians 1:18-30
Matthew 27: 39-43
Deuteronomy 21: 22-23

Points to Make

- One of the temptations Bible preachers have to overcome is the desire to impress their hearers with some new insight or revelation from the Word of God.
- Paul could easily have played that game, based on his background.
- He was writing to the Corinthians – a world-wise, intellectually savvy bunch, steeped in human philosophy.
- He begins with the very central theme of the gospel – the cross of Jesus Christ.
- Having the cross as the centerpiece of his message was the most foolish thing Paul could possibly do!
- This wasn't Paul's invention – this was the way God chose to bring His divine plan for human salvation into full view – through the cross.
- The gospel is bound up in the cross. As you are well aware, the word "gospel" simply means "good news".
- How could this possibly have been "good news"? It was a stumbling block to the Jews and utter foolishness to the Greeks!
- The Jews wanted a sign, but Jesus failed their test. "Come down from the cross and we'll believe You are the Son of God".
- To the Jews, the fact that Jesus could not or did not come down from the cross showed that He was *not* the Son of God as He said He was, but in fact the accursed of God!
- The Greeks had many legends and myths about gods fighting for supremacy. The thought of a god willingly giving him or herself up to be killed by a rival without a struggle was complete foolishness in their eyes.
- But Paul said – I'm not coming to you with man's wisdom. I'm talking to you about God's wisdom, which makes man's wisdom utter foolishness.
- We hear the message of the cross today and preach it with all our hearts.
- We wonder why people aren't coming in droves to receive such good news and deliverance from sin, self and Satan.
- We even wonder why so many rejected the gospel in Paul's day, even whole cities rising up against him.
- Yet today, we preach the same message: "Come to the cross". The cross is God's divine answer to all that's wrong with humanity.
- The cross puts us all on the same level – there's no elitism, sexism, racism or division of any kind. We all need the cross and thank God we all have access to the cross!
- Let us never stop preaching "Our Foolish Gospel".

Discussion Tools

- Read Acts 19:23-29 – Ephesus; Acts 21:27-30 – Jerusalem; and talk about why the people of Ephesus and Jerusalem rejected the gospel in Paul's days.
- Discuss: why would *any* first century person have been converted to Christian faith through the preaching of Paul?"
- How do people react to the preaching of the cross today? Why?
- What should our response be, based on this lesson? Give practical examples.

Prayer Time

Dear Lord, help me to never be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

ICE-BREAKER: Share one silly thing you have done or said while trying to make a good impression somewhere.

NOTES