

## “The Folly Of What We Preach”

There is a vice imbedded like a tick in the scalp of the Church which has sucked away its life and replaced it with a deadly fever. I am referring to the desire to be liked.

It is but a short step from the genuine call of Scripture to love others with a gracious self-sacrificing way (cf. Mt. 5:16; 22:37-40; 1 Peter 3:2) to the deadening and false call to woo others to us. We think: If I can get them to like me, then we can get them to like Jesus. And, if they like Jesus, maybe they will decide to follow him!

The problems with this view are many, not the least of which is that we are trusting in something other than the power of God through the gospel of Jesus Christ to save sinners. The result is that we begin to soft-peddle sin, avoid a call for people to repent, and put far more emphasis upon people’s responsibility to choose Christ and believe (along with our methods) than we do upon proclaiming the bad news of their absolute inability to save self, to believe in Christ, or even to see their need for Christ, apart from His grace.

When we hold out even a glimmer of hope the sinner has something to bring to Christ to help with salvation, it appeals to our pride and fits with our American can-do attitude. But it is the opposite of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which empties us of any trust in self and drives us to see our only hope is to discover our spiritual poverty (Mt. 5:3), to see we are dead in sin, and only by the grace of God can the Spirit of God cause us to be born again to new life in Christ (John 3:3-8; Ephesians 2:1-10).

A man-centered world which thinks a great deal of man’s ability believes it the height of folly to make so little of man and so much of Christ as our only hope. Yet, this is exactly the gospel of which Paul writes, “It pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). Paul does not mean the gospel is truly foolish, but that many think it so. It pleased God to save in such a way He gets the glory, not man, and man gets the benefit.

Our responsibility is not to make the gospel palatable, but to preach it right (Galatians 1:8-10) that it effects the power of God unto salvation in those who are lost (Romans 1:16). Those in whom the sovereign grace of God is not operating and who are perishing will always think this message foolish. We must not judge our mission by their response. Instead, we must realize that this glorious gospel is the very message the Lord will use to bring to saving faith as many as are appointed to eternal life (Acts 13:48).

Lord, grant that we trust You and not us for the harvest.

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