

Sabbath School Lesson #2 – The Message of the Cross – 4-10 July 2026

Christ sent Paul to preach the gospel, and he did it, not using the wisdom of man's words, in order that his preaching might not be disannulled. He says, "Lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" (1 Corinthians 1:17). Then when Paul preached among the Corinthians, he preached nothing but Christ and him crucified, and that was the gospel. That gospel – the cross of Christ – is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (verse 18). Notice the word "saved" used in this text; it is frequently used in the Bible in a sense similar to that of "conversion." Here Paul uses "saved" in the present tense and has no reference to future salvation. Again he says: "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Timothy 1:8-9). To the same intent the word is used in Titus 3:4-6 "... but according to His mercy He saved us" The texts show that when one has been forgiven for all his past transgressions, – when the burden of sin that clung to him as a body of death, has been removed, – and a new heart has been given him, – a heart loving righteousness and hating iniquity, – it is proper to say that he is saved. The trouble arises from confounding that salvation with eternal salvation. There is a salvation which is wholly future (see Matthew 24:12-13); those who are converted – saved – must endure to the end if they would be saved. What connection have the two? Simply this, the first is a preparation for the second. One is salvation in the kingdom of grace, and the other is salvation in the kingdom of glory.

Sunday: The Gospel of the Cross – Read 1 Corinthians 1:17-31; what important point is Paul making here? Paul says he preached the gospel. What is the Gospel? "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16). It is present power applied to the salvation of the one who has present faith. From what does the power of God save men? Jesus is the power of God, and of Him it was said, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). The Gospel is the power of God to save men from sin. But it is present power, for sin is ever present. Its power is applied only while one is believing. "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). The moment a man ceases to believe, then he is a sinner, just the same as though he had never believed. Yesterday's faith will not answer for to-day, any more than the breathing of the man yesterday will keep him alive to-day. Many professed Adventists are ashamed of, and wilfully ignorant of, the gospel. But Paul says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ... For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith" (Romans 1:16-17). The gospel saves man from himself; therefore, the man who proposes to do either wholly or in part by himself the work that God requires, proposes to do the best he can to thwart God's plan. Many do this ignorantly, but the result is the same. Whoever realises the infinite depth and height and breadth of the character of God, which is summed up in His law, will readily see that nothing short of the power of God can produce that character in man. "Christ is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:24), and only the power of God can do the works of God. Only the works which God has wrought in Christ can save us; and "this is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John 6:28), which we obtain by faith, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

Monday: Foolishness to Those Who Are Perishing – Read 1 Corinthians 1:20-21, 23, 25, and 27; how do these references to foolishness help us understand what Paul meant when saying that the message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing? In verse 18, Paul said that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;" and in the beginning of this chapter, he says that he came not to the Corinthians "with excellency of speech or wisdom," or with "enticing words of man's wisdom." Paul did not speak the "wisdom of this world" but the wisdom of God, which is infinitely superior. This wisdom, he says, "none of the princes of the world knew; for had they known it, they would not have

crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8). Those who put Christ to death were ignorant of His true nature. In the ninth to eleventh verses Paul proceeds with the argument to show why the gospel seems like foolishness to the wicked. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Human reason cannot grasp the wonderful truths of the gospel. It is foolishness in human reasoning. The blessings which God stands ready to bestow upon those who obey the gospel, have no meaning to those who serve self. When Christians tell of the great love of God, how it lifts them above earthly trials and sorrows, they seem to the worldling to be simply fanatical. This is because the things of the Spirit of God are spiritually discerned (verse 14). In the eleventh verse the apostle clenches his argument by saying, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." No one can know the thoughts and designs of the man, except the man himself, so none but the Spirit of God can comprehend things of God. It would be less absurd for a man to profess to understand all the hidden thoughts of his neighbour's mind, than for one entirely destitute of the Spirit of God to imagine that he is capable of passing judgment upon the truths of the gospel.

Tuesday: Power to Those Who Are Being Saved – Read Colossians 1:20 and 1 Peter 2:24; what did Jesus accomplish for us on the cross? Christ accomplished reconciliation for our iniquity. Peter says, "for Christ also hath one suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). Paul says, "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in His sight" (Colossians 1:19-22). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Romans 5:1-2, 10-11). "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

Wednesday: A Messiah Crucified – Read Acts 13:16-47 (especially verses 26, 38, and 47); what does this passage teach us about the meaning of the Cross? The cross is denying self to save others. Christ willingly spent his strength and energies, suffered and laid down his life. But this was not in vain. As Adventists, health reform is the starting point for us to deny self. "Many," Paul says, "walk, of whom I have told you often, and not tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Philippians 3:18-19). These make appetite their god. Why are they enemies of the cross of Christ? Jesus said, whosoever will be my disciple, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." We cannot do either of the last two of these commands without doing what goes before it: first, deny self; next, take up our cross; and, lastly, follow the Lord. Those who are governed by their appetite are enemies to the cross of Christ, because their desires are paramount, and they cannot deny themselves. These have other gods before the Lord.

Thursday: Christ, the Power and Wisdom of God – Read 1 Corinthians 1:24-29; notice the words there, such as "foolishness," "power," and "wise;" what point is he making? The point is: Christ alone is our wisdom. Christ "the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:24) is the only means by which, if He "dwell in your hearts by faith" (Ephesians 3:17), you can truly live wisely. "Wisdom crieth" "Turn you at My reproof; behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known My words unto you" (Proverbs 1:20,23). This Wisdom is but another name for Christ, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).