

# MESSAGE GUIDE January 28, 2018

## REBOOT: God's Answer to the Problem of Popularity Contests

1 Corinthians 1:10-17



### CONNECT

- Some things in life are *counterintuitive*, meaning they go against what we might call common sense or common knowledge. Can you think of something you've witnessed or experienced that didn't seem to make sense on the surface, but actually did in practice?

### STUDY

The passage of study for this week's message was 1 Corinthians 1:18-31. It is, essentially, Paul's response to the problem of the favoritism and popularity contests that were going on in Corinth. Some people aligned themselves under Paul, some under Apollos, others Peter. Bottom line, the divisions were creating an unhealthy culture in the church. Use the following questions to process Paul's response to this problem that threatened the unity in the church at Corinth:

- Look at verses 18-19. What does Paul say the cross means to those who won't embrace its message? What does the cross mean to those who understand its meaning? What does verse 19 say about God's attitude toward those who think they are wise (meaning they think they have life by the tail and all figured out by themselves?)
- In verses 20-26, Paul continues to write about how those who embrace the perspective of human wisdom tend to look at God's ways as simple, silly and foolish. What does Paul mean when he writes, "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" How did Paul describe the different ways Jews and Greeks responded to the message of the Gospel? Why does Paul refer to the preaching of Jesus crucified as a stumbling block?
- Look at verses 27-29. Why does God have a bent toward using the "weak," "low," and "despised" things of the world, rather than those who are popular, self-made, successful or powerful?
- Wrap up your time in this passage by taking in verses 30-31. What might Paul mean when he writes that "Jesus became wisdom for us"? Why is it important that one "boast in the Lord" rather than boast in self?

### APPLY

- Why is it that the message of the cross can be so difficult for some people to embrace?

- Paul talked about the stumbling blocks of the Jews (power and signs) and the Greeks (logic and knowledge) which kept them from getting to Jesus. When you think about the culture we live in, what are some common stumbling blocks that seem to get in the way of people receiving Jesus?
- Because some people have difficulty with the message of the cross, we may sometimes be tempted to try to explain the Gospel without talking about the cross work of Jesus. What are some ways we may try to skirt around talking about the cross when presenting the Gospel? Why is the cross central to our sharing the good news?
- Why does God seem to work so hard at not affirming the type of human wisdom that leaves Him out of the equation?
- Thinking about the Bible, what are some examples of how God works in counter intuitive ways, employing the weak or low, rather than people who are strong and important? Why does God seem to have a habit of doing this?
- What does “boasting in the Lord” look like practically? Why is such ‘bragging upon God” a good discipline to embrace?