

A STUDY OF 1 CORINTHIANS

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5

# THE WISDOM OF THE CROSS

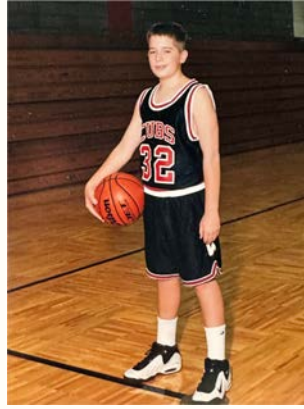


An abstract sculpture of a cross, rendered in dark, flowing, ribbon-like material. The cross is formed by two interlocking loops that create a sense of movement and depth. The background is a light, textured surface.

## THE WISDOM OF THE CROSS

The Problem of 'Choice'  
The Pride of 'Chosen'  
The Power of the Cross





# THE WISDOM OF THE CROSS

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## 1 Corinthians 1:18-20 <sup>NIV</sup>

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> For it is written:

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;  
the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."

<sup>20</sup> Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?



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For the message of the cross is **foolishness** to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> For it is written: “I will destroy the **wisdom** of the **wise**; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”

<sup>20</sup> Where is the **wise** person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the **wisdom** of the world?

<sup>21</sup> For since in the **wisdom** of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the **foolishness** of what was preached to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> Jews demand signs and Greeks look for **wisdom**, <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and **foolishness** to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the **wisdom** of God. <sup>25</sup> For the **foolishness** of God is **wiser** than human **wisdom**, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

<sup>26</sup> Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were **wise** by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.

<sup>27</sup> But God chose the **foolish** things of the world to shame the **wise**; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. <sup>28</sup> God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no one may boast before him. <sup>30</sup> It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us **wisdom** from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. <sup>31</sup> Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

**2:1** And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human **wisdom** as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. <sup>2</sup> For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup> I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. <sup>4</sup> My message and my preaching were not with **wise** and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might not rest on human **wisdom**, but on God’s power.


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1 Corinthians 2:1, 4a <sup>NIV</sup>


And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God... <sup>4</sup> My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words...





Wisdom without eloquence is like a flower without  
fragrance...Nothing can penetrate to the emotions that  
stumbles at the portal of the ear.

QUINTILIAN



If wisdom is present as the moderator of all things, then  
those who have attained it gain glory, honor, and  
prestige from it.

CICERO



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1 Corinthians 1:26 <sup>NIV</sup>

Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.



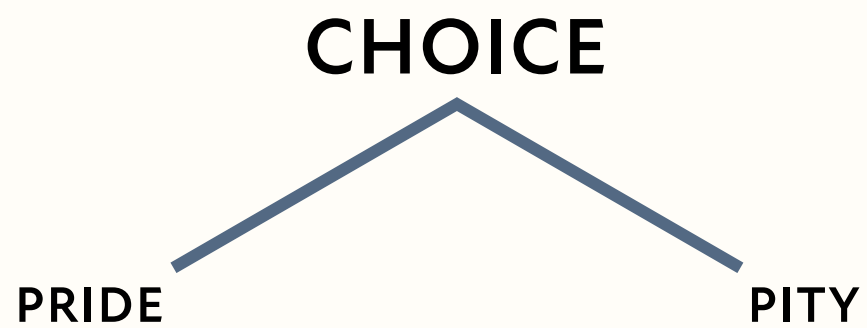


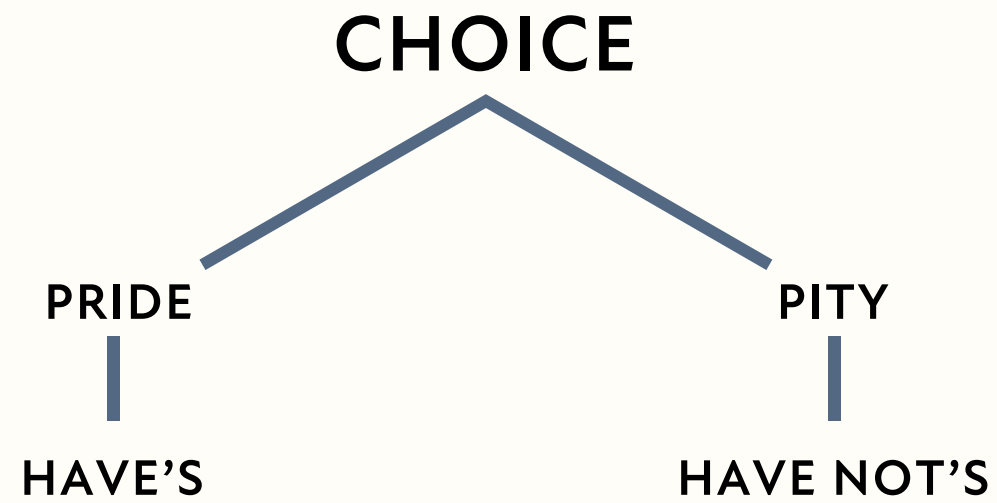




Corinth was a city where public boasting and self-promotion had become an art form. The Corinthian people thus lived within an honor-shame cultural orientation, where public recognition was often more important than facts and where the worst thing that could happen was for one's reputation to be publicly tarnished. In such a culture a person's sense of worth is based on recognition by others of one's accomplishments, hence the self-promoting public inscriptions.

BEN WITHERINGTON III





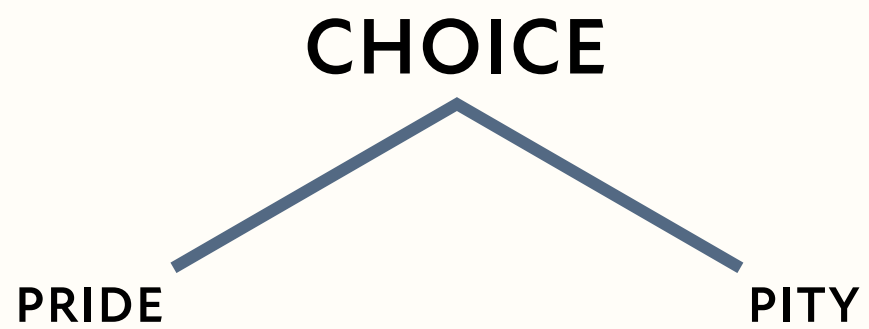
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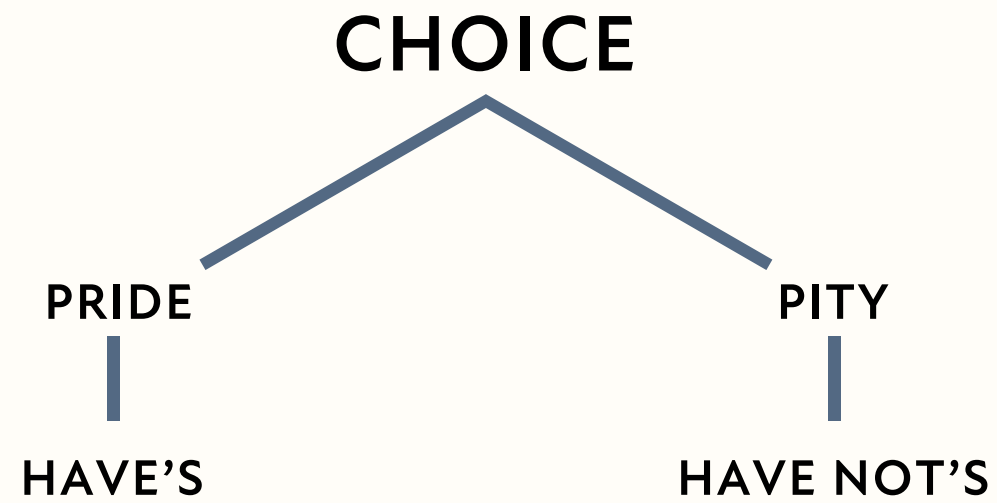
1 Corinthians 1:22-23 <sup>NIV</sup>

Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles...









An abstract sculpture of a cross, rendered in dark, flowing, ribbon-like forms that twist and turn, set against a light, textured background.

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## 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 <sup>NIV</sup>

But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. <sup>28</sup> God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no one may boast before him.



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**CHOICE** ════════════ **CHOSEN**



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1 Corinthians 1:30 <sup>NIV</sup>

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.





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1 Corinthians 1:31 <sup>NIV</sup>

Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts  
boast in the Lord."





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## 1 Corinthians 2:1-4a <sup>NIV</sup>

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1 Corinthians 1:18 <sup>NIV</sup>

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.



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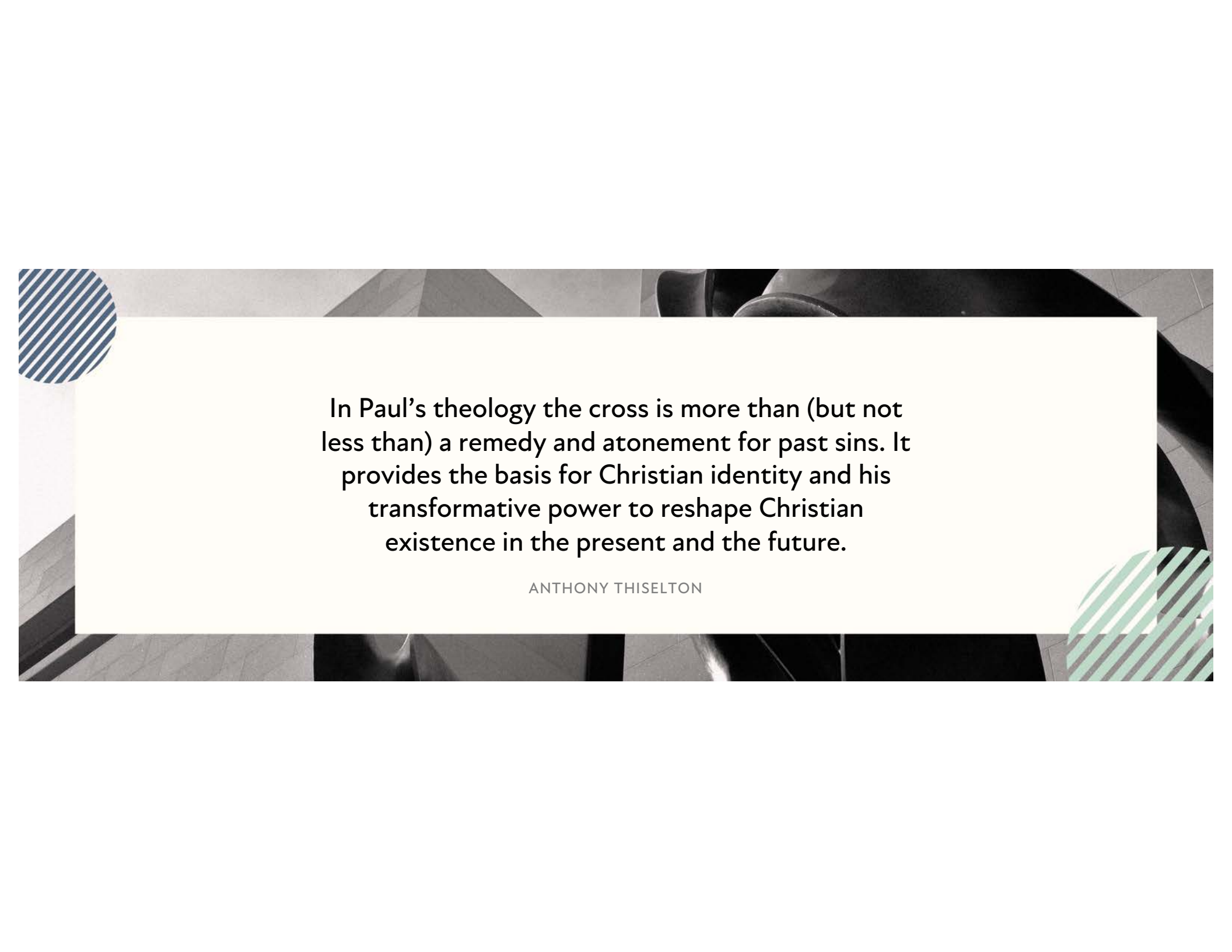
1 Corinthians 1:18, 23; 2:2 <sup>NIV</sup>

For the **message of the cross** is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

<sup>23</sup> but we preach **Christ crucified**: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles...

<sup>2</sup> For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus **Christ and him crucified**.



The background features a complex geometric pattern of triangles and polygons in shades of grey and black. A large, off-white rectangular box is centered horizontally, containing the main text. In the top-left corner, there is a circular graphic with blue and white diagonal stripes. In the bottom-right corner, there is a circular graphic with green and white diagonal stripes.

In Paul's theology the cross is more than (but not less than) a remedy and atonement for past sins. It provides the basis for Christian identity and his transformative power to reshape Christian existence in the present and the future.

ANTHONY THISELTON

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1 Corinthians 1:18, 23-24; 2:4-5 <sup>NIV</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> ...but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the **power of God** and the wisdom of God.

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