Consider Your Calling

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[0:00] Welcome to Built on God's Word, the preaching and teaching ministry of Highland Park Baptist Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.! Elder Tom Holland teaches on 1 Corinthians 1, verses 26-31.

! Let me read to you some verses here.
Chapter 1, verse 26, and we'll go through the end of the chapter, which is verse 31. For consider your calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards.
Not many were powerful. Not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.
God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is lowly and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.
[1:29] And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that as it is written, let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.

So the Apostle Paul is going to continue to lead us tonight in the superiority of God's wisdom. The particular church that we're talking about was located in Corinth.
We sort of get the impression that Corinth was this massive city. It was actually rather small compared to many cities in the world in those days.
And this particular church didn't have rich or influential members. There was a lot of highly educated and intelligent people, semi-intelligent.
They rejected Christ, so you can't be that smart. But they didn't have the famous, they didn't have the highly educated. And this church was not the center of power in the community of Corinth.
[2:51] What they had were followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. And one can only imagine how the citizens of Corinth, speaking of the unsaved, looked upon the membership of this church.

So what did they have? They had Jesus. That's why the Apostle Paul, writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, starts out with the words, Consider your calling.
Consider your calling. The words your calling show up three times in the Old Testament. Six times in the New Testament. If we limit it only to the word calling, we find in the Bible a total of 38 times.
Paul used this word in his writings to designate people that were genuine and legitimate, born-again followers of Christ Jesus.
He's referring to people that had been regenerated by the Spirit of God. They had the saving call of God.
[4:27] These people had been born again. More accurately, in the Greek language, the word anothen means born from above. rebirth, rebirth, originates with God and it comes down from above and settles on God's people.

So that's what we're dealing with here. These people had been foreordained to eternal life through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ Jesus.
This explains the words found in verse 26. God was not choosing many who were wise or mighty or of noble birth.
Instead, God was saving those who were foolish and weak and base and despised. By doing so, God is shown not to practice favoritism on those who the world favors.
By doing so, God has shown not to practice favoritism on those who the world favors. That would be the wise and the rich and favored peoples of the world by the world's standards.
[6:01] He granted simple wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. God saves a man or He saves a woman. First of all, that's the only way you can be saved.

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God has to do the work. And the only boasting should be boasting in the Lord. I swore I wouldn't put this in here, but you know when I lead off like that, I'm going to do it.
But I still remember when one of the highest ranked employees of the oil and gas industry in our town, he worked in the big complex in downtown Barfield.
I won't mention the company. And I knew him well. In fact, at one time, he worked for my dad and feared him and should have. But he decided he should be baptized because he wanted to go to heaven.
So he went to the big church in town and they baptized him. And they had photographs of him being baptized and that was in the cover of the Baptist Messenger a few weeks later.
[7:16] And I thought, oh my gosh, they never saw him again. One only needs to consider the membership of the church at Corinth.

They didn't have the rich and famous. They had people coming for salvation. Who were these people?
They were poor. They were simple. And they understood they could have a relationship. So how does the world measure greatness?
Well, typically, the world will look at intelligence, wealth, prestige, and position.
I found a statement by a very noted atheist philosopher in Paul's day. I have no idea if I'm pronouncing this correctly.
[8:22] Celsus. And this is what he had to say. Let no uncultured person draw near, none wise and none sensible.

For all that kind of thing, we count evil. fool. But if any man is ignorant, if any man is wanting and sense and culture, if anybody is a fool, let him come boldly to become a Christian.
You can kind of tell this guy was anything but Christian. He's an antichrist. They can come boldly to become a Christian. We see them in their own houses.
Wool dresses. Some of them are cobblers. Some of the worst, the vulgar and most uneducated people on earth.
they are like a swarm of bats or ants creeping out of their nest or frogs holding a symposium around a swamp or worms convening in the mud.
[9:43] I wonder what he would say today. Boy, if I could be with them for one minute. I wonder what he would say this is apparently an accurate statement of how much the world felt about Christians in that day.

And actually, if you analyze it, it's not far off from how many people feel about Christians in our day. Robert and I have had great discussions on what's going on up north and I won't mention any states but, you know, like Minnesota and places like that where Robert's from, by the way.
He escaped to Oklahoma. What is the problem that the world has with believers in our day?
Bring it to our day. 21st century. Well, those problems take many forms. We have a simple gospel and its simplicity is an indictment from the world.
They want to bash it. The fact that our, quote, religion attracts and even solicits participation from people who are humble and faithful within their beliefs is aggravating to the unbelieving world.
[11:20] And God saw that coming. It's all part of His plan. Again, that is why the Bible says that God has chosen the foolish things of the world.

Why would He do that? Well, it tells us to shame the wise. God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame things that are strong and He has chosen the despised of the world.
According to God's Word, the greatest person that ever lived apart from Jesus, and of course Jesus was incarnate God, but apart from Jesus, the greatest person that ever lived was John the Baptist.
He had no formal education. He had no profession to fall back on. He was poor, never was in the military, had no military rank.
He was not a politician and didn't want to be one. He was uncultured when it came to speaking. And Jesus, the greatest person that ever lived or ever will live said this about John the Baptist.
[12:50] Truly I say to you, among those born of women, there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist.

Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is. By the way, that's Matthew 11, 11. 25. And just a few verses later, the Lord Jesus prayed this prayer.
At this time, Jesus declared, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you've hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children.

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Matthew 11, 25. The wise of every age, guys, have scoffed at the gospel of Christ.
When I was the head of security for a large company downtown, I got put on a committee. You remember when the Billy Graham Association came to town?
[14:04] It was the associate. And Dr. Graham was considering coming in here, but he had a problem. He had to get to California for a speech.

and so he asked, did we think that Phyllis Petroleum would fly him out there? It was kind of a remote area, and they got a jet fleet or had one.
I was the only Phyllis guy on the whole thing. They approached me. So I went to them, I laid it out, and they said to me, why would we do that?
He's nothing. I said, well, he is the greatest evangelist alive today, the greatest living evangelist, and it got real quiet, and my advancement got real slow, which I didn't care.
So the wives scoff at the gospel and anyone who preaches it. and that takes in our age as well, and leads to an interesting question.
[15:24] What is the purpose of God's wisdom? We read it again in 1 Corinthians 1, 29-31, so that no human being may boast in the presence of God.

well, there's not going to be any boasting. And because of Him, you're in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that it is written, let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.
The wisdom of God produces salvation. With all of its component parts, by God's wisdom, we receive His righteousness.
We receive His sanctification. By God's wisdom, we are redeemed. we are saved by God's wisdom, and we are granted God's wisdom in the sanctification process, being remade into the image of Christ.
I was glad to read that we're not saved by our intelligence. That made me feel a little better about myself. Made Diane feel really good about me. We're not saved by our accomplishments.
[16:52] there is no human achievement that brings us salvation. We are saved by Christ because He is the way, the truth, and the life.

There's no other name by which we are saved or can be saved. And we are therefore saved by the wisdom of God.
We'll cover this if we ever make it to the study of 2 Corinthians, not the second chapter, but there's actually four Corinthians and two of them are inspired, first and second.
But this is in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 6. For God who said, let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
That's 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 6. In Genesis chapter 1, and we all know this, God gave us physical light.
[18:20] Let there be light and there was light. And some of that even occurred before the sun was created. light. But God is also the source of spiritual light.

We often hear of the glory of God as we should. Have you ever wondered, what does that word mean? The glory of God? It is a commentary on His majesty and on His greatness.
greatness. There was no one like Him and never will be. Paul makes this very important statement when he closes out the first chapter of 1 Corinthians.
He says this, just as it is written, let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord. If you're going to do any boasting, boast in Jesus.
And Paul, it's interesting, he is here quoting a passage from the Old Testament book of Jeremiah when he says that. And he also incorporated similar wording when he wrote the book of Galatians.
[19:48] Galatians 6.14 But far be it from me, to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.

He said, if you're going to boast, boast in the cross. And of course, we know the cross was repugnant to most people. That's where thieves and murderers and liars and blasphemers are dealt with.
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