**Sermon Title: The Framework of the Church in a Christ-less Culture**

**Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 1:25-31**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to increase their boast in God.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 4 frameworks of the church that leads to boasting in God.**

**Introduction:** “Man made of the cross a tree of shame. Christ changed the cross to a Tree of Glory. Man used it as a tree of death; Christ converted it to a Tree of Life. Man employed it for cruel oppression; Christ put it into the service of freedom. Man made it an agency of judgment and retribution; through Christ it became a means of forgiveness and mercy. In the hands of man the cross was an accursed tree; touched by the hands of the Son of God it became a tree of blessing. Before Calvary the cross instilled only fear; after Calvary it became a symbol of infinite love. Before Good Friday men turned their eyes from it in horror; after Good Friday men turn to it for comfort and reassurance. Before that day men shuddered at the mention of the cross; after that day men bow before the cross and are at peace. Once man disgraced this tree with crime and other sins; then Christ sanctified it with His holy and precious blood. Before Calvary it harshly enforced the Law; after Calvary it joyously proclaims the gospel. Before Good Friday it hastened man into outer darkness; after that it ushers men into Paradise and Glory. The shame of the cross was man, the Glory of the cross is Christ.

[**E. Paul Hovey, *The Treasury of Inspirational Anecdotes, Quotations, & Illustrations*, Fleming H. Revel, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, p.138-139**]

**I. The standard of the framework of the church. V.25**

**II. The sample of the framework of the church. V.26**

**III. The strategy of the framework of the church. Vv.27-28**

**IV. The summary of the framework of the church. Vv.29-31**

**I. The standard of the framework of the church. V.25**

 The idea is that God’s “nonsense” is wiser than humanity’s wisdom. Also God’s “weakness” is stronger than humanity’s strength. The foolish message about Christ that the church preaches is offensive to those who are perishing.

**II. The sample of the framework of the church. V.26**

 Salvation by its very nature and definition does not depend on human achievement, worth, status, class, or race. Rather, God has mercy on all who acknowledge their sinfulness and turn to Jesus Christ.

 **Mark 2:17** When Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

 **John 9:39-41** And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind." **40** Then *some* of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?" **41** Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say,`We see.' Therefore your sin remains.

 God’s wisdom found in a crucified Christ is revealed to the foolish, stumbling, weak, and common, those considered to be nothing by the elite.

 **Deuteronomy 7:6-8** "For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. **7** "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; **8** "but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

 **Deuteronomy 9:4-6** "Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, `Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land'; but *it is* because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD is driving them out from before you. **5** "*It is* not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart *that* you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **6** "Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you *are* a stiff-necked people.

 God’s election does not depend on qualities in those chosen.

 A. Rejected by those **wise** according to worldly standards. V.26a

 Illustration: The rich and the eye of a needle.

 B. Rejected by those **noble** according to birth standards. V.26b

 Most of the believers in Corinth lacked the wisdom prized by Greeks and the power admired by Romans and Jews. (**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**)

**III. The strategy of the framework of the church. Vv.27-28**

 A. Those considered foolish by the world, are chosen to put to shame the wise. V.27a

 B. Those considered weak by the world, are chosen to put to shame the mighty things. V.27b

 C. That which is considered base is chosen by God. V.28a

 D. That which is despised is chosen by God. V.28b

 E. The things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are. V.28c

 Paul provides the rationale for the framework of God’s people. Because God’s people embrace the “nothing” message and the “nothing” people, the world views them as nothing, because they reject they are perishing and not being saved!

 Yet in the next age to come God will put to shame the wise and the strong, while bringing to nothing the things that in this age are viewed as everything or something of value and importance. (**1 Corinthians 2:6; 3:18-20**)

**IV. The summary of the framework of the church. Vv.29-31**

 A. The purpose is to cancel the boasting of man. V.29

 God chose or determined to choose the foolish, weak, despised, and nothing things when they embrace the foolishness of Jesus, and the cross, so that no one can glory or boast based on their human accomplishments or positional status before a Holy God’s presence. No human being can boast in the presence of God, to earn salvation, sanctification, or glorification. (**Jeremiah 9:24**)

 B. The position cancels the boasting of man. V.30a

 No saved sinner, who is now a saint, can boast that they have achieved salvation by their effort, intellect, status, or birth right. It is a result of the gracious gift of God, that men are saved.

 **Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, **9** not of works, lest anyone should boast.

 It was by the Father’s activity, the Son’s sacrifice, and the Holy Spirit’s empowerment, that believers now have a new and radical identity and position before a Holy God!

 (**vv.23-24, 30; 2:2**)

 C. The provisions cancel the boasting of man. Vv.30b-31

 1. We become the wisdom of God. V.30c

 Because of this, the Christian now possesses the wisdom of God, Christ crucified, the very wisdom of God, and essence of wisdom.

 2. We become the righteousness of God. V.30d

 **Romans 3:21-26** But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, **22** even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all1 who believe. For there is no difference; **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, **25** whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, **26** to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

 **2 Corinthians 5:21** For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

 3. We become the sanctified of God. V.30e (**Romans 6:1-23**)

 **Ephesians 2:10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

 4. We become the **redeemed** of God. V.30f

 Jesus is our redemption, the one whose death and resurrection ensures that we. soul and body will be fully redeemed from sin’s guilt and sin’s penalty, which is death.

 **Romans 8:23** Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

 **Ephesians 1:14** whois the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

 **1 Peter 1:18-19** knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, **19** but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

 5. We become proclaimers of God’s glory. V.31

 **Jeremiah 9:24** But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I *am* the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.

 **Galatians 6:4** But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.