

3. Understanding How God Chooses People

In our last topic, we saw there is a great difference between human wisdom and godly wisdom. As a result, the world thinks that godly wisdom is foolishness. However, once we place our faith and trust in Christ, we begin to understand godly wisdom and we realize the tremendous importance of the message of the cross. We want to help our children understand godly wisdom. Today, in our topic, we are going to see that the world looks at certain things when it chooses people. In contrast, we are going to see that God looks at very different things when He chose people for salvation. The way that God chooses to work in our lives leaves us with no room to glory in our own efforts.

In 1 Corinthians 1:26, we read, “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called.*” Here, we see that the way that God chose people is different than the way that the world chooses people. We see that God does not call many people because of their human wisdom, their human power or their human position in life. In fact, 2 Timothy 1:8-9 says, “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.” We want to help our children understand that God called us with a holy calling based on His own purpose.

In contrast to the world, 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 says, “But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.” Here, we see that God chose us in a different way than the world chooses because He wanted to show the powerlessness of the things that the world uses to choose people.

First, we see that God chose the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise. The world depends on human wisdom. In contrast, 1 Corinthians 3:18-20 says, “Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, ‘He catches the wise in their own craftiness’; and again, ‘The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.’ Here, we see that the world commonly deceives itself. It looks to people who have worldly wisdom for guidance. In contrast, God says that we need to become a fool to become wise. God says that the thoughts of the worldly-wise are useless and have no purpose.

Second, we see that God chose the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty. The word that is translated “weak” means *feeble or without strength*. Romans 5:6 says, “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Christ died for us at the time when we had no strength. In contrast, God says those who are depending on human strength today are lacking spiritual strength and so they have no real strength. The word

that is translated “mighty” speaks of *human strength*. Luke 11:21-22 says, ““When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.”” God says that the person that depends on great human strength will be put to shame.

Third, we see that God has chosen the base things of the world. The word that is translated “base” means those who are *low born or those whose families are not even recognized by most of the people*. Gideon is an illustration of such a person. In Judges 6:12, we read, “And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, ‘The LORD *is* with you, you mighty man of valor!’” Then, Gideon answered in Judges 6:15, “...‘O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan *is* the weakest in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father's house.’” Gideon looked at how the people viewed him and his family. God looked at what He was going to cause Gideon to become as Gideon yielded to the Lord.

Fourth, we see that God has chosen the things which are despised. The word that is translated “things which are despised” means *something that is so despised that it is treated with contempt*. This word is used in Luke 18:9-13 where we read, “Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ‘Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’” And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!’”” The Pharisee certainly despised the tax collector and treated him with contempt. The Pharisees continually complained because Christ welcomed tax collectors and sinners and even ate with them. God chose differently than the Pharisees.

Fifth, we see that God has chosen the things that are not to bring to nothing the things that are. The word that is translated “not” is used to make something a negative. It is used in verse ten of this chapter to say that there should be no divisions in the church at Corinth. It is used in verse 29 of this chapter to say that no flesh should glory in His presence. In contrast, the word that is translated “nothing” means *to deprive of force, influence or power*. God uses those that the world considers of no value to take away the influence of those that have had great power and influence. We see that God wants to make it clear for all to see that no one will be able to boast about their own efforts throughout eternity.

We go on to see that God has given us more than just salvation. 1 Corinthians 1:30-31 says, “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption--that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.’” These verses show us that God gave us four more things at the moment of salvation. We want to help our children understand each of these things that He has given us.

First, when we placed our trust in Christ, God gave us a measure of His wisdom. This means that every Christian is given some of the wisdom of God at the moment of salvation. God also wants us to continue to grow in His wisdom. Proverbs 2:6 says, “For the LORD gives wisdom; from His

mouth *come* knowledge and understanding.” As we grow in the wisdom of God, James 3:13 says, “Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom.” Here, we see that godly wisdom will be shown by our good conduct, which will be carried out in the gentleness of godly wisdom. James 3:17 also gives us a description of godly wisdom when it says, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” Godly wisdom will help our children to develop a ministry that is pleasing to the Lord and has a powerful impact on others.

Second, when we placed our trust in Christ, God gave us the righteousness of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 5:21, we read, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” God put our sin on Christ even though He was without sin. That meant that Christ became sin for us. As a result, at the moment of salvation, God placed the righteousness of Christ on us. Because of this exchange, God now sees us with the righteousness of Christ instead of seeing us in our own sin. We want to help our children understand how God now views them as He sees them with the righteousness of Christ.

Third, when we placed our trust in Christ, God placed the holiness of Christ on us. Romans 6:19-22 says, “I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness *leading to more* lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves *of* righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.” Before we placed our trust in Christ, we were slaves of sin. We want to help our children understand that now that they are in Christ He makes it possible for their lives to produce the fruit of holiness as our lives bear the fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23.

Fourth, when we placed our trust in Christ, God provided us with redemption through Christ. The word “redemption” means that *we were set free from the penalty of sin by the payment of a ransom*. The price that Christ paid in order to set us free was His blood. 1 Peter 1:18-19 says, “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” Christ did not pay for redemption with money. Instead, He paid for our redemption with His precious blood. That is why the Father could give us eternal life. As we help our physical and spiritual children understand what God did when He chose and called us, they will understand why we should glory in the Lord. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn why they should glory in what the Lord has done for them.