



**Uncommon Sense 1 Corinthians**  
**Wk. 4 The Word of the Cross**  
**By Pastor Jody May 05/18/2025**

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**1 Corinthians 1:25** - For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

**Uncommon Sense** - *"God's Wisdom over man's pride through a Flawed Church."*

**[CALL TO HEAR]**

**1 Corinthians 1:18-25 ESV**

**Christ the Wisdom and Power of God**

<sup>18</sup>For the word of the cross is folly 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,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

<sup>20</sup>Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater 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 did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are 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 men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

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**Pastor - "People of God, this is the Word of God."**  
**People - "Thanks be to God."**

**Pray**

**Illustration**

You ever have one of those wispy conversations with people who are a little put out with living in the modern world? By that, I mean the constant bombardment of media, or the constant need to learn new technologies, or



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the busyness of society that negates personal interactions and relationships. In those conversations I always like to point out though I would still take it over living in the past century. Don't get me wrong I am a classic conservatist and I love simple things and simple ways, but I am also a realist. While I long for the good old days I am so glad I live in the present with the **blessing of modern medicine!** If I had lived a hundred years ago, with the same medical history, I don't know if I would still be alive!

For example, did you know it has almost been 100 years since the invention, or we should say **the discovery**, of **Penicillin**. You may be like so what? Family, in case you did not know if it was not for that invention alone many of us would not be here today.

In 1928 a Scottish researcher named Sir Alexander Fleming <sup>1</sup> who had a reputation for being a careless lab technician went on vacation. Upon his return after two weeks he discovered that a mold had developed on an accidentally contaminated staphylococcus culture plate. He noticed a white substance that was living off the Staph, and after a while it negated the effects of the dangerous bacteria. That started Dr. Fleming in his pursuit of this type of bacteria that was harmless to people but dangerous for other bacteria.

Fleming stopped studying penicillin in 1931, his research was continued and finished by Howard Flory and Ernst Chain, researchers at University of Oxford who are credited with the development of penicillin for use as a medicine in mice. Penicillin has gone on to be a remedy for things like Pneumonia, Bronchitis, Sepsis, Strep throat, Impetigo, Cellulitis, Gonorrhea, Syphilis, Endocarditis, and Meningitis plus oral, ear, nose and throat infections. Penicillin also led the way for the discovery of other antibiotics that we use to treat things like Whooping cough, Tuberculosis, Typhoid Fever, Cholera, Lyme Disease, and we can appreciate this one more being Bible people, Leprosy.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.healio.com/news/endocrinology/20120325/penicillin-an-accidental-discovery-changed-the-course-of-medicine>



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I bring all of this up this morning, to say if it were not for this discovery, many of us would not be here, not just because you benefitted directly from the discovery of this miraculous cure, but your forefathers were also saved by it! Penicillin made all the difference in the world with its' discovery pre-WWII for up to that point Sepsis was untreatable in injured soldiers. *Throughout America's first 145 years of war, far more of the country's military personnel perished from infectious diseases than from enemy action.*<sup>2</sup> Studies show that pre-WWII, that for some armies, infection after an injury was the main killer of military personnel. Getting shot in the Revolutionary/Civil War in the extremities was almost as much as a death sentence as it was to get shot in a vital organ.

The course of many of our lives would be very different if it were not for the discovery of Penicillin. The kicker in all of this, is that we had no clue how to combat infection at this magnitude until a sloppy researcher, by chance, left a dirty slide out in the open over vacation, and discovered a miracle cure saving countless millions over the past century. We had no idea how to stop people from dying from bacterial infections, we were clueless, we were in the dark, we were under the weight of hopelessness when it came to many diseases that we have now conquered today.

The wisdom of the modern man had failed us, BUT GOD, being rich in Mercy I believed that day, gifted us with a discovery, that in nature, in His creation, there was a natural cure, it just had to be discovered, it had to be experienced. It was something we could not create out of our own knowledge for we did not have it in us. It was the Wisdom of God that was discovered in nature, and it was the Grace of God that delivered it to Sir Flemming and allowed it to become physical salvation for human health and well-being. Because of that and let me say again, I am SO THANKFUL I have been born in the Year of our Lord in 1970 or otherwise I would not be here.

## **Introduction**

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<sup>2</sup>[https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18192771/#:~:text=Throughout%20America's%20first%20145%20years,%20and%20treatment%20\(antibiotics\).](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18192771/#:~:text=Throughout%20America's%20first%20145%20years,%20and%20treatment%20(antibiotics).)



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In much the same way the Corinthians in AD 51 were in the dark when it came to a cure for their spiritual disease of depravity that had them literally Hell bent on a path of destruction. They could not figure it out, they had tried everything to get their spiritual life in order, hoping that their multiple religions would somehow generate a better physical existence. They had put great stock into the wisdom of man and his ability to discern better ways, better philosophies, better ways of being, better religious thought, allowing their hedonistic desire to map out their futures. They included all forms of high wisdom but in the inclusion of all things that man could dream up it still left them dying, unsure of their eternal existence, and like all false ways was constantly pitting them against one another. It wasn't until God decided to act that they had any hope for He let them discover **outside of themselves** that there was a better way. The message came by way of Paul, and His wisdom that He brought, which was not born in and of himself, but rather came from without, from a place he had never expected, an **old rugged cross**.

The cure for sin, the cure for hopelessness, the cure for eternal security was found in a death that was meant to deter people from ever wanting to think about it. **Crucifixion** was established by the Roman Empire as a capital punishment for treasonous behavior, to drive people away from the reality that this could be a possible future for the uncompliant conquered.<sup>3</sup> It was a form of torture that people tried to get out of their minds. It wasn't like a public hanging of the old west where justice was quick where death was not pleasant to look at, but it could be stomached. No, the cross was the type of delivery system by which the Romans would just say the word and they expected you to dismiss it from your mind because of the brutality in it. **Yet this was the way that God chose to save the world.**

**John 12:27-33 ESV**

<sup>27</sup>"Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name!"

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." <sup>29</sup>The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/crucifixion.html>



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<sup>30</sup> Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. <sup>31</sup> Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. <sup>32</sup> And I, **when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.**" <sup>33</sup> He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. (see Is. 52:13-14)

By letting His elect discover/by GRACE, through His intervention, He picked the lowliest of all deaths to elevate His Son, and by that exaltation He thus **provided a cure for ALL sins!**

The greatest need for mankind's eternal health would not be found in His achievements in philosophy, biology, psychology, nor sociology/anthropology. Man's need for a cure of his sin, his ongoing falling short in all things, his inability to love his neighbor, would be found on a very public display of death, that all men would say needs to be forgotten. Today still family, your hope and my hope for our lives is still to accept the fact that the **Message/Word of the Cross is the death that you and I deserved.** The Son of God took our place, and only by looking at it, accepting its' truth, believing in its' condemnation, and receiving by faith the forgiveness of God are we saved. This message most of the world STILL calls foolishness while those being saved by it call it the Wisdom of God! **To most of the world it is Uncommon Sense but to us we call it the GOSPEL!** And it shall be this way until His return!

So today we want to look at this Wisdom of the cross, to see how it unites the church in mission by common belief in the uncommon sense of God for the saints alone. We have three things we are going to see today to make us cling onto this truth even harder today: First, the Wisdom of the Cross separates out the Lost from the Saved. Secondly, the Wisdom of the Cross highlights the foolishness of the world. Lastly, the Wisdom of the Cross garners Ridicule from the Lost and Rejoicing from the Saved. This propels all of us to this one action and thought today.

**MP:**

**Seek to be United in the Wisdom of the Cross**

**1. The Wisdom of the Cross separates the Lost from the Saved.**



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<sup>18</sup>For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Paul says here, *for the word of the Cross*, the **Logos**, it is used here most likely how John would use it later to describe the **objective truth** behind the cross. Paul says the Truth of the Cross, our need for Salvation and the way God provided it, **is folly to the unsaved**. It is foolishness, it is non-sensical, it doesn't add up, it's not logical, to those that are perishing. Dr. Tom Schreiner believes the intent of the words there in v. 18 for **perishing** and **being saved** have an eschatological meaning. The intent of the verse is those that are dying and going to Hell cannot perceive what the Wisdom of the cross is, it doesn't make sense to them. Family, dead men, perishing men, cannot understand the call to believe the Gospel, it doesn't make sense.

Family this is why you and I everyday should be thankful for the gift of the HS in our lives, for He is the one that gets us to understand our dilemma and opens our eyes to the answers. The reality we see here in the text is that the Wisdom behind the Cross, the objective Truth, helps the body/us to discern who is saved and who is not, who is of God and who is still of this world. The reality is anyone that adds or takes away from the message of the Cross is still dead in their sins.

Now what we don't want to do is lose the intent of this truth we just learned. In the beginning of v.18, we see the word "**For**", meaning: the reason Paul is saying this is for those who are arguing about who they follow makes them right, or arguing about their gifts showing their better Salvation, or arguing for the inclusion of certain pagan practices, **those are the people who cannot understand the Wisdom of the Cross**, they are still perishing. Those that are arguing about the acceptance of sinful behavior are showing they have no idea what the cross was for.

Jesus doesn't pay for your right to keep on sinning, He won you the ability to trade with Him your spot on that cross. You are to let your old self die on that tree with Him, you put on His righteousness, and now you live out His Holiness for Him here in the physical world. You have been set apart by the Cross, and



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the impact of these verses is to get away from those that don't believe the same. Even after an impactful and disciplinary trip to Corinth, Paul writes again in 2 Corinthians what they must do.

**2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 ESV**

**The Temple of the Living God**

<sup>14</sup> Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

<sup>15</sup> What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

“I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,  
and I will be their God,  
and they shall be my people.

<sup>17</sup> Therefore **go out from their midst**,  
and **be separate from them**, says the Lord,  
and **touch no unclean thing**;  
then I will welcome you,

<sup>18</sup> and I will be a father to you,  
and you shall be sons and daughters to me,  
says the Lord Almighty.”

**7** Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

Family today we have people who call themselves pastors in our land that have done everything possible to include everyone that walks in their doors into their church membership claiming it is what Jesus wants. Paul believes otherwise. Accepting all people and all ways into the church is called “**Universalism**” or the belief that ‘all’ will go to heaven.<sup>4</sup> If that were true, then we don't need letters like Corinthians. The problem is we have the blind leading the blind now, or we should say the dead leading the dead, for we have false shepherds telling people the message of the cross is that you never have to change!

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/universalism.html>





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Today perhaps you have fallen into a practice that leads you to believe you can dress like this world, you can love who you want in this world, you can spend your money on worldly pursuits, you can practice whatever hedonistic lifestyle you want and still be saved. That is an ignorance of the Wisdom/Word of the Cross which says for these very things Christ died for you to leave behind! As a matter of fact, what stands out in this world as a testimony is that **Christians don't want those things anymore.**

We unite in the Wisdom of the Cross which calls us to be separated from this world, it tells us that people that argue for the worldly things don't understand the Cross. The Wisdom of the cross calls people to pick up their cross and follow Jesus ([Mat 16:24-26](#)), which is to deny self.

Yes, it is a glorious thing about the Gospel there is no cleansing oneself of sin when we are saved, that is done to you. BUT it is the realization of that fact that screams to your conscience to leave your old life behind out of love for the one that has saved you! Let us be united church in leaving our worldly practices behind in love for Christ.

**2. The Wisdom of the Cross highlights the foolishness of the world.**

<sup>19</sup>For it is written,

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

Just so we are aware, Paul over the next few verses is using his wisdom of the book of Isaiah to prove a point. Paul knew the book of Isaiah before he ever met Jesus, being a Pharisee of Pharisees, but after His encounter with the risen Lord Paul started seeing this OT text in new light. He saw how the prophecies of Isaiah all culminated and crescendo in the revelation of the Christ/Messiah which Isaiah made popular.

**Isaiah 29:14 ESV**

<sup>14</sup>therefore, behold, I will again





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do wonderful things with this people,  
with wonder upon wonder;  
and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,  
and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden."

Isaiah is looking forward to a day after the fall of Jerusalem and in the days of our current age, the age of the church, where God will continuously reveal His plan in the Wisdom of the Cross. When that happens though, the wise of this world will not be able to comprehend it, and those things, God's plan, shall remain hidden. As a matter of fact, this was the opinion of Christ, for Jesus was a big fan of Isaiah as well, and adhered to his prophecies knowing He must fulfill them.

**Matthew 11:25 ESV**

<sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have **hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children;** <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup> All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Point is Jesus agrees with Isaiah that there is no one that knows God, He chooses not to let the self-proclaimed wise person figure it out, so that there would be no boasting. The only way you get to God is through Christ's intervention, His choice, and that's it. Paul continues with some light from Isaiah (33:18) on how this plays out.

<sup>20</sup> Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater 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 did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

Those first three questions are not necessarily taunting, although they accomplish that, but theologians believe in the vein of Isaiah this is a victory cry, as when the Lord's will is accomplished! Where is the wise, the scribe, the debater of this age? They never figured it out! As a matter of fact, if they



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had, if they knew that the message of the cross was going to save men, destroy death, make a way for man to return to God, they would have never let it happen! On the day of the most tragic of all events in history played out, where a perfect being was put to death for sin not of His doing, when the most disgusting/vile act was portrayed in the world, it was the day that evil was conquered. This is the message that Paul says is pleasing to God, to keep preaching the cross, to keep saving men through its' power, because the wise of the world will never get it, and by their blindness to God's glory it illuminates the path of Salvation for His people.

Family let's walk away from this passage with at least this truth today, **it is a blessing to know God in a Saving way**, for you did not figure it out on your own, people smarter than you couldn't do it, people of noble birth weren't privy to it, it was not because of your family social placement that it came to you, **you are saved because God loves you and chose to reveal Himself to you** making this a reality in your life. That you mean enough to Him that He counted it as righteousness to you through the Cross! God has saved you, you did not save yourself, and He has chosen to bless you with that knowledge, so that you may worship Him alone!

Let us seek to be united in this wisdom family today, we all come to God the same way by Grace alone, through His Wisdom, making the wise of this world look foolish.

**3. The Wisdom of the Cross garners Ridicule from the Lost and Rejoicing from the Saved.**

<sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are 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 men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

**Ridicule**

Jews demand a sign and the Greeks seek Wisdom.



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For Paul this is a personal subject for he may be the best in the NT to talk about it for he is a child of both worlds. He has Jewish roots and loves his people, but he is all too aware of their vast stubbornness. He was also born in Tarsus, a large Greek city-state in Turkey, experiencing classical Greek education including philosophy/politics. He understands the plight of both groups of people.

**The Jews demanded a sign.** They always wanted proof, and it wasn't just a simple sign, I mean when you read the Gospels Jesus spent 3.5 years healing and casting out demons to the point He would have eradicated this type of suffering in Palestine among the Jews. No, what the Jews wanted was a sign of His **Messiahship** that was going to lead them to victory over the Romans! They wanted a physical King right then and there, of which Jesus politely indicated the only sign they would receive was the sign of Jonah (Mat 12:28-42). The Jews only wanted Jesus if they could give them what they wanted, political freedom to live as they wanted to, under OT authority now held captive by the popular Jews in power at that moment **they wanted objective truth by power**. In other words, Jews were looking for a way to ensure their political power through Jesus, not to give it up to Him.

**The Greeks sought after wisdom.** They wanted to be debated into belief because it shows your present beliefs, that you had defenses for, were actually conquered. But it also means that if you believe philosophy can be debated into submission then any new belief in Jesus can be challenged, changed, and choked-out by a better debater. For the Greek **their truth is always subjective by popular opinion**, that's where liberalism comes from, especially if it is a debatable truth. They would have never been happy with just receiving Jesus through intellectual pursuit, because it would mean the end of their hobby and love. When you find answers people for life you don't keep looking for other answers to your problems, at least the sane person doesn't. For the Greeks the pleasure was in the pursuits and argument not in actually receiving a cure.

Paul just states that He and the boys (AKA Apostles) will just keep preaching a crucified Savior that is a stumbling block to the Jews. Because it was the



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worst death a Jew could experience, for it was a curse to be hung on a tree according to their OT covenantal law. They couldn't accept that as a sign. The Greeks could not understand that the Cross, the ultimate way of suffering and pain, was the path to enlightenment. This brought them no pleasure, and only promised to them they would have to give up their indulgences in the flesh. The Gospel is truly a stumbling block for those that seek Jesus as an answer in how they see the world.

### **Rejoicing**

Those though, that were called out of both groups of people, they would receive joy when they accepted the truth about God.

What the Greeks thought was foolishness the Greeks who were saved saw enlightenment, and that it did not have to be their wits and their smarts that would have to save them. They didn't need the oration skills of a speaker, God spoke through His Word. They didn't need to be reasoned into accepting truth, they just believed by Faith that what God said is true. The Greek didn't have to find answers anymore the answer found them!

What the Jews saw as weakness those called by Christ saw the Cross as the ultimate display of strength. The Messiah was not someone to be embarrassed of but was worthy of following. The Messiah was a person that didn't use the sheep for His gain but gave all he had for His people. The Cross is the ultimate display of strength through a man, that finally showed a life unto death was worth the name of God. For the Jew, it was a blessing to be under His kingship.

Those that can't get what they want from Jesus will **ridicule** and reject Him, and those that are blessed with divine hope through Gracious revelation will **rejoice** over the God they have found, they will always praise the Wisdom they have found in Jesus.

Family let us seek to be united in the Wisdom of the Cross by rejoicing over the God who found us.



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**[CALL TO OBEY]**

**Separate oneself from the Lost, in word and deed.**

We are not saying as a church to stop living among the world, but I am calling on us to stop being like them. The strength of our testimony is not in how we look like this world, but as Jesus taught us to be a city on a hill, a light that cannot be quenched. Are you accepting of modern liberal theological teaching that says become a 'universalist' or you adhering to your forefathers who clung to the Wisdom of the cross, and that is unrepentant sinners enter not into the kingdom of God.

**Seek to build your Wisdom of the cross, by looking for those that can sharpen your beliefs.**

Are we spending enough time around each other, around those that cling to the Wisdom of the cross, are we allowing people who are active in keeping out the world to be the ones that help sharpen our beliefs?

**Spend time thanking and rejoicing in how God is saving you.**

Practice your theology with those in your family here and at home by explaining specifically how God is saving you. What is it that you see He is making you aware of that must be confessed, changed, and jettisoned? Do you see how He is challenging you in what you believe? Ask others to pray for you if you are not happy with following Jesus now.

**MP:**

**Seek to be United in the Wisdom of the Cross**

**Prayer**

**Communion**

**1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ESV**

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given



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thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."<sup>25</sup> In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."<sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus which was lived for us. Jesus lived a life that showed the Wisdom of God. He lived a life of total obedience to the law, He lived a life showing total mastery over the powers of darkness, and He lived a life praising His Father even in His death. Praise be to Him for His Wise Ways.

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood for the new covenant. The Wisdom in the Cross is displayed by the once and for all sacrifice of a perfect lamb, the perfect blood of that lamb that was necessary to cover all our sins, the perfect love of a Savior that gave freely to pay a debt we can never repay. Praise be to Him for His wonderful love.

**[CONFESSION OF FAITH]**

\* The Congregation will stand

**Elder – "Christians, what do we believe?"**

**Congregation –**

**James 3:13-18**

**Wisdom from Above**

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. 15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits,



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impartial and sincere. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

**[OFFERING+LAST SONG]**

**[BENEDICTION]**

Go in the name of the Father, who to make the wise foolish, displayed His Wisdom in the cross, so that none may boast.

Go in the name of the Son, that has lived out the Wisdom of the Cross, making our Salvation effectual on His merits alone.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that opens the eyes of God's elect to the Wisdom of the Cross and empowers us to share this good news with others.





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