

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

We are constantly faced with all kinds of **choices**. We need to choose where we will **live**, what kind of **car** we will drive, and what line of **work** we will pursue. Actually, everything we **do** or **don't** do involves making some kind of a **choice**. All you have to do is walk into a **grocery** store and you will be faced with **countless** choices - high **quality** or low **cost** - **large** or **small** packages - **name** brands or **generics** - **buying** or **not buying** - **paper** or **plastic**. Usually our choices are based on what will bring us the most **benefit**. For example, the NBA teams draft the **tallest** centers, the **strongest** power forwards, and the **quickest** and **smartest** play-making guards - **regardless** of the cost. They want players who can think **clearly**, pass **intelligently**, and shoot **accurately** - because a **winning team** will return their investment many times over. In the **Bible**, Abraham's nephew, **Lot**, chose to live on the land which was near the cities of **Sodom** and **Gomorrah** because it was the most **fertile** and the best **watered**. It was a choice which he **thought** was in his best interest, even though it almost meant his **destruction**.

But you know, there **are** instances where we have **no** choice whatsoever - times when someone **else** makes the decision **for** us - and our **call** is **one** of those instances. The term **call** can refer to several different things, ranging from dialing a **telephone**, to our **occupation**, to the **faith** which we possess. It's this **final** example of which our text speaks today. This morning I would like us to **Consider Our Call** - our coming to **faith** in the Lord Jesus. We will quickly recognize that we were **not** called because of our **own** efforts, but rather, we were called **by God**, and we were called **in Christ**.

In our text Paul exhorted the Corinthians, "*Consider Your Call, brothers. Not many of you were wise from a human point of view, not many were powerful, and not many were born with high status.*" From Paul's description of them, it would seem as if the Corinthian congregation was made up of a group of **misfits** - or perhaps not really **misfits**, but rather just a group of **average, everyday** people. The Corinthians were the kind of individuals who for the most part didn't **stand out** in a crowd - who didn't call any **special attention** to themselves. Oh, there were a few **exceptions**, but that's exactly what they **were** too - **exceptions**. One Corinthian who is mentioned by Paul was a man named, **Crispus**. He was the **ruler** of the **synagogue** in Corinth, and as such he was certainly **well educated**, and also very **influential** in the community. His counterpart in **Rome**, was a man named, **Gaius**. He had provided **his own house** as a place of worship, and it seems that he also provided, out of his own pocket, for all of Paul's **financial**

needs while he was in Rome. This man was obviously **well-born**, and was perhaps even **nobility**.

Just about **every one** of the congregations which were started by Paul had **one** such individual. Some were even blessed with **two**. But such people were **few** and **far between** among the Christians. God hadn't **chosen** many of them, and there are a couple of reasons **why**. **One** of those reasons is recorded for us in verses 27 and 28 of our text, where Paul writes: "*God chose the **foolish** things of the world to put to shame those who are **wise**. God chose the **weak** things of the world to put to shame the things that are **strong**, and God chose the **lowly** things of the world and the **despised** things, and the things that **are not**, to **do away** with the things that **are**."* That's **not** the way **people** normally operate. When **we** want to **accomplish** something, we logically choose the **wisest** and the **strongest** to give us help. But **God** chose just the **opposite**. Why? Because He wanted to show that **we** hadn't **accomplished** our salvation - that we **couldn't** accomplish our salvation - because we were just people who were **foolish** and **weak**.

Perhaps a second reason for God's choice of the **foolish** and **weak** of this world, is to remind us of **who we are**. Sometimes we can get pretty **wrapped up** in ourselves and our own little **world**. We get to thinking that we are pretty **important** people, and that others should take us more **seriously** than they do. They should really **sit up** and **take notice**. But then **God** comes along and says, "Don't build yourself up **too high**. Remember, I **didn't** choose you because you were so **important** and **influential**. I chose you because you were **foolish** and **weak** by the world's standards." That message should certainly put us right back in our **place**, and bring our **thinking** back into the proper **perspective**.

Then again, if you **do** happen to be one of those very few, **privileged**, **wise**, **influential**, and **noble** people whom the LORD has chosen to bless with **faith**; then **also** remember the great **responsibility** which the LORD has placed on you. He tells us in His Word, "*From everyone to whom **much** was **given**, **much** will be **expected**. From the one who was **entrusted** with **much**, **much more** will be **asked**."* Those whom the LORD has blessed with **special** gifts He will expect to be **leaders**, like Crispus and Gaius - or **teachers**, like Aquila and Priscilla - or **generous**, like Lydia, the wealthy seller of purple cloth. But even **then**, you must remember who you **are**. By serving in a capacity of **leadership**, you will not be doing anything **out** of the **ordinary**. You will only be **servants** - using the talents and resources with which the LORD has **provided** you.

All this has been arranged by the LORD so that no one can **boast** before Him. There is **no room** for boasting about ourselves; because **everything** we have, including our most precious **faith**, has come from the **LORD**. We are only **stewards** or **caretakers** of the manifold blessings of our God. And it's only by His **grace** and **mercy** that we sinful human beings will be **good** stewards, and make the proper **use** of those blessings. Again, Paul told the Corinthians, "*Because of **him** you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us the **wisdom** from God, namely, our **righteousness and sanctification and redemption.***"

Actually, this whole **process** is the work of the **Holy Spirit**, as we learned in our confirmation classes when we studied the 3rd Article of the Apostles' Creed. The Holy Spirit has **called** us to **faith** by the **Gospel** in God's Word and Sacraments. And by those **same** Means of Grace, He has **converted, sanctified,** and **enlightened** us. God has given us a **new life** - a life to be lived **in** Christ, and a life to be lived **for** Christ.

Paul sums up this all-inclusive work of God with these concluding words, "*Just as it is written, 'Let the one who **boasts** boast in the **Lord.**'*" Those are words which Paul quoted in **part** from the Prophet **Jeremiah**. In **full** they read this way, "*Let those who **boast** boast about **this**: that they have **understanding,** and that they know **me.** They know that I am the **Lord,** who shows **mercy, justice,** and **righteousness** on earth, for I **delight** in these things, declares the Lord.*" My friends, there is **no room** in our lives for **personal** bragging, but there certainly **is** room in our lives for **boasting**. When we boast let's do so **loudly** - not boasting of our **own** merits, but rather shouting from the housetops that we have a **Savior** who is **kind** - kind enough to call us **unlovely** sinners to be His dear **children**. Let's boast that we have a Savior who is **just** - so just and fair that as He has promised; He will take all those to **heaven** who **believe** in Him, whether they are the **greatest** or the **least** among the people of the earth. And let's boast that we have a Savior who is **righteous** - a **perfect** Savior who is **God** Himself, and who **shares** His righteousness with us.

Consider Our Call. Remember who we **are** - children of **God** - and remember also what that high calling **requires** from us. God says, "*Let your light **shine** in people's presence, so that they may **see** your good works and **glorify** your Father who is in heaven.*" Dear people of God, **Consider Our Call**, and keep Jesus as your **highest** priority in life - because **without** Him, our lives wouldn't even be worth living - but **with** Him, we are both **children** of God, and **heirs** of everlasting life. **Thank Him** for His goodness. Amen.