

Human wisdom and the Power of God

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[0 : 00] Please do sit down and please pick up your Bible. I'd be very grateful if you'd turn first to Acts chapter 18. And as you're looking that up, you might also like to put a finger in 1 Corinthians chapter 1.

Acts chapter 18, page 927 in the Blue Bibles. I'm going to read two short snippets from this chapter. First, an excerpt from the description of Paul's ministry while he was in Corinth. And then a little excerpt after he left Corinth to describe what went on there later on.

Acts chapter 18, verse 5. When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus.

And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, Your blood be on your own heads. I am innocent. From now on, I will go to the Gentiles.

[1 : 05] And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justice, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household.

And many of the Corinthians, hearing Paul, believed and were baptized. And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.

And he stayed a year and six months teaching the word of God among them. Now, verse 24. Paul has left Corinth.

Now, a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the scriptures. He'd been instructed in the way of the Lord and being fervent in spirit. He spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

[2 : 20] And when he wished to cross to Achaia, that's where Corinth is, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

Now, turn on to 1 Corinthians chapter 1, page 952. Paul has finished his introduction, and he starts off the main substance of the letter, verse 10.

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no divisions among you, but rather that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to be my close people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, I follow Paul, or I follow Apollos, or I follow Kephas, or I follow Christ.

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name.

[3 : 47] I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I don't know whether I baptized anyone else. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it's the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will fort.

Where is the one who's wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God

through wisdom, it pleads God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs, and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified a stumbling block to Jews, and folly to Gentiles.

But to those who are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. [5 : 01] 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 low 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.

He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, and our righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Therefore, as it is written, let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the destiny of God with lofty speech or wisdom, for I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling. And my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

[6 : 15] Amen. This is the word of God. We'll be studying that passage together just a little later on. Sometimes choosing where to start is quite a difficult thing to do in life.

You have a day at home. You want to relax, but there are things to do. The kitchen needs to be tidied. The washing needs to be done. You need to get some food in.

And then there are all those things you've been putting off for a while. That picture that needs to be hung up. The dripping tap that needs mending. The bills that need to be paid. The broken curtain rail. And as you think about all of that, you decide, I'll just take the dog for a walk.

You get to work tomorrow morning. There are 50 emails in your inbox. It looks as though 15 of them, at least, are important. Which do you respond to first?

Let's just have a cup of coffee, you say to yourself. A.A. Milne describes this beautifully in a humorous poem. There was once an old sailor my grandfather knew who had so many things which he wanted to do that whenever he thought it was time to begin, he couldn't because of the state he was in.

[7 : 24] Many of us meet that kind of situation often in life. At the beginning of the Corinthian letter, the apostle's mental inbox is already full.

All sorts of bits of troubling news have reached him from Corinth. Messy public legal disputes. Gross sexual immorality. Chaotic meetings.

People denying the resurrection. And the Corinthians have written to him with loads of questions that they want answers to. Sex and marriage. Food sacrifice to idols. Speaking in tongues. With such a choice.

Where to start. You can imagine him thinking, let's just go on holiday. Where does he start? Well, in a very surprising place.

Look at verse 10. I appeal to you brothers by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that all of you agree and there be no divisions among you but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment for it's been reported to be my Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers.

[8 : 32] What I mean is that each one of you says, I follow Paul. I follow Apollos. I follow Kephas. I follow Christ. The Corinthians are divided.

about which Christian leader they like the best. They've had visits from these three named ones here. Paul, Apollos, Kephas. That's the Apostle Peter. And these three have been a bit different from one another.

We read about Apollos earlier on. An inexperienced believer but evidently a very able speaker. And he made a big impact when he came to Corinth. For some of them, he's their man.

Probably because he's a more impressive speaker than Paul. Kephas, he pops up again in chapter 9. He seems to have visited after Paul bringing his wife with him.

He's been partly supported by Corinthian money. For some of the Corinthians, he's their sort of guy. He's an important man. He's been willing to travel.

[9 : 29] He's been willing to receive their financial support unlike the Apostle Paul and they're not very happy with that. These different visitors to the Corinthian church have been different from one another and because of their differences, they now have their fans.

Just as in a big city, different people support different football teams, so in the church, different people support different Christian leaders. That's the issue Paul starts with.

And I don't know about you, but I think that's a bit of a surprise. Think of the things that this letter deals with. I mentioned some of them earlier on. Faced with this choice, I don't think we'd have started where he starts.

I can imagine starting on chapter 5, verse 1. Turn over to that. I can imagine his first attack being, it's actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you and of a kind that's not tolerated even among pagans for a man has his father's wife.

I can imagine starting there if I were writing that letter. Why? Because that issue is going to make it to the front page of a national paper. But you can't ever imagine seeing a headline in the paper, Scandal, Christians disagree with one another about favorite preacher.

[10 : 50] It's just not going to sell papers. Where Paul starts is a surprise to us. We too come from a church culture where that kind of thing is just normal.

Having a favorite Christian leader is about as normal as having a favorite football team. We think about our favorites, who's best, instinctively.

Oh, I like to listen to him preach. I listen to him all the time online. I always read that person's blog to see what they have to say. Maybe if we could get him to come and speak on our youth group weekend, then we'd have the impact we wanted.

Let's book him on our training course. Then people will know we're something to be reckoned with.

Or, I wish I were more like her. Then I could be spiritually useful.

Now, there is nothing wrong with good examples and with useful people. But, the cult of Christian celebrity has never been stronger than it is now.

[11 : 55] It is not difficult to find gross examples. Here's one. A pastor, known and admired around the world as a vibrant communicator.

This is the church website. A vibrant communicator, concert-level pianist, eloquent theologian, and impassioned man of God. We're told about how he piano studies at the age of 11 and accepted Christ into his life a year later.

He has a Bachelor of Music degree, a Master of Divinity degree, an Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree, and an Honorary Doctor of Sacred Theology degree. He's an accomplished pastor and college chaplain.

He's the senior pastor of a church. Away from the pulpit and the keyboard, we're told, he is an instrument-rated pilot, certified scuba diver, motorcyclist, Segway rider, and vintage automobile enthusiast.

He also is a devoted animal lover, having owned six monkeys, a chimpanzee, a ferret, and a colony of 26 hamsters. Committed to being a citizen of the world, he has spoken, lectured, or performed concerts in Great Britain, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, an endless number of countries.

[13 : 08] He's spoken to thousands of people in conference, campus, and religious settings. Last year, more than 100 different groups benefited from his wit. It's not difficult to find gross examples.

Here's a closer to home one from the UK. Our minister's work, and in particular, his preaching, is permeated and inspired by his deep and passionate faith.

He reads widely. And the breadth of his reading, including poetry, is reflected in his sermons. His theology is rational, progressive, and pertinent to life in the 21st century.

And he has no hesitation in tackling controversial subjects. That is one of the grosser UK examples I've come across recently. It is very unusual to find a church website where there are more words about Jesus and what he's doing in the world than the human leaders and what they're doing in the church.

So often, the first thing churches want to present to the world is who their human leaders are. And the fact that we find ourselves a bit surprised by why Paul starts here, given that smorgasbord of disasters to deal with, might just mean that the Corinthian issues are not as far from us as we'd like to think.

[14 : 32] You do not have to look Corinthian to be Corinthian. They love their Christian celebrities. And so do we. Why does he start here?

Well, he starts here because this issue, perhaps better than any other, shows where their true confidence lies. They are people who trust in human power and in human wisdom rather than God's power and God's wisdom.

Look at verse 12. There's an argument going on in the Corinthian family. I'm for Paul, says Gus. He's the guy who brought us the message.

I'm for Apollos, says Anita. He's a really impressive talker. I like the way he talks. He preached to my baptism. It was a great sermon. I'm for Kephass, says Diana. He's an important person.

He was grateful for our money. No, says Nick. Christ is the one we ought to emulate. And Paul says, in response, that whole discussion just totally lacks perspective.

[15 : 37] Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? Why are you having this argument? Jesus is not one among many.

He's one over all. And none of those people was crucified for you. So why do you talk about them all the time? And when you were baptized, you were united with Jesus in his death and his way of doing things.

Why do you care about which human being baptized you? He goes on to say, thank goodness, I hardly baptized any of you. If for you, baptism is just a marker of status because of the human being it links you to.

When I came to you, he says, verse 17, it was not to impress you with my words or power or associate you with me in baptism.

For if I'd done that, the cross of Christ would be absolutely powerless in your lives. Why does Paul start here? Because their partiality to particular people proves that no matter what they might have liked to think, their confidence was in human power and human wisdom, not God's power and God's wisdom.

[16 : 56] Nothing demonstrates that better than the fact that they're just always talking about Christian leaders. Now I imagine for us that's quite an uncomfortable connection to make and having made it, let me observe that if we are always talking about our Christian leaders, their work, their abilities, their example, comparing one with another, who's better, who's worse, who's preaching and modeling of things is the best example to follow, whose is the best sermon we've ever heard, which ones I know and have met myself, to the extent that we are preoccupied with human leadership, we demonstrate that that's where our confidence lies.

And I guess we find that uncomfortable because we like to be able to be preoccupied with our human leaders, what they do, what they don't do, and yet continue to think that our confidence is really in God.

And as we work through these four chapters, we're likely to find ourselves resisting the idea that being preoccupied with human leaders does say something about our confidence in God because like the Corinthians, we come from a culture deeply in love with human achievement and celebrity. What's the biggest news in the news last week? The thing everyone can remember without fail, Madonna fell off the stage at the Oscars. Why does that make it to the front page?

That kind of celebrity focus spills over into the church. It takes Paul four chapters to deal with this issue because for them, it's a big and unrecognized issue.

[18 : 41] And given our cultural background, it might so easily be like that for us. Where does he start? With their arguments about leaders, why does he start there? Because it shows clearly where their confidence is.

How does he respond? Well, in the rest of our section, Paul basically does one thing. He starts to prove to them that verse 18 is true.

Prove to them that, look at verse 18, God's power comes not through the cleverness or power of people, but rather through the foolish looking message of the cross.

And the whole of this section is about that up to chapter 2, verse 5. And in order to prove that to them, Paul gets them to consider two pairs of related things.

Here's the first. He says, think about what the scripture says and think about what God has done. Think about what the scripture says. Let me read verse 18.

[19 : 43] For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it's the power of God for it is written in scripture, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the

discernment of the discerning I will thwart.

Here's what scripture says and here he's quoting from Isaiah chapter 29. Now I'd like you please to turn that up. It'll be quite helpful for you to look at that. You'll find it on page 590 in the blue Bibles. The quotation comes from verse 14 of Isaiah 29. Let me fill you in on the background. This is a chapter spoken at a very low point in Israel's history.

They'd had great privileges in their history from God, the best of spiritual heritage, the clearest of human preachers. They were proud of their spiritual heritage and they thought themselves superior to the other nations.

In Isaiah's day, verse 13, they said the right things about God. They honored him with their lips, but their hearts were far from him.

[21 : 03] And God promises to do something about that. But, verse 14, God says, when I do something about that, I'll do it in such a way that nobody can put what I've done down to human activity, to human power or wisdom.

Now, back to 1 Corinthians. Corinthians. The Corinthians are very like the people of Isaiah's day. They're people who are proud of their heritage. They're people who thought themselves superior to others.

And Paul says, remember the scripture which says, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.

When I do it, you'll know it's me that's done it, not human power or cleverness. That's what the scripture says. And, surprise, surprise, he adds, that is precisely what God is doing in the world now.

What is God doing? Just what he said he would. He's destroying human wisdom through the proclamation of Christ crucified. Verse 20, where is the one who's wise?

[22 : 22] Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world. How has he done that? 21, 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.

For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who have been called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Look at what God's doing in the world, he says. People are not, verse 21, not coming to know God because of human activity.

Now, there are loads of things in the world that people are impressed by. Verse 22, Jewish culture loves a miraculous sign from heaven. You want to impress a first century Jew?

Get your miracles out. Greek culture loves a snappy speaker. You want to impress a first century Greek? Polish up your lecture and deliver it with passion.

[23 : 35] But that's not how God is working, says Paul. In fact, we proclaim to the world the message that both Jews and Greeks regard as a total no-hoper in the persuasion stakes.

And lo and behold, verse 24, both Jews and Greeks believe it. Why does God work that way? Because God uses stupid-looking things to accomplish what clever-looking things can't accomplish. God wants to show that when he brings people to know him, it's him that's bringing people to know him, not human power that's bringing people to know him.

And so he uses weak-looking things to accomplish his purposes. Why does he do it that way?

Because, verse 19, he is making it clear that it is him that does it, not human beings.

So Paul starts off, guys, look at what the scripture says and look at how God is working in the world and you'll see that they absolutely agree with one another.

[24 : 47] he says he's going to work in a way that shows he's done it and lo and behold, he works in a way that shows that he's done it through a weak-looking message.

Now again, let me say, we find this hard to believe. We see things happening in a church and the first question we ask is, what are they doing there?

We must do the same. in a previous church I worked in, we had a building project. We were in the middle of the building project. It was a building site.

I came to pick my children up from an evening children's club. I was waiting outside in the middle of the building site. A guy from another church, a leader in another church, came along also to pick his children up.

He looked around at the building site. He turned to me and he said, what's your secret? I said, there isn't a secret.

[25 : 49] We preach the scriptures and we pray and God's been very good. In comprehension all over his face. We find it very hard to believe that God uses the ordinary in a world that values the extraordinary.

We want to do something. We ask, who can we get to do that? Who can we get to speak? At one level, that's not a stupid question. Somebody competent is necessary.

But the power is not in the speaker. The power is in the message. We have a really wonderful asset and we think, that will do it.

Think about this building. It is a fantastic facility, isn't it? It's wonderful if you've seen around it. It's wonderful. I rejoice in it. I've got an office now.

It's great. It's a fantastic facility. But, brothers and sisters, it's a building. It's a human construction.

[26 : 53] It's only matter. It's very nicely arranged matter. But God's wisdom and power will not be manifested by people walking through the door and bowing the knee to Jesus because the building looks impressive.

Now, it's not helpful to have a nasty building that people don't like being in. No point in giving people reasons not to listen. It's a great tool. But it is not where the power lies.

If your church or Christian union has competent leaders, well, thank God for that. It's a wonderful asset, a great gift of God. And if you haven't got competent leaders, you'll know what a problem that can be.

But the power lies not in the competence of the human leader, but in the gospel message. That's where the power is. A crucified king does not look powerful.

But the crucifixion of Jesus is the most powerful and wise thing that has ever been accomplished on the face of the planet. Speaking words about a crucified king is not powerful looking.

[28 : 02] It's not something that anyone who wants to persuade anyone could possibly think of doing. But that's where the power lies. I find myself giving evangelistic addresses to various groups.

I hear myself say the words about Jesus and his death. And as I'm saying the words, it is so easy to think that is never going to do anything. It sounds so weak.

Paul says, look at the scriptures and look how God is working and you will agree that God works through means that negate human power. And now he goes on and makes it more personal for the Corinthians.

Corinthians, how did it happen for you? Two things again. First, think of what you were like and think of what I did when I visited you.

Think of what you were like. Verse 26. You were nothing special. consider your calling brothers, which means consider when you were called.

[29 : 06] What were you like? Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful. Not many of you were of noble birth. You were nothing special. So why did God choose you lot then?

Verse 27. He chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. He chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. He chose what is low and despised even things that are nothing to bring to nothing things that are so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

Why did God choose you Corinthians? He chose you as an object lesson. So that no one looking at you might think that you got onto God's team through human power and wisdom.

He makes the Corinthians remember what they were like. And the words he uses must have been very uncomfortable for them. Foolish. Weak.

Low. Despised. Nothings. And those are precisely the terms that the now proud Corinthians are using of Paul in comparison to them.

[30 : 17] Since his visit they've grown proud. Cast your minds back he says. I remember what you were really like. Don't you remember? Some wise but not many.

Some powerful but not many. And brothers and sister that could be accurately said of nearly every congregation that's ever existed in the whole world. Look around this evening.

Just look look around the building. Some wise. But not many. Some powerful but not many.

would you choose this lot if you were going for the 18? Would they choose you? You see like every group of Christians we are an object lesson in how God confounds human wisdom.

Which for a proud congregation like Corinth is a very very painful reminder. reminder. But which for people with better perspective on life is a massive encouragement.

[31 : 21] I wonder if you remember the painful business of choosing people for playground games in at school. Do you remember that? Now I don't know what the girly version of that is.

I've only been on the boy version of that which was football. I was never that good at playground football. So I remember it well. who gets to choose? The captains.

Who are the captains? The two best players. Who do they choose first? The two next best. And then the next best. And then the next best.

And once we get past two or three choices we're getting into slightly iffy territory where they're not sure who to choose because none of them are very good. Until at the end come the players that everyone wishes they didn't have to choose.

That's how human choosing works. And it works like that all the way through life. It gets a little bit more sophisticated looking but that's how it works. Why?

[32 : 20] Because every human team wants to look good and to win. And unless you happen to be a very very unusual person you often experience the disappointment of being the at least a bit iffy category.

But God. doesn't choose like that at all. Mostly he chooses really rubbish looking players for his team.

And he does it that way because he wants everyone to wake up to reality that human power and achievement is not where it's at in this world.

Think what you were like says Paul. And think what I did. Chapter 2 verse 1. You were nothing special.

And when I came to you I did nothing spectacular. I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom for I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified and I was with you in weakness and fear and much trembling and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom but in demonstration of the spirit and of power that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of man but the power of God.

[33 : 42] Now I don't think the Apostle Paul was lacking in ability but there is plenty to suggest that the work in Corinth was genuinely frightening. Remember that vision back in Acts chapter 18.

Do not be afraid. He has to be told in a vision not to be afraid. But I think also there's deliberate choice here.

Look at verse 2. I decided how I was going to do things when I came to you. When he came to Corinth he chose not to impress them with things that would have impressed them naturally.

We are very quick to think what will impress people. I'll do that to impress them. And I think Paul deliberately avoided that in Corinth. He knew that they liked a good speaker so he chose not to play the eloquence game though I imagine it was well within his capabilities.

We need to take on board that it may be possible to say true words about Jesus in such a way that we encourage people to trust us because we're clever speakers rather than him the one we're speaking about.

[35 : 00] That's the downside of getting a really brilliant talker to do your evangelistic address. People can come away trusting him rather than the one they're talking about. Paul didn't do that and yet verse 4 the Corinthians believed him.

It was a demonstration of the spirit and of power. Why did he do that verse 5 so that their faith would not rest in the wisdom of men but the power of God.

His message was about a crucified Savior and so in his method he did not big up human activity because that would have undermined the message.

Let me conclude. Paul starts with this issue. Why? Because it gets right to the heart of where Corinthian confidence lies. In human power and wisdom rather than in God and he says to them you know that's not what the Bible says don't you?

And you know that's not how God is working in the world don't you? And you know that's not why God worked in you because of your brilliance and you know that's not how God worked through me because of my brilliance.

[36 : 13] You know all of that don't you? So chapter 1 verse 31 wise up Corinthians boast in the Lord chapter 2 verse 5 don't put your faith in the wisdom and power of men.

Don't put your faith in Christian workers. Chapter 1 verse 10 stop going on about your human leaders which is better? Who is worse?

Now this is a great challenge. It's a great challenge because left to ourselves we would like to think that we were in the game because of our own brilliance.

Left to ourselves we'd like to think that we were part of our magnificently grand looking enterprise. Everyone likes to be in with something grand.

But the truth is very different. Let me ask you how did the captain of our team lead and play the game?

[37 : 19] Well there's no doubt that he has amazing personal qualities. The Lord Jesus Christ has great power and great wisdom.

But you'd have to say from a human perspective he did not play a great looking game. He leads down a very difficult road.

He walks directly towards hostility, rejection, desertion, humiliation, false accusation and execution. He did not look like he was playing a good game. Who does he choose? Well mostly pretty rubbish looking people to be on his team.

Why does he do that? So that nobody will be in any doubt that the whole thing depends on God and his power and his wisdom. What does the captain use?

[38 : 23] Human brilliance? Well he does employ the odd brilliant human being. But he puts that brilliance in its place and mostly he uses the very ordinary to do his work.

And he persists in using pretty rubbish looking players to accomplish what he wants to accomplish in the world. That's how he does things. Our Lord Jesus Christ is not like the world.

And how brilliant is that? He overturns the world in everything he does. In how he did it himself, in who he chooses, in who he uses, in what it looks like now.

He always subverts the world. How wonderful that is. And those who follow him properly fit in with his way of doing things, not the world.

Let's pray together. Amen. What does the scripture say?

[39 : 45] I will destroy the wisdom of the wise. What does God do? A message about a crucified savior saves people.

Who does he choose? Pretty rubbish looking players. Who does he use? Not the spectacular. Those who follow Jesus.

The heading for death one. Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that we belong to a culture which just loves human brilliance.

And we recognize that there are many clever things about human beings. But we pray that you'd help us to believe the scriptures. That you do not use things that make us look clever.

Please deliver us from thinking that our brilliance earns us a place on the team. That our cleverness makes us useful. Please deliver us from glorying in human achievements.

[40 : 57] Instead, please help us to boast in the Lord. In who he is. In his way of doing things. And please help us to follow him faithfully.

For his honour's sake. Amen.