



A STUDY IN 1 CORINTHIANS

Foolishness and Weakness of God

“For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” — 1 Corinthians 1:25

THE TEXT — NEW KING JAMES VERSION

1 Corinthians 1:25-29

“For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 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.”

Introduction: The City of Corinth

- A wealthy Greek seaport on the isthmus — trade and traffic from every direction.
- Rebuilt by Rome in 44 B.C.; a proud center of philosophy, athletics, and rhetoric.
- Home of the temple of Aphrodite — “to Corinthianize” meant to live immorally.
- Into that culture of human wisdom Paul writes: the cross is foolishness to those who perish.



Two Classes — and Only Two

THOSE WHO PERISH

- The preaching of the cross is “foolishness”
- God's revelation judged weak and unreasonable
- Jews demand a sign; Greeks seek wisdom
- Measure God by the standards of men

THOSE WHO ARE SAVED

- The cross is “the power of God”
- Christ, “the power of God and the wisdom of God”
- Receive what God says because God said it
- Measure men by the standard of God

“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith.” — 2 Corinthians 13:5

The Basis of the Gospel: Not Man's Wisdom

- No man knows the things of a man except the spirit of man within him.
- Even so, no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.
- So the apostles spoke “not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches.”
- The gospel is revealed, not discovered — no council of scholars could have reasoned its way to Calvary.

1 Corinthians 2:11-13

“These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches.”

Isaiah 55:8-9

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD.”

We Live This Way Every Day

The man who refuses God's way as “unreasonable” trusts a hundred things he cannot see before breakfast.



The Buried Seed

No one can see how a grain of wheat germinates in the dark soil — yet every farmer sows.

The Daily Meal

No one can trace how bread becomes bone, blood, and flesh — yet every man eats.

Beyond the Senses

None of this is proved by the five senses. “We walk by faith, not by sight.” — 2 Corinthians 5:7

Not “Blind Faith” — but Faith with Evidence

- **Faith is not a leap in the dark; it rests on testimony given by witnesses.**
- “Faith working through love” — a faith that acts. (Galatians 5:6)
- Thomas believed when he saw; blessed are those who believe without seeing.
- “Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.” — John 20:29
- The signs were written “that ye might believe.” (John 20:30-31)
- Blind faith believes without reason; Bible faith obeys God's word.

Hebrews 11:1

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

Romans 10:17

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”



EXAMPLES ILLUSTRATING THE TEXT

**God's remedies never
match human
expectation.**

Examples Illustrating the Text (1)

The Fiery Serpents — Numbers 21

A bronze serpent on a pole: “Look and live.” No medicine, no merit — only a look of faith (John 3:14-15).

Jericho — Joshua 6

March, blow rams' horns, shout. No siege engines. When did the walls fall? “By faith” — before a stone moved (Heb. 11:30).

Gideon — Judges 6–7

32,000 cut to 300. Weapons: trumpets, pitchers, torches. Was the plan wise? It left no room for Israel to boast.



Examples Illustrating the Text (2)

Naaman — 2 Kings 5

“Go and wash in the Jordan seven times.” He raged at the simplicity; obedience cleansed him.

The Blind Man — John 9

“Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.” He went, washed, and came seeing.

The Lord's Supper — Luke 22:19

Bread and cup as a memorial: “Do this in remembrance of Me.” Silly to the world; sacred to the saved.

Baptism Saves — Mark 16:15-16

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved.” Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21.



The common thread: the remedy never matches the malady — and God is glorified in the mismatch.

The Lord's Work Without Institutions

- **David — 1 Samuel 17**

- He put off Saul's armor: “I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them.” Sling, stone, and the name of the LORD.

- **Dorcas — Acts 9:36ff**

- “Full of good works and almsdeeds” — and not a member of any sewing society. She used her needle as a disciple.

- **Paul and Silas — Acts 13**

- Sent out by the Holy Spirit through a local church; no missionary society was formed, needed, or mentioned.

Ephesians 3:9-10

“To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”

The church is God's chosen instrument to display his wisdom — and the church is all that is needed.

Conclusion: The Obedience of Faith

1. Hear

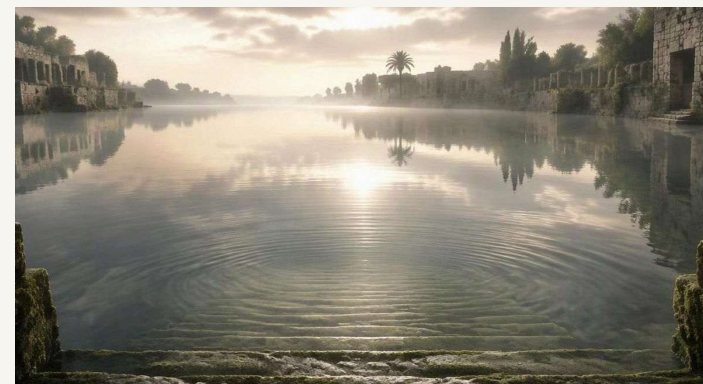
2. Believe

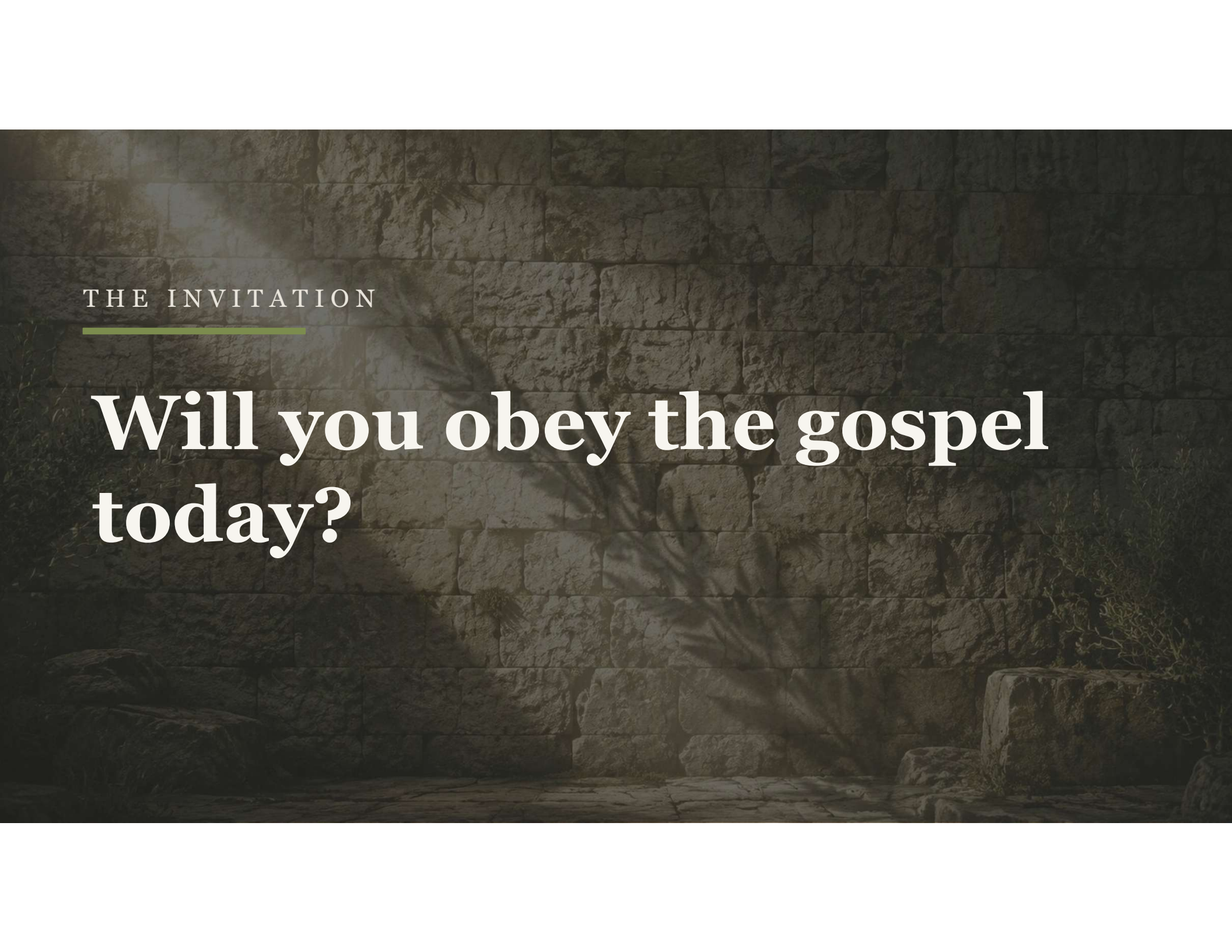
3. Repent

4. Confess

**5. Be
Baptized**

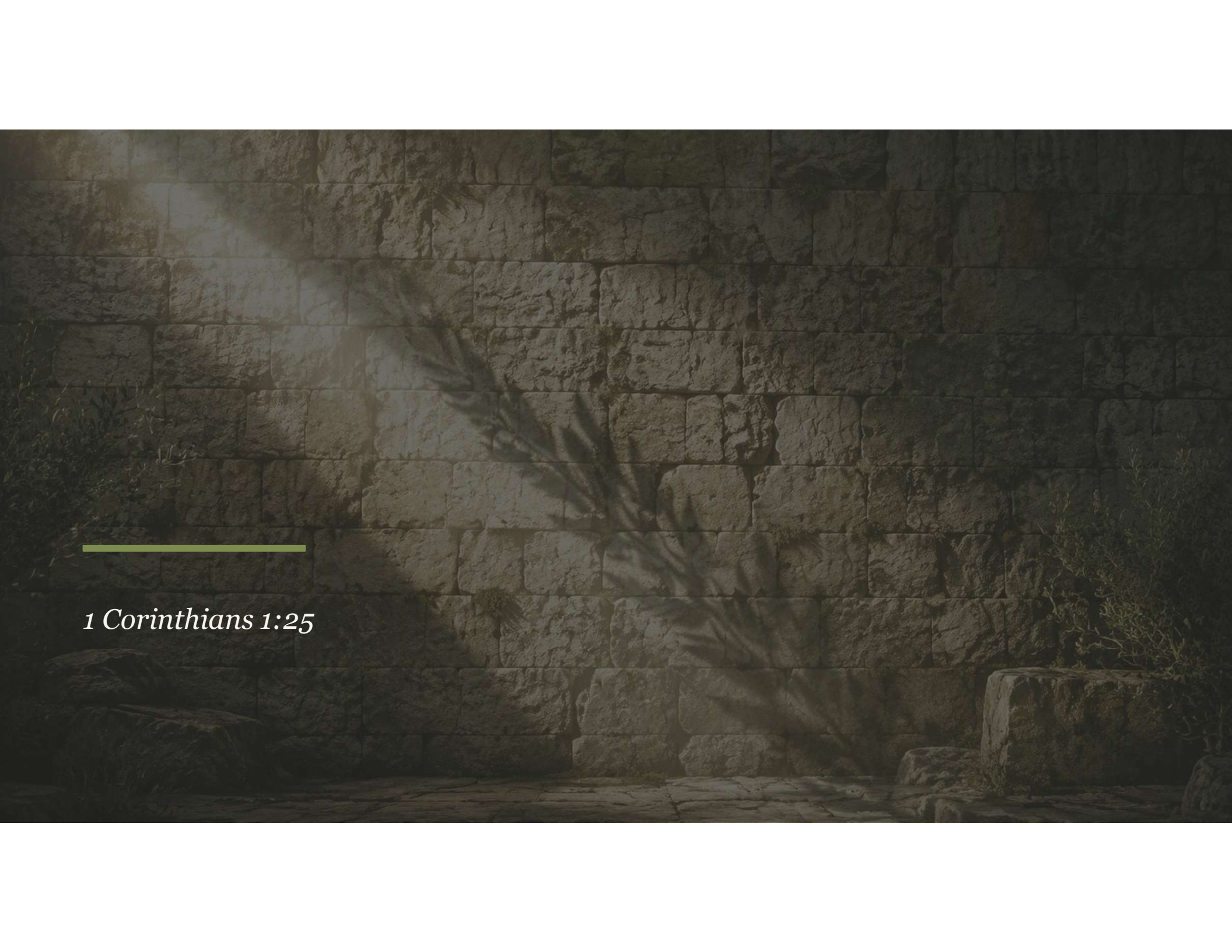
- Paul's whole apostleship aimed at “obedience to the faith among all nations.” — Romans 1:5
- “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.” — James 2:24
- Buried with Him through baptism into death, raised to walk in newness of life. — Romans 6:3-4
- It still looks foolish and weak to the world — and it is still the power of God unto salvation.





THE INVITATION

**Will you obey the gospel
today?**

A dark, atmospheric photograph of a stone wall. The wall is constructed from large, rectangular stone blocks, some of which are weathered and discolored. A long, dark shadow of a palm frond is cast diagonally across the wall from the left. In the foreground, there are some dark, rocky structures and some small, dark plants. The overall lighting is low, creating a moody and mysterious atmosphere.

1 Corinthians 1:25