

July 10, 2011
"Mind Boggling Good News"
1 Corinthians 2

I. *What the Gospel (Good News) does not NEED –*

^{NKJ} 1 Corinthians 2:1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. (1Co 2:1 NKJ)

⁴ And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,
⁵ that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. (1Co 2:4-5 NKJ)

1. *It does not need "excellence of speech or wisdom"*
2. *It does not need human wisdom*

What is Paul talking about, is he saying he intentionally tried to be boring or uninteresting in speech?

No, what he is saying is, the Gospel, the Good News about Jesus Christ and our salvation, does not need a lot of HYPE! It does not need salesmanship; it definitely does not need lying, refining, small print or exaggeration!

I remember Pepsodent, the toothpaste guaranteed to get a man a date with the very same girl who rejected him the day before! Another Pepsodent commercial promised a girl success in Hollywood if she just used that toothpaste.

3. *The Bible does not need hype, we do not need either to hide the offense of the cross, avoid talking about sin or Hell or predestination.*
4. *We do not need to offer the Lord's Supper to pets (cats and dogs) or door prizes like cars or motorcycles to get people in!*

5. *Or maybe I should say to do God's will –*

¹⁷ "Therefore prepare yourself and arise, And speak to them all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before their faces, Lest I dismay you before them.

¹⁸ For behold, I have made you this day A fortified city and an iron pillar, And bronze walls against the whole land-- Against the kings of Judah, Against its princes, Against its priests, And against the people of the land.

¹⁹ They will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you," says the LORD, "to deliver you." (Jer 1:17-19 NKJ)

God's will for Jeremiah was to speak the truth in spite of the fact virtual no one heard, no one believed! God does not need us polishing Christ's cross!

II. *What people NEED, the wonderful, mind boggling TRUTH of the Gospel –*

1. *If I am looking for a car, am I more likely to buy a poor one if someone offers me 20 cupcakes a month for life with it?*
2. *It is the TRUTH of the Gospel that makes it desirable!*

But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Corinthians 2:9 NKJ)

A. *There is salvation from the consequence of sin and even from sin itself –*

"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21 NKJ)

B. *There is eternal life, not only in duration but in quality –*
"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (John 17:3 NKJ)

C. *There is the transfer from the kingdom of Darkness into the Kingdom of God's Dear Son –*
He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, (Colossians 1:13 NKJ)

3. *These things are not seen or understood by the ungodly –*

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14 NKJ)

This is why Jesus says, even to Nicodemus, a teacher of the law, you must be born again – Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3 NKJ)

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (John 3:5 NKJ)

"Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' (John 3:7 NKJ)

4. *This has led to two different strategies of witness toward the ungodly –*

A. *Make the Gospel appealing to them – with prizes, diminishing of truth, application of Biblical truth to worldly / here-and-now / down-to-earth problems!*

B. *Focus on the truth, pray and pray some more, aim and encourage other brothers and sisters in Christ to live in a way God may bless –*

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47 NKJ)

- *This second approach may take longer, it may seem to have no impact at all on an ungodly society, yet Biblically it is God's way of people being SAVED!*

- *Where does faith come from? ---*

So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17 NKJ)

- *How do we truly come to KNOW GOD? ---*

¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. (Jer 29:13 NKJ)

III. My own preaching strategy –

1. *Like Paul's –*

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.² For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (1 Corinthians 2:1-2 NKJ)

2. *This does not rule out illustrations or heart-felt communication*

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Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NKJ)

3. *My coming vacation, not necessarily a break from study and prayer –*

praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints--¹⁹ and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, (Ephesians 6:18-19 NKJ)

- *Prayer is a calling of every saint and for every saint – “and supplication for all the saints” Ephesians 6:18*
- *Prayer is a call for all times – pray without ceasing, (1 Thessalonians 5:17 NKJ) “praying always” Ephesians 6:18*
- *Prayer enables us with God's help to do what we could not do otherwise – Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. (Ephesians 6:10 NKJ)*