

INTRODUCTION

1. Please take God's Word and turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 2.
2. We come now to the heart of what Paul said in chapter 1, verses 18-31 that we looked at last week on the Lord's Day.
3. In those verses, Paul contrasted the human wisdom of man with the wisdom of God.
4. Man in his wisdom says the "message of the cross" is foolishness.
5. It's moronic or stupid.

6. Man cannot believe that by God sending His Son Jesus to die on a cross for our sins is enough for our salvation.
7. But Paul reminds the Corinthians that Jews ask for signs and Greeks seek for wisdom but the sign they asked for and the wisdom the Greeks sought was in reality “Christ crucified” even though they rejected Him.
8. That’s the sign and wisdom God gave.
9. God did not choose the wise, the mighty or the noble.
10. He chose the weak, the base, and the despised.

11. Now in chapter 2, He describes his arrival, his message and his purpose.
12. Listen as I read the first 5 verses.
13. Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.
14. Words---we all use them.
15. Some good, some bad.
16. Some encourage, others abuse.
17. Some manipulate.
18. In the modern day church when calling sinners to come to Christ, some preachers manipulate the emotions with words.

19. Songs are sung with the purpose of moving the emotions so that the sinner will walk an aisle and get saved.
20. God uses words but He doesn't trick or mislead us.
21. Sometimes He uses parables.
22. Other times He speaks plainly.
23. When it comes to the Gospel, He uses an economy of words to specifically show the sinners what he needs to do.
24. When beginning His preaching ministry, Jesus said in Mark 1:15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

25. He told Nicodemus in John 3:3 “You must be born again.”
26. He told the woman at the well in John 4:10, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”
27. Peter used specific words on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:38-40 (NASB)
Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” 40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them,

saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!”

28. Paul said to the Romans in Romans 10:9 (NASB) that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
29. These are specific words regarding the gospel of salvation.
30. Paul is that precise as he speaks to the Corinthians.
31. He tells them in 1 Corinthians 1:23, “But we preach Christ crucified.”
32. He says it again in 2:2, “For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus

Christ, and Him crucified.”

33. In Chapter 2, verses 1, 3-4, Paul talks about his arrival at Corinth.

LESSON

I. The Arrival (vv.1, 3-4)

“And when I came to you, brethren.”

“Came” (Gr.erchomai) aor.act.part.

The aorist is “having come”

Paul “came” (aor.) to Corinth following his ministry at Athens (Acts 18:1).

We’re told in Acts 18:11 that He spent “a

year and six months” in Corinth “teaching the word of God among them.”

That verse alone tells us what his mission was---to teach the word of God!

This is what preachers do. They teach God’s Word.

They are literally called “teaching shepherds” in Ephesians 4:11.

They “feed” the flock of God (1 Peter 5:1).

That’s why Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2-4 (NASB) preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.
3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have

their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

“By inserting “I came” and then proceeding with “not ... proclaiming” Paul is more precise and says not merely that some time after his coming, but at once, simultaneous with his coming, he preached as he did.¹

Paul says when he taught the word of God it was...

A. Not with Superiority of Speech (v.1)

1. This word is translated by various terms in other translations:

¹ Lenski, R. C. H. [*The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians*](#). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963. Print.

- a) KJV - “excellence”
- b) NIV - “eloquence”
- c) ESV & NLT - “lofty”
- d) HCS - “brilliance”

2. The Greek word is hyperoche, noun, and it refers to “eloquent and persuasive oration.”²

3. Moses claimed he was not eloquent in speech when he was told by God to go speak to Pharaoh to let the children of Israel leave Egypt to worship Him. Moses said in Exodus 4:10 (NASB) “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of

² Ibid., Lenski.

tongue.”

4. Paul did not come to Corinth as a philosopher.
5. He did not come as an eloquent speaker.
6. He came as a witness to the Gospel of Christ.
7. He says in verse 1 that He came proclaiming to you ... the testimony of God.
8. Testimony (*marturion*) means just that—a testimony or witness.³

He also says his speech was...

³ MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

B. Not in Human Wisdom (v.1)

He says, “I spoke to you neither oratorically nor philosophically.”⁴

In fact, the followers of Apollos spoke of Paul’s speech as “contemptible” in 2 Corinthians 10:10.

They said “His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible.”

Whatever others said about his speech, he said it was “not in cleverness of speech” (1:17).

⁴ Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed. [1 Corinthians](#). London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909. Print. The Pulpit Commentary.

If you look down at verse 3, we'll come back to verse 2 in a moment, he came in...

C. In Weakness (v.3)

“Weakness” (Gr.astheneia), noun

Paul came to Corinth after being beaten and imprisoned in Philippi, run out of Thessalonica and Berea, and scoffed at in Athens (Acts 16:22–24; 17:10, 13, 14, 32), so he may have been physically weak.

But in that weakness, he was most powerful.⁵

He told them in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NASB) Because of the surpassing

⁵ MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997. Print.

greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! 8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. 9 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Not only did he come to them in

“weakness” but also in...

D. In Fear and Much Trembling (v.3)

“Fear” (Gr.phobos), noun

“Trembling” (Gr.tromos), noun

He used the phrase “fear and trembling” in several other passages, each of which have to do with deep concern over an important, urgent issue (2 Cor. 7:15; Eph. 6:5; Phil. 2:12).⁶

So when he came, he came with a serious message to be preached by the power of the Spirit and not in the wisdom of men...

⁶ Ibid., MacArthur. 1 Corinthians.

In verse 4, he adds...

E. Not in Persuasive Words of Wisdom
(v.4)

“Persuasive” (NASB) or “enticing” (KJV),
(Gr.peithos), adj.

He says, “and my message and my
preaching were not in persuasive
(enticing) words of wisdom.”

Paul was not interested in oratorical or
philosophical words.

He spoke plainly...

II. The Message (vv.2, 4)

A. Jesus Christ and Him Crucified (v.2)

There are two things he states in his message:

1. He identifies Jesus by name: Jesus Christ

a) Jesus means “savior”

b) Christ (christos) means “anointed one”

c) The Hebrew equivalent is Messiah

d) Peter said in Acts 4:12 (NASB)
And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we

must be saved.”

Second he mentions his death and the manner by which he died: crucified

2. Crucifixion was not only a horrible death; it was a shameful death.⁷

a) It was the “most cruel and horrifying punishment,” in the words of Cicero.

b) Every totalitarian regime needs a terror apparatus, and crucifixion was Rome’s terror apparatus *ad horrendum*, infamous alike for its infliction of pain and ignominy on the victim.

⁷ Wiersbe, Warren W. [*The Bible Exposition Commentary*](#). Vol. 1. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996. Print.

- c) “Whenever we crucify the guilty, the most crowded roads are chosen, where the most people can see and be moved by this fear,” approved Quintilian (*Declamationes* 274).⁸
- d) From the numerous references to crucifixion in Herodotus (i.128.2; iii.125.3, 132.2, 159.1; iv.43.2, 7; vi.30.1; vii.194.1f; cf. Thucydides i.110.3) handbooks tend to credit the Persians with the first use of crucifixion (e.g., TDNT, VII, 573).
- e) Other classical sources (many of little historical value) regard crucifixion as essentially barbaric—a form of execution

⁸ Edwards, James R. [*The Gospel according to Mark*](#). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002. Print. The Pillar New Testament Commentary.

used by barbarians (cf. Hengel, pp. 23f).

- f) Both Greek and Roman historians found it more palatable to mention barbarian crucifixions and overlook the use of this cruel practice by their own people.
- g) A predecessor of crucifixion in the ancient Near East was impalement (forcing the living human body down onto a pointed stake), used by the Assyrians as a mode of executing deserters, captured enemies, rebels, and the like (cf. ANEP, nos. 362, 368, 373).⁹

⁹ Burke, D. G. "[Cross; Crucify.](#)" Ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Revised 1979–1988 : 828. Print.

h) Paul told the Galatians in Galatians 3:1 (NASB) You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?

Paul preached Jesus as the anointed One, the Messiah, who was crucified. He further states down in verse 4 that this message He preached was in...

B. The Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power (v.4)

Charles Spurgeon said, “The power that is in the Gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher, otherwise men would be the converters of souls, nor does it lie in the preacher’s learning,

otherwise it would consist in the wisdom of men. We might preach until our tongues rotted, till we would exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless the Holy Spirit be with the Word of God to give it the power to convert the soul.¹⁰

“Demonstration” (Gr.apodeixis), noun. It means “proof”

The noun ἀπόδειξις is found nowhere else in the New Testament and denotes proof or demonstration of some proposition or of some claim or fact.

The genitives can scarcely be subjective: proof offered by the Spirit and power; they are objective: proof

¹⁰ Ibid., MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#).

demonstrating that the Spirit and power are present.¹¹

The now gives the purpose of why his message and preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration (proof) of the Spirit and of power...

III. The Purpose (v.5)

“So that” (hina purpose clause)

A. Your Faith Would Not Be in the Wisdom of Men

B. Your Faith Would Be in the Power of God

¹¹ Ibid., Lenski. 1 Corinthians.

CONCLUSION

1. If the Corinthians had come to have faith in the wisdom of men, even in Paul's wisdom, they might have changed intellectually, but they would not have changed spiritually.
2. They would still have been spiritually dead, and Paul would not have been able to write to them as saints and brothers (1:2, 10).
3. He had not come with his own message but had come simply as a channel of God's message.
4. Only the message of God brings with it the power of God.
5. The church should not have divisions based on philosophy any more than it should have

divisions based on individuals.

6. We are to be united around God's wisdom, not human wisdom.
7. We are one in Jesus Christ and should be one in His Word and power, and in the fellowship of those who are His.¹²
8. If you have never received the message of the cross, you can right now.
9. Repent and surrender your life to Jesus Christ and He will save you.
10. Let's pray.

¹² Ibid., MacArthur. 1 Corinthians.