

I Corinthians - Lesson 02

I Corinthians Chapter 2

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Memory verses for this week: *Isa 40:31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

Introduction: Last week in second half of Chapter one, we discussed how Paul encouraged the church to put behind their differences in following after different men, and to fully follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul exhorted them to do as he and know nothing but the Lord Jesus and Him crucified.

I. Paul's Preaching Was in Demonstration of the Holy Spirit

1 Cor 2:1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

Paul was not a preacher who sought to gather followers around himself. In Chapter one, Paul had affirmed that he was careful not to give anyone grounds to think he had baptized in his own name.

1 Cor 1:12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

1 Cor 1:13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

1 Cor 1:14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

1 Cor 1:15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

Paul knew God was not pleased when the people began to follow various ones. When we lose sight that we are all on a team all for the purpose of reaching the lost and glorifying Christ with our lives, we will never achieve what God meant for the church to accomplish. Unlike many of the theologians of our day, Paul did not teach with philosophy, human wisdom and human learning, but he gave the "testimony of God."

The message of God's Word is the most important message in the world. The Bible is that message. Yet, the Bible is a mystery to most people. In the city of Corinth, men were mixing philosophy and human wisdom with God's message. This created great confusion, and the same thing is happening today in our churches. Teachers are adding their own interpretation to the Word of God. This chapter was written, to call the Christians back to the inspired Word of God.

1 Cor 2:2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

Perhaps if we could have only one verse to live by today, this might be the best. If we forget all the encumbrances of life, and the weights that bear us down, and know only this one thing, we will be successful in our witnessing. Our life will show forth Jesus Christ, and our walk will be patterned after the holy and just One. When things get confusing, and you need to clarity to your thinking, come to this verse and follow this advice for living. If you know anything, know Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

Not only did he die for us, but Jesus rose for our justification. I want to point out that Paul was not belittling other bible doctrine or teaching, he was simply stating that this was the foremost point that he constantly reminded himself about. In Acts, Paul told the elders at Ephesus that he had not failed to declare all the counsel of God. It would be a blessing to every church if all pastors in all churches would preach the whole counsel of God without fear of man.

Acts 20:26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

Acts 20:27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

In Athens Paul was exposed to the poets, philosophers and orators, but he did not allow this to influence his preaching in Corinth. He simply came to Corinth to declare the message of God. *Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* Paul was consecrated to the Master and concentrating on the message.

Gal 3:1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

The cross is the high point of the Christian message.

Gal 4:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

The Cross reveals what man is. It was because of man's sin, that the cross had to be. It also reveals what God is. Only love would cause God to send His son to the cross. And it reveals what sin is. Sin put him on the cross.

II Cor 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through

Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor 2:3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

Paul was a wise man. He recognized that without Christ he was nothing. A fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and we must get our power from the Holy Spirit if we intend to accomplish anything for the Lord. Paul said he came in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. When we realize that God has given the keys of heaven to the church, and when we don't look to God for our strength, we will no doubt fail to be effective in preaching the gospel.

*Mat 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
Mat 16:19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

John 15:6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John 15:8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

1 Cor 2:4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

1 Cor 2:5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Paul wanted very much to reach the lost, but he did not want it to be done with enticing words of man's wisdom. Rather, he wanted to see it done in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. If only those with great oratory skills were called to be preachers, we might wonder if God is saving the people or is it in the skill of the orator. As we found in last weeks study, few mighty in word are chosen. God uses those who are weak and many times less gifted, but He accomplishes His will through those who are humble and willing to be used.

1 Cor 1:26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

1 Cor 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to

*confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;
1 Cor 1:28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:
1 Cor 1:29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

I think this should encourage each of us to know that no matter how small our talent, if we will be willing to be used, God can accomplish great things with us. Paul didn't want anyone's faith to stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. I watched a special on television once about David Koresch there in Waco. Here was a man who might have started out truly trying to do God's Will, but soon was far off course and seeing himself as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Always watch out for those who seek to build up themselves and their name rather than uplifting Jesus Christ.

Almost all false prophets can be identified by a few key points. Normally they seek to build a name for themselves rather than letting Christ be glorified in the church. (The church is the way God receives glory through Christ throughout eternity.)

Eph 3:21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

A second key point to identifying false prophets is their constant speaking of how God has spoke to them to give us a message. Prophecy has ended, and we are to only prophesy today from the bible. A third thing is that they preach a message of ultimate doom, and recommend isolation from the world and the stockpiling of food and weapons. Common sense teaches us that if God takes care of the sparrow, He will most certainly take care of us. I'm not saying we should not have guns to defend ourselves, but that is a personal issue, certainly not something that is an issue within the church. Jesus wants His house to be a house of prayer, not of merchandise or violence.

*1 Cor 13:9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.
1 Cor 13:10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*

*Mat 21:12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,
Mat 21:13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.*

The Gospel is still the power of God.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Col 2:4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. 16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

II. Inspiration and Revelation

1 Cor 2:6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

1 Cor 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

1 Cor 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Paul's wisdom came for God above. He received God's inspired Word.

2 Tim 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

When we say that the Bible was inspired of God, we mean that God furnished the words, so there could be no error. There is no new inspired word of God, but we do have the revelation of God. All the Bible is a revelation from God. "Perfect" means "mature or full grown," and not sinless perfection.

The only secure place for our faith to find rest is in the power of God. The Apostle Paul proceeds to show that there is higher wisdom than the worldly wisdom we acquire down here. The higher, the divine wisdom comes from God. He speaks of speaking wisdom among them that are perfect. This refers to Christians who have become mature and spiritual. What a blessing to be around someone who knows Christ and lives a Christ-centered life.

You see it in the person's face. There is joy and a magnetic attraction to the world. We have peace and joy that every lost man and woman so desperately seeks but can not find outside of Jesus Christ. The rulers of this world, depending solely on human wisdom, had no conception of the divine plan of God. They demonstrated that by rejecting Christ when He came to earth. They not only rejected Jesus, but they crucified Him on the cross.

III. Human Wisdom has no Knowledge of the Things Prepared for the Saved

1 Cor 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

1 Cor 2:10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God

What a promise. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. I've mentioned before that my dad once said that if God would just open the gates of heaven for the world to see, we would see the lost flocking to the church to find Jesus Christ. But these things of faith are hidden for now. If we are to come to Christ, we will do it by faith by hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Man is given three channels to receive knowledge.

- i. Through the "eye"
- ii. Through the "ear"
- iii. Through the "mind"

Dealing with earthly things, these channels work pretty well. But they fail to scratch the surface when it comes to the things of God. Our greatest spiritual realities are unseen to the physical eye, unheard by the physical ear, and beyond the thinking ability of the natural mind. This comes by the new birth where the Holy Spirit opens our mind of understanding.

Isa 64:4 For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

God reveals these things to us by the Spirit. In verse 10, "Hath prepared" and "hath revealed" are both in the past tense. It is through the Spirit that God reveals His purpose and will. This is not apart from the Bible, but through the Bible that this is done.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

IV. God Has Revealed These Things Through the Holy Spirit

1 Cor 2:11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

1 Cor 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which

is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

The reason the Christian can learn the deep things of God is because he has not received the spirit of the world, but rather the Spirit of God. Through the Spirit, He reveals these deeper things. We have received the Spirit of God that we might know the things God has freely given us.

By the human spirit we understand the things of the human mind and by the Holy Spirit we understand the things of the divine mind, that is, the things of God.

We receive the Holy Spirit when we are saved, but we must yield to the Spirit and obey, if we are to receive the things which the Spirit reveals. Intelligence, education, and aptitude can not possible make up for the absence of the Spirit. The Spirit is the only one that can make us to know "the things that are freely given to us of God."

1 John 4:5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

Rom 8:5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

V. The Deep Things That are Revealed

1 Cor 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

1 Cor 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Verse 13 teaches that the "words" of the Bible are inspired. Not just the thoughts, but the very words of the Bible are inspired. "The Holy Ghost teacheth," means that Holy Spirit illumines our minds so that we can properly understand the Bible. This does not teach us that it is not necessary for us to study. We must apply our selves to gain a thorough knowledge of the Word of God.

2 Tim 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Unless we know Christ as Lord and Savior, the bible is not a book we will

understand. Man's wisdom is not capable of comprehending the things of God. I truly believe that this is part of the reason we have a new version of the bible coming out about every other month. Men want to write the Word of God where it can be read like a novel, and it will never happen.

God's word is spiritually discerned to the lost man and woman. It takes the Holy Spirit opening our minds to the scriptures for us to comprehend the deeper things of the Word. I love it when I read a verse that I may have read 20 times before, and suddenly God opens my eyes to what it really means. And the way God's Word can meet the need of the day as it seems to conform to our needs. No other book is like the Bible.

J. Vernon McGee had this to say in his commentary on I Corinthians.

"The natural man cannot receive the things of God. Why not? Because they are foolishness to him. If you are not a Christian, my friend, what I am saying seems foolish to you. If it doesn't, there is something wrong with you or there is something wrong with me—one of us is wrong. God says the natural man finds the preaching of the cross of Christ for salvation foolish. It simply does not make sense to him. "Neither can he know them." When I was a student in college, I had the high-minded notion that anything that any man wrote I could understand. Well, I have found that isn't true.

Certainly I cannot understand the Word of God until the Spirit of God opens my heart and mind to understand. It is spiritually discerned. Only the Spirit of God can take the things of Christ and show them unto us. The Lord Jesus said that: "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John 16:13-14) My friend, unless the Spirit of God shows you the things of Christ, this Epistle to the Corinthians will mean very little to you."

I might add that even when we know Christ, the scriptures don't magically transcend into our minds. We are commanded to "Study the Scriptures" that we might properly divide the word of truth. It is work, but it begins when we come to know Christ and we seek the truth with the help of the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor 2:15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

1 Cor 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

The natural man is unsaved, and therefore does not have the Spirit of God. He cannot receive the things of the Spirit, nor can he know them. Why? Because they are spiritually discerned. This is where the devil side tracks so many lost

people. They are determined that they are not going to be saved until they have studied the Bible and understand it. The more they study it, the more confused they are. They may even be deluded into thinking that they understand it, when all the time they are deluded by their own ignorance and the wiles of the devil.

Such people sometimes become founders of some denominational branch of religion. In fact this is why we have so many denominations and cults with their conflicting claims and doctrines. You may be sure that God is not the author of confusion.

James 3:14 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

Jude 1:19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

The spiritual man has the "mind of Christ." We are not mental miniatures of the Master. However, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, our mental faculties are quickened and enlightened to the point where we can share His thoughts and understand His will and comprehend the revelation of His truth as it is found in the Scriptures.

The unregenerate man in his natural fallen condition will never understand God's Word. Even if we obtain 10 college degrees and have several doctorates, God's Word will be foreign to us until we come to know Jesus as our Lord and Savior. The natural man simply does not have the capacity to know the things of God. The man who is born again and seeks after the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he or she can become spiritually mature and then can understand the deeper things of Christ. And the mind each of us should have within us is the mind of Christ.

Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Rom 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Rom 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Rom 8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

* Lessons updated with notes from E. L. Bynum in May 2013

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.