

I CORINTHIANS

Chapter 2:1-9

INTRODUCTION:

God had determined to save men not by human wisdom, but by the preaching of the gospel, I Corinthians 15:1-4. Paul, when preaching in Corinth, came neither as an orator nor as a philosopher, but simply as a witness, VS: 1-2. He had no confidence in himself, but relied for success totally on the demonstration of the Spirit, VS: 3-4. The true foundation of faith is not reason, but the testimony of God, V: 5. Though what he preached was not the wisdom of men, it was the wisdom of God undiscovered by human reason – VS: 6-9.

VERSES 1-2

Going to Corinth, Paul put aside human instrumentality and went in absolute dependence upon the Spirit of God with one great message, “Jesus Christ, and Him crucified”.

1. Christ crucified because He is the highest disclosure of God's love for man.
2. Christ crucified because He is the greatest demonstration of the wickedness of man.
3. Christ crucified because He is the grandest display of loyalty to righteousness. Paul realized it was possible to cover or obscure the shame of the cross, so he did not permit himself to speak great sounding words or sophisticated sentences to make an appeal to the intellect, (Def: man's mind or intelligences), but to preach Christ crucified in its simplicity.

Christ and Him crucified should still be the method of the servant of God for after all; there is no other message that will gain the salvation of sinners or the edification of God's beloved people. Everything centers in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Jesus Christ and Him crucified”, that is the Person and the work. Always, Christ personally was presented in the apostolic preaching. Men were not asked to believe a creed, they were not asked to subscribe to a system of doctrine, but they were asked to receive a Person and that Person was the Lord Jesus Christ.

People often make a mistake in supposing that just putting their faith in a verse of Scripture is salvation. Believing John 3:16 or John 5:24 has not, does not, nor ever will save anyone. Believing in Christ alone is what saves all that trust Him.

VERSE 3:

“In weakness and fear”, no doubt every servant of God has had this type of experience. How often, as one thinks of facing an audience, the heart fails and the spirit cries out, “Oh Lord, what can I do, what can I say? What if I make a mistake, suppose I proclaim the wrong message, how terrible the effect might be on some! I can never undo it for eternity!” I can see Paul bowing before God every time he contemplated going out to preach the Word and crying out, “O Lord, keep me from mistakes, let me have just the right words, let me be thy messenger, save me from trying to attract attention to myself, save me from glorifying man.”

Lesson 5

VERSE 4:

Paul recognized there was such a thing as meeting men on the soul-level, using words that appealed to the human mind while finding the right psychological moment to get the flesh to make a decision. When people respond he says, "Look at how many people have come to Christ". The fact may be that not one in the crowd had the spiritual man awakened to his need of Christ as Saviour, Ephesians 2:1. Many decisions had been made, but no one had been born again. Paul was afraid of appealing to the emotions of men and not reaching the heart of man. How sad that so many decisions are being made in churches today and it appears so few are truly born again! Paul had a real fear of deceiving people as to their salvation or their true spiritual condition. We should also be concerned!

With all the opportunities that worldly wisdom has ever had, it could not unfold God and His purpose to us. Many great men of the world have tried to change the nature and moral standards of the world, only to suffer defeat. Many preachers are trying to build great churches in our day by the methods of intellect and wisdom of men, but this also shall come to naught. Only by the power of God can an old sinner be changed to a new creation. II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:1-9.

No doubt, the apostle Paul was a man of great eloquence and ability, but he laid it all aside and preached Christ crucified. Christ was all that was important at Corinth, "I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified", I Corinthians 2:2. He depended upon the power of the Holy Spirit to be demonstrated in their lives as he used the Scripture to preach unto them.

VERSE 5:

Many people today are converted to the preacher because they like him, rather than because they love Christ. If they will follow Christ and His Word, they should follow any man of God who preaches the doctrine of Christ. If people do not follow the doctrines of Christ, they are looking only to the wisdom of men. The preaching of the cross may seem foolish to the world, but to those who have been born again it is the power of God.

Paul did not want people to be converted to him because of his personality, likeability, looks, or his eloquence of speech, but he wanted them to be made alive in Christ because of the work of the Holy Spirit in their heart.

How sad that so many people have made professions and never return to a church nor become involved in the Lord's work. The false professors never brought forth the fruits of a child of God, because they had been converted to a man and were never changed by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit unto God. Paul did not want to have people converted to him, but to God.

VERSE 6:

"We speak wisdom among them that are perfect." What does this mean? Did you ever see a perfect Christian? Surely not in the absolute sense, but it means perfect in the sense of well developed – Philippians 3:15. It is clearly used to denote those who were advanced in Christian knowledge; who was qualified to understand the subject; who had made progress in the knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel. It does not mean they were sinless, but does mean they were qualified to understand the gospel in contrast to those who rejected it as foolishness.

Lesson 5

VERSE 7-8:

Those who were saved understood that the apostle was speaking in wisdom, for they knew the power of God in salvation. The world can never understand the “wisdom of God”, for it is a hidden “mystery” unto them. The world and all its’ wisdom can never understand the purpose of God, because God has “ordained” this wisdom to be revealed to us “before the world unto our glory”.

None of the great rulers could know it by their wisdom. They could not understand the mighty works of Christ among them; therefore, they “crucified the Lord of Glory”.

The apostle declared that in making known the gospel, he sought to use simplicity of speech, but when it came to opening the truth of God to believers there are deep things, wonderful precious things that cannot be given to the world at large, which form the hidden wisdom of God. God has His deep things, which are not for the outside world, but for those who have already received the gospel message. The Lord Jesus, Himself, warned His disciples against casting pearls before swine, Matthew 7:6. What did He mean by that? Simply that the unsaved man, the man who has never been regenerated, has no more ability to appreciate, to enter into, and enjoy spiritual things than a swine has the ability to set a value on beautiful pearls. Therefore, the message for the unsaved is the gospel; but to the Lord’s own people He would impart the hidden wisdom that, “which none of the princes of this world knew”.

VERSE 9:

The apostle is quoting from Isaiah 64:4. The problem is a great many people stop with the Old Testament quotation and say, “You know we cannot understand. We cannot be expected to understand or enter into the things which God hath prepared for us.” The Word tells us that, “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.” Therefore, they settle back and conclude that we must be content to be ignorant of those things, for God has said that they are not for us today. What does Isaiah 64:4 tell us? It tells us no man apart from divine revelation can understand what God has in store for His people in times to come.

Ignorance is not bliss for a child of God. Knowledge is gained by study of the Word of God and having the God’s Spirit open the mind to the beautiful things God has to offer to His own. These are the things the world cannot see, understand, nor appreciate because they are learned and known by the Holy Spirit as He opens their mind to understanding.

Lesson 5

WORKSHEET

1. God had determined to save men not by _____, but by the preaching of the _____, I Corinthians 15:1-4.
2. What was it that Paul did not have confidence in but depending on the preach God's Word?
3. What was it Paul said that he preached?
4. _____ is the highest revelation of God's love for man.
5. What did Paul say the wrong message could do to lost men?
6. What is the one message that will gain the salvation of sinner?
7. Believing John 3:16 or John 5:24 has not, _____, nor ever will _____ anyone. Believing in Christ alone saves all that trust Him.
8. What did Paul mean when he said, "In weakness and fear", in verse 3?
9. Why do so many people make false professions? This issue was of great concern to Paul?
10. Ephesians 2:1. Paul was afraid of appealing to the emotions of men and not preaching the _____ of man. What does this statement mean?
11. Only by the "_____ of _____", can an old sinner be changed to a new creation. II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:1-9.
12. Paul depended upon the power of the _____ to be demonstrated in their lives as he used the Scripture to preach unto them.
13. Many people today are converted to the _____ because they like him, rather than because they love _____.
14. Paul did not want people to be converted to him because of his personality, likeability, looks, or his eloquence of speech, but he wanted them to be made alive in _____ because of the work of the Holy Spirit in their heart.
15. "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect." What does this mean? Did you ever see a perfect Christian?
16. The world can never understand the "_____ ", for it is a hidden " _____ " unto them".
17. What passage of scripture did Paul quote in Verse 9?