



1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5

TRUSTING THE POWER OF GOD WHEN SHARING THE GOSPEL



PAUL'S WORDS IN THIS PASSAGE (2:1-5) REFLECT THE COMMUNICATION OF GOD THROUGH THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH

- Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest, are given the responsibility to rebuild the temple
- Their work of reconstruction is not accomplished by ordinary means
 - Zechariah 4:6
- Rebuilding would be a challenge because opposition would arise from those unimpressed with the structure and the activities
 - Some people saw the presence and power of God in the size and beauty of Solomon's temple
 - Some people fail to see the presence and power of God in the humble temple Zerubbabel built
 - Zechariah 4:10
- Both situations are causes for joy because God does the work in both for His glory
- Comparatively, both Zerubbabel and Paul lay foundations for new temples
 - Zechariah 4:9
 - 1 Corinthians 3:10–11

FOCUS ON THE CROSS NOT ON YOUR IMPRESSIVE PRESENTATIONS (2:1-2)

1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.

- Paul reconnects with a previous point he made in chapter 1
 - 1 Corinthians 1:17
- Paul is not seeking to impress people, but to present Jesus as the suffering Savior

“...did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.”

- Paul does not focus on being impressive or polished to people
 - This is a criticism his opponents in Corinth continue to use
 - 2 Corinthians 10:10
- Paul's intent was to focus on Jesus and the gospel, not people or himself

FOCUS ON THE CROSS NOT ON YOUR IMPRESSIVE PRESENTATIONS (2:1-2)

- *² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.*
- Paul makes a conscious choice (“I decided”) to make Christ crucified the chief point of his communication
- Paul’s approach is not unique to Corinth; it is to be characteristic of all gospel ministry
 - Galatians 3:1
- Paul intentionally narrowed his subject matter to the cross of Jesus
 - Isn’t such a determination (“Jesus Christ and him crucified”) over simplistic?
 - Humble dependence on Jesus Christ crucified for sin and selfishness is the humble and dependent way life continues for followers of Jesus
 - Jesus teaches that complete dependence on Him is critical
 - John 15:5

DEPEND ON GOD AND ANTICIPATE GOD'S POWER (2:3-5)

³ *And I was with you in weakness*

- The weakness Paul displays is not just in word, but also in action
- While in Corinth, Jesus appeared to Paul to encourage him
 - Acts 18:9–10
- The Lord puts Paul and us in circumstances that show our weakness and His power
 - 2 Corinthians 12:7–10

and in fear and much trembling,

- Paul is not experiencing fear and trembling because of people in Corinth
- Paul's understanding of God as the Almighty and Majestic Creator whose purpose he is called to fulfill causes Paul *fear and much trembling*
- Paul had enough wisdom to know he should fulfill his mission with "*fear and much trembling*" before the Lord, not before man
 - Hebrews 12:28–29

Confrontation

- We become so comfortable with life on earth we engage in gospel ministry in ways that are comfortable for us
- We give little to no consideration and reverence to our high and holy God

DEPEND ON GOD AND ANTICIPATE GOD'S POWER (2:3-5)

⁴ *and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom,*

- The Corinthians are used to showing favor to professional speakers for their rhetorical skills

- Paul is not looking for the affirmation or accolades

but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

- The people want intellectual and emotional stimulation for entertainment
- Paul is looking for the power of the Holy Spirit's activity in the hearts of unbelievers
- The “*demonstration of the Spirit and of power*” is in the dawn of divine light and the radical spiritual conversion of the Corinthians
 - 1 Corinthians 12:3
- New life brings an understanding of God's righteousness, personal sinfulness, and the sufficiency of the work of Jesus on the cross
 - The power of God is discernable in and through the gospel communicator
 - This is what Paul affirms happened in Thessalonica
 - 1 Thessalonians 1:4-6

DEPEND ON GOD AND ANTICIPATE GOD'S POWER (2:3-5)

⁵ so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

- Paul wanted the faith of the Corinthians to rest securely in the power of God, not the persuasiveness of human spokesmen
- Paul wants no one to be manipulated into a “decision” follow Jesus Christ
 - No one should think human wisdom is the way people find God
 - It is not the wisdom of the presenter or the responder
- May God help us to have confidence in Him in the midst of oppression, so that we rely on Him for holy boldness
 - Acts 4:29-31

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How many times do you not speak because you fear you may not be able to express the gospel convincingly?
- Why is it important for you to focus on the cross and not your impressive presentation?
- During this current time of divine judgment, in what ways are you depending on God and anticipating His power through your ongoing gospel witness?
- How can we encourage one another to be boldly Christ-centered in our witness and in our walk?



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