

When Presentation Supersedes Doctrine, Part 1 - 1 Corinthians 2:1-2 – April 6th, 2014

- Today's teaching will be part one of a new series I've titled, "When Presentation Supersedes Doctrine."
- I'll begin with a question, what if, by way of introduction; I said to you that my sermon today would be void of any excellence or eloquence?
- What if I told you the reason today's sermon was deliberately void of any excellence or eloquence was so I wouldn't get in the Lord's way?

1. It comes at the expense of the Gospel (Verses 1-2)

(1) When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. (2) For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

- v1 Paul says what when he came to them, he didn't come with eloquence or superior wisdom when he proclaimed to them God's testimony.
- v2 He says the reason why is because he had resolved to know nothing while he was with them except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
- In other words, he'd deliberately downplayed his brilliant intellect so that his intelligence wouldn't overshadow the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

One commentator of this wrote, "If a preacher is not careful, he will get in the way of the gospel instead of being a servant of the gospel. They can obscure Jesus by their preaching, either in the presentation or the message. Like the little girl, who when a smaller man was guest speaking could finally see the stained glass window of Jesus behind the pulpit said, "Where's the man who usually stands there so we can't see Jesus?"

- The Apostle Paul is turning a corner here in chapter two as he now goes from the content in the Gospel, to the presentation of the Gospel.
- This because, the carnal Corinthian Christian's had embraced the corrupt cultural ways of the world and placed presentation over content.
- Actually, not only had they placed presentation over content, the eloquent and superior presentation came at the expense of the content.

- In other words, as far as the Corinthian's are concerned, as long as the presentation was flashy and entertaining, the content didn't matter.
- Sadly, this dynamic of presentation coming at the expense of the doctrinal content is alive and well in the church today, this, the last days.
- We need look no further than to some of the carnal methods that have taken up residence in some of the churches, chiefly here in the US.

- Rather than taking the time to talk about what they are doing, my sense is that the Holy Spirit would have us know why they are doing this.
- Namely, why like the Corinthian church in that day does any church in our day opt for the carnality of the world at the expense of the Word?
- Two thoughts on this, the first of which is the acquiescing to the perceived pressure from the world, for the church to be cool like the world.

- The problem is not only is the world not cool, the world doesn't even want the church to be cool; they want the church to be the church.
- In chapter one we addressed how the church today has bought the Devil's lie that the church must be cool like the world, to win the world.
- The fact of the matter is nothing could be further from the truth. It's the opposite that's true, in that the world is not looking for more world.

- Personally, when I came to Christ, and first stepped foot in a church, I wasn't looking for or attracted to the worldliness that I'd come out of.
- I'd had my fill of the world, and desperately needed for the church to be different. Had the church been like the world, then why even go?
- However, when the world does go, what they find are churches that are personality driven, and excitement driven, rather than Word driven.

- The second thought concerning why the church today will opt for the carnality of the world's way, is that they don't trust in the Word of God.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest that in addition to their not trusting in the power of God's Word, they are even ashamed of God's Word.
- Let me explain, they see God's Word as old fashioned and out of touch with this generation and as such, they don't think it's hip anymore.

- To make matters worse, they're sort of embarrassed by the archaic doctrine in it, thinking it's outdated for a social networking generation.
- Furthermore, because it's not tweaked down to a 140-character tweet, or spiced up to a 500-character post, an hour sermon will be boring.
- It's for this reason the sermon has to be short, flashy, and cool because if it's not, people who do come will be bored and uncomfortable.

- This explains why in the church today you'll find these carnal man centered sermons, or as one calls them, sermonette's for Christianette's
- These man centered sermons and church services are designed around not making the world too uncomfortable with how different we are.
- Here's the bottom line, we can't be sanctified and holy without making unholy people uncomfortable around our stinging saltiness and light.

Matthew 5:13-16 NIV "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. (14) "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. (15) Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. (16) In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

- There's something else I would like to point out before we bring it to a close and it has to do with the irony of people being uncomfortable.
- Here's what I'm thinking, instead of salt and light being uncomfortable for the world, the world has succeeded in making us uncomfortable.
- Here's how I get there we as believers can be made to feel uncomfortable by the world whenever we're being the salt and light in the world.

- Then, when the pressure and discomfort becomes too great, we cave into the culture's carnality and lose our saltiness or dim our light.
- We want to be liked by the world so as to fit in with the world and be cool like the world, only to have it come at the expense of God's Word.
- I'll close with 2 Corinthians 10:9-10, which speaks to how Paul never caved to his detractors concerning his unimpressive teaching style,

2 Corinthians 10:9-10 NIV (9) I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with my letters. (10) For some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing."