

The Power is in the Gospel Outline

1st Corinthians 2:1-5

- I. The theme and main subject of 1st Corinthians 1:18-2:5.
 - A. **For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.**
 1. Man's wisdom—Perishing.
 2. God's wisdom—Eternal life.
 - B. Context (Review).
 1. The intellectual and philosophical ideologies of Athens bled into Corinth.
 2. Philosophers were the celebrities of the day.
 - a. The church at Corinth had started to listen to the media of the day: Poetry, dialogue, rhetoric and drama—all rooted in the philosophy of the day.
 - b. What impressed the people was not the accuracy of the message but the charisma of the messenger.
 3. This passage could be the most important passage in 1st Corinthians.
 - a. It contains the answer to all of life.
- II. The first thing we see is why God has chosen to operate the way He is operating.
 - A. How is God operating?
 1. In the foolishness of the message—the foolishness of the cross.
 2. He chooses foolish messengers to deliver the foolish message—the preacher.
 3. Those who embrace the message are fools.
 - B. Why does God do it this way?
 1. “So that no one can boast” (v. 29).
 - C. God does all the “choosing”.
 1. They are “called”—elected.

- a. Not based on any human talent or endeavor (why? So no one may boast—take the glory away from God).

III. What God gives us (v.30)

- A. His wisdom.
- B. His righteousness.
- C. Sanctification.
- D. Redemption (from sin—salvation).

IV. Paul’s understanding of “the preacher”.

- A. He is not to change the message to make it more accepting or popular.
- B. Paul was a “simple person”.
- C. A “simple message”.
- D. The greatness of God.
- E. Example: Hebrews 11—simple people, simple message, God’s glory.

- 1. Conclusion?

Hebrews 12:1-2

12 Therefore, since we also have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let’s rid ourselves of every obstacle and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let’s run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking only at Jesus, the originator and perfecter of the faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

GOSPEL CENTRALITY IS THE EPICENTER OF ALL OF LIFE AND ALL THAT TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH MOSCOW IDAHO EXISTS FOR!

The Power is in the Gospel Pastoral Notes

1st Corinthians 2:1-5

I am grateful that today we continue on the same thought and themes we've been talking about for the last couple of weeks...I am glad that I can clarify a few things...

I told you last week that a "preacher" was IN THE GRECCO ROMAN WORLD...at the time of Paul... a "herald of God's word... that means he is to simply relay a message from someone higher up.... And he was not to insert any personal opinions or ideas... simply relay the message in its pure sense....

I also said this herald guy was, in the Corinthian culture one of the lowest forms of occupations... in today's terms an equal or a little bit lower than a used car salesman... I also said the preacher/herald was to not be desiring that his hearers think of him as a "gifted orator" or a "persuasive speaker" or to desire any praise or adulation whatsoever at the conclusion of his message....

Many of you actually listened to that part of the sermon and immediately afterward I was impressed in the amount of you that came up to me agreeing about the used car salesman part and sharing with me just how unimpressive my sermon was.

I also greatly appreciated the comment I got praising my "transparency" as a pastor...after all it was pastor appreciation Sunday....appreciating the fact that I sometimes share my own imperfections... *"it's great to have a pastor that is more messed up than us"*...

Anyway... I'm glad we can continue this topic this morning...maybe I can clarify a few points as we go.

So...this morning we are going to finish that section of 1st Corinthians that we began two weeks ago... verse 18 of chapter one provided us with the theme and basis for the rest of chapter one and the first five verses of chapter two which we are looking at this morning...

(18) For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

From there we looked at the contrast between the wisdom of man and the wisdom of God...The wisdom of man is "egocentric"... Man is the center.... And God's wisdom is God centered... man's wisdom is based on man's opinions, man's limited logic while God's wisdom is based on all the attributes of the infinite true knowledge of God....

Man's wisdom can carry one through this world but goes no further than the moment of death... **those who are perishing...**[College class and Charlton Heston....]

God's wisdom carry's one through this world... the way the world was designed... and continues on through eternity... **to those being saved.** as we saw last week the wisdom of man is incapable of bringing anyone to the wisdom of God.

The context of this passage has been very important so that we can get the true message God intends for us to get... Paul founded the church at Corinth... just fifty miles from Athens, the intellectual hub of the world at that time.

The intellectual, philosophical world of Athens had bled into the neighboring Corinth... Corinth had become a melting pot of philosophical ideas... in fact... philosophy was the favored pastime of the populace in Corinth.

It drove the media of the day: Poetry, dialogue, rhetoric and drama.

The entertainment of the day centered on the intellectual who could dialogue... exhort... persuade and challenge his listeners... to sit around a philosopher was like watching a movie today... the philosopher had become the celebrity of the day... and the fashionable thing to do was follow your favorite philosopher.

It didn't matter if the philosophy being philosophized was true or accurate... what mattered was the philosopher... was he an entertaining orator... was he gifted in persuasive rhetoric?... What impressed the people was not the accuracy of the message but the charisma of the messenger.

Paul had established the Corinthian church upon the gospel of Jesus Christ... but what happened is the church, after a few years, began to exchange the gospel for the entertainment of the day... Philosophy.

Instead of setting their lives on the truth of God's word... God's wisdom.... The message of Jesus Christ and the cross.... They began choosing personalities to follow... back in 1:12 we saw that some were following Apollos... some were following Paul.. some Cephas... some Jesus Christ... not for the truth they may have been professing but rather their appeal... their ability to hold an audience... to entertain.

It is quite apparent that the Corinthian church didn't limit it to "Christian celebrities" but were being entertained by outside philosophies as well... the media of the day... so Paul writes these verses to try to set their minds and hearts back onto the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God is going to bring down the wisdom of man (19)... the wisdom of man has a death sentence on it and it is on death row awaiting execution... but until that happens... the world will bask in their wisdom and lash out at God's wisdom viewing it has utter foolishness.

Before we get into this morning's section a couple more things... there are many scholars through the years that think this section of 1st Corinthians shouldn't be there... maybe editors added these

verses at a much later date because they don't seem to have the same flow as what is before and after them...

Paul's purpose is to get the church to grow up... to mature in their faith... so he will address specific sins and problems that existed in the church.... There's adultery, sexual sins... Christians have lawsuits against other Christians... they get drunk during communion... and a host of other problems...

I agree with Gordon Fee who said these 19 verses are probably the most important verses in all of 1st Corinthians... you see... if you grasp what Paul is saying here...and you center your life on the truth in these verses..... all your problems will no longer be unsolvable problems...

Many of you have personal problems... some of you may have serious problems... problems in your marriage... problems with people at work... problems with your children...problems with depression... anxiety... if you grasp and employ the wisdom of God in your lives... if you place the Gospel of Jesus Christ at the center of your life... you will find the answer to those problems...

I'll go so far to say that if both husband and wife truly embrace the wisdom of God for their lives...place Jesus Christ at the center of their lives.... they will not have marital relationship problems...

Paul has these verses here... and actually all the verses to chapter 5 to lay the foundation for everything he is going to call the Corinthian church out on...he gives them the answers up front...the foolishness of the cross...the power only found in God.... So... this is a rich passage... at the end of this morning you may:

- Have a different outlook on the purpose of church....some of you are visiting here looking for a church... this morning may change your criteria in what you are looking for in a church.
- You may have a different outlook on what a pastor truly is supposed to be.
- You may have a different outlook on what is truly important in this life.
- This could be a life changing passage for you.
- It may change your understanding of how people come to Christ and your role in sharing Christ.
- It may speak to you regarding how to handle and deal with the problems in your life.

So let's read it together... let's back up to verse 26 of chapter 1 and work our way all the way through the first five verses of chapter 2.

Read 1:26-2:5

1. The first thing we see is *why* God has chosen to operate the way He is operating....

How's He operating?...He operates in FOOLISHNESS... **He chose to deliver a foolish message**... the cross of Jesus Christ...the idea of the Savior of mankind... the one and only who can save man from their sin.... Gets killed on a cross... *the Savior dies*.... How foolish... go ask your non-Christian friends what they think about that?....

It's a foolish message!... of course it's not so foolish on the third day after His death on the cross... where Jesus defeats death through His resurrection.... But that too is foolishness for those who are really smart....and not only that...but

He chooses foolish men to deliver foolish message (23)....and those who actually **embrace and believe the message are fools as well...** The operative word here is FOOLISH!...

God could have chosen a far "smarter"...more affective way to do all this right?... He is the all powerful omnipotent all knowing God, creator of the universe.... Why didn't he do it through the wisest of the wise... the cleverest of the clever and the most dynamic of the dynamic?

Paul tells us simply in verse 29...**So that the flesh may not boast before God....**God removes any possibility of human boasting!... think about that... we need to understand this...Have you ever thought "*why doesn't he or she accept Jesus Christ?*"... "*What's wrong with him/her?*" ... *it's so obvious... what's wrong with them?*... what you are in effect saying is *I was smart enough... I was observant enough... I was wise enough ... what's wrong with them?*

What Paul is showing us here is.... This has nothing to do with you being smart, observant and wise.... And them being dumb.

We glossed over this last week... but let me show you something... look back at **verse 24**... verse 24 is about those who are saved... some Jews and gentiles... are they smart, observant and wise?... no.. they are what?.....**called** **Read verse 24**

They didn't do anything.... God *called* them... they are called... the elect of God... God chose them... look at verse 26... same thing...here I like the NIV...**Brothers, think of what you were when you were called....**

There it is again... God chose them... had nothing to do with their brains or effort of any kind... in fact he hammers that fact... **Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many of you were influential, not many of noble birth...IT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU... GOD CHOSE YOU.**

But I had to do SOMETHING didn't I?.... yes you did... you had to believe .

Read verse 21

And even your belief was the result of God opening your eyes to the truth!...I've had several tell me their testimony on how they came to Christ.... *I looked at all the archeological records... I*

studied prophesy and saw how many events prophesied in the Old Testament came about just as they were prophesied....

*So I put all that together and I CONCLUDED the Bible is true... in other words... They came to Christ through their reasoning.... **No they didn't**.... they may have studied all that.... But the only way they accepted it as truth is because God opened their eyes to the truth.*

Another conclusion you can make is that when you go out to share Christ... there is NOTHING you can do to convince that person to come to Christ.... GOD HAS TO DO IT... and that is the work of the Holy Spirit...that kind of takes the onus off of you doesn't it?

How many of you don't share Christ because you don't think you have the right words... don't know enough of the Bible?... *"you need to talk to the pastor"* ...just share the foolish gospel!... there is nothing you can say to convince ANYONE of the truth of the gospel...but God may be using YOU in His process!

God used and uses the foolish things of this world...SO THAT NO FLESH MAY BOAST BEFORE GOD AND SAY...I DID IT!

Read verses 30 and 31

Man cannot through his wisdom come to God... Only through God's wisdom and God's doing... and God's choosing does man come to God... so He's pleased to use the foolish things of this world....

That puts legs on Ephesians 2:8-9 doesn't it?.... **For by grace you have been saved that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God, not of works lest what?....** if you were saved by something YOU did... you would go around boasting!.... **stealing the glory that only goes to God.**

Before we get into chapter two... one more thing...

2. Once you become a Christian, you get four things from God... HE GIVES THEM TO YOU...YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING TO GET THEM.... In verse 30 it says four things are given to you...**By His doing...**

1. You get God's wisdom...you get transferred from being a man's wisdom container to a God's wisdom container... **You are in Christ Jesus WHO BECAME TO US WISDOM FROM GOD.** We get God's wisdom... and that carries us through life.

2. Righteousness.... God makes you righteous... what is righteousness?.... I heard a simple way to think of righteousness... 1. Take the "ness" off..... you now have righteous. 2. Take the 'eous" off of righteous... what do you have?.... 3. Right.

Righteousness means you stand "right" as opposed to wrong...good as opposed to bad... sinless as opposed to sinful before God.... there is NOTHING YOU CAN DO to present yourself as

righteous before God... NOTHING!...God.. through His Son on the cross.... The foolishness of the cross...makes you righteous.

3. Sanctification... sanctification simply means two things.... “*To be deemed as holy*” and “*to be made holy*”...both are true and happen in every Christian by the work of the Holy Spirit... when you become a Christian... **immediately you are deemed BY GOD as holy**... you are “set apart FOR Him”... you are now His possession..... In that sense...you are completely sanctified by GOD.

In the other sense of the word... you are **now being made holy**... the process of sanctification.... Which will continue through the rest of your life... the process of making you more and more like Jesus Christ.

Thinking of the Corinthian church... they were all “sanctified”..... they were all eternally deemed as set apart for God in their salvation.... but their sanctification process was going to be a rough one!... 2 Corinthians 3:18 says **the Holy Spirit begins to conform us to the image of Christ**... the process of sanctification... “*progressive sanctification*”.

For some this is going to take a lot of messin with by the Holy Spirit!...the Corinthians were a bunch of sinful strong willed children!... their sanctification process undoubtedly included much “chastening” by the Holy Spirit....discipline.... some children if you spank them they are scarred for life... others you can spank them nonstop and they smile at you!

4. Redemption...to redeem something means *to purchase*.... *You didn't buy your way out of sin*... Jesus paid the price of your sin... He *redeemed* you... purchased you with the shedding of His blood on the cross!

Notice on all four of those things... the philosophy of man... the intelligence of man... the letters behind a persons name HAS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH THEM!... Now... all of this is vital in understanding Paul's message in chapter two...if all that is true... how Christ is shared by us will possibly take on a different meaning than we thought.

3. Paul's understanding of the preacher.

Let's go back for a little more background. We know from the book of Acts... that prior to Paul going to Corinth to establish the church...he went to Athens...Paul was not well received in Athens... he was basically rejected...

That had to be frustrating... preaching God's word to deaf ears... so he immediately goes down to Corinth...we looked at that several weeks ago... Acts 18....one important thing to notice... When Paul began to preach in Corinth... after frustration and rejection in Athens...**He didn't change anything regarding his message or his preaching style when he gets to Corinth**...He simply preached the gospel of Jesus Christ... the foolishness of the cross...

Today a preacher in a similar situation probably would sit in his hotel room when he arrives and the next city and re-evaluate his message and his “techniques” of delivery... “*that didn't ‘work’ so maybe I should try this...*”

“*Maybe if I cut out so much Bible and put in a few more funny stories... maybe I should give them what they want... how to have a happy life... how to be successful in this world... the four points of being content with your job... ” ... and maybe throw in a little Jesus at the end...*

1. Paul didn't change his message or his preaching style!...chapter two begins with Paul looking back at when he arrived in Corinth after being shut down in Athens:

Read 2:1-2

Think back at the culture of that day... Paul is saying directly... *I know you all are entertained by clever orators...highly stylized philosophical rhetoric... I know you have your favorite celebrity debaters you like to follow..... I am none of those...*

I didn't come with persuasive words... you could exchange that with “**eloquent words**” [this doesn't mean we aren't to be persuasive!...]... *the only thing you heard from me was Jesus Christ and Him crucified..... Why is that?*

Think back to chapter 1.... Nothing I say can make you come to Christ... so it doesn't matter HOW artsy I say it...I CAN'T PERSUADE ANYONE TO COME to CHRIST!...so there's no sense in my trying to be eloquent... .. all I can do is be willing to be a tool for proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ..... and let God do His will.

This really does take the onus off the preacher... we have an obligation to God to be faithful in heralding His message to others... that's it...[my understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit and myself.]

Going back to 2nd Corinthians 4:1-2;

2 Corinthians 4:1-2

4 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, 2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in trickery nor distorting the word of God, but by the open proclamation of the truth commending ourselves to every person's conscience in the sight of God.

The open proclamation of the truth... some translations say *the manifestation of the truth...* manifestation = to make known...**THAT IS THE TASK OF ALL MINISTRY!**... to proclaim the truth!

For you looking for a church... this should direct your search... find a church that does NOTHING but PROCLAIM THE TRUTH!... I am shocked and saddened by those of you who

have told me how frustrating it is to find a Bible proclaiming church... how many churches never open their Bibles... Don't waste your time!

The next three verses reveal to us key principles Paul shows us in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.... This is for preachers... teachers... anyone who shares the gospel with others... this should include everyone here in this building.

2. Paul was a simple person

Read 2:3

Basically what he says is *"If there is power in this ministry...it does not come from me"*

One of the primary methods you have to lead people in God's grace through God's sovereignty through faith in Christ and power of God is to show them that you are not capable of producing it on your own.

It is to be a woman or man of weakness... I shared how sometimes I get people telling me they appreciate my admitting that I fail sometimes... that I struggle like the rest of you in my spiritual walk... that my life isn't perfect...

First of all... my wife is ALWAYS SITTING RIGHT THERE... AND SHE KNOWS ME!... if I say anything different, we may have something to talk about at lunch!... The fact is... we are all weak.... And we need to share the gospel in God's strength, promoting His power... in our weakness.

Pride is the antithesis of all this... there is a part of me that wants people to say to me *"I didn't want to be a Christian but your sermons compel me"*...

I like hearing a particular person's "AMEN'S" after I say something.... And when he is not here... it's a bummer!... and let me say it... it's ok to tell me the sermon impacted you... it's ok!... not for my pride but for letting me know the microphone is working!... to let mem now that God is using me the way He intends.... And if I'm not... I can make some adjustments.

Not to be more clever but to make the Word clearer.

what Paul is implying here is that people need to see *through* him... So that they see the message that matters... the message that saves... the message that actually has power.

3. We must have a simple message. Back to verse 2

Read verse 2

This doesn't mean that Paul just got up and said *"Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so"*... preach some simple platitude without ever going deep... anyone here think Paul as a "simpleton".... Have you read the book of Romans?!

Paul wasn't simple in an elementary sense... he was simple...in the diversity of His message... He had ONE message... that is simple!...his message ALWAYS centered on the gospel of Jesus Christ...

“I decided...” implies intentionality... I could have gone there... or over there... I could have talked about something so very entertaining... something that would have pleased your senses.... But instead I DECIDED to preach to you the only really important subject there is in all of life...

As he says later... I speak what is MOST important...

1 Corinthians 15:3-

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

I could have brought something different to you... but instead I brought to you the answer to everything else... Instead of preaching on “how to have a good marriage”... I preached the gospel of Jesus Christ... if you embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ in your lives.... you will have a great marriage.

[marriage centered on Christ instead of a marriage centered on yourselves...a successful... outrageously great marriage is obtained by both of you finding your identity in Christ!]

I could have preached on how to be happy... but I preached to you the gospel of Jesus Christ that actually has the power to give you peace and joy...something much greater than happiness...

I could have preached to you how to raise your kids... the gospel of Jesus Christ is the secret too parenting!...instead of making your children your idols... you have your identity in Jesus Christ...THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IS SUFFICIENT!

If you have bitterness in your family.... Between once friends... someone at church... your relationship in Christ will enable you to deal with it.... repair the relationship and move past it... the centrality of Jesus Christ is the answer to everything.

I am so happy this is the case... that many come to this church because their marriage is falling apart.... Their family is falling apart... everything else they've tried has resulted in a big zero... *“I've lost my 13 year old can you help me gain some kind of control?”*

“I'm miserable at work... what can I do?”... *“I'm so depressed and don't know why, what can I do?”*... *“I can't seem to find any real purpose in life...how can I fix that?”*.... desiring pragmatic solutions to all these things...

What they need is a gospel that transforms!...So many churches don't get what Paul is telling us here... they do something we could call "Life Plus Religious ditty".....

"Life Plus Religious Ditty"... *Here are five ways you can be a really good dad...* all five principles of fatherhood are unpacked... it doesn't matter who you are... Christian, atheist, confused...it doesn't matter... the logic is something anyone could understand... good principles...principles ANYONE can do.. ANYONE can place into their lives....so you present the five keys in being a good dad...

Since you are a preacher and you call the building you're in a church... you know you have to somehow link everything to something religious..... so you end your talk with something like... *none of what I said doesn't mean anything if you don't know your heavenly Father...let's close in prayer.*"

Life Plus Religious Ditty... it's like when buying a car you can upgrade to leather seats... "add a little Jesus"... *You want to be a great dad?.... do those things and we can even upgrade you with a relationship with God... "*:

[I said this might help you when you select a church to get involved with... you need to be in a church where God's word is central... where God's word is what is preached... you can get all the other stuff on You Tube.... It is only the message of the gospel... the message of God's word that has any power!....don't waste your time with anything else!...it's a simple message!

Read verse 4

Here's something that hit me this week as I worked myself through all this...this is why the centrality of the gospel of Jesus Christ is so vital.... If I do preach pragmatically... preach on the subjects everyone wants to hear... preach a *Jesus plus*..... or *subject plus Jesus* .

The church might... probably will fill up... because that is what people naturally want to hear... and we can go along and feel as though we are "successful" as a church because the seats are filled and everyone is liking everything.....

But the moment that someone goes through the furnace.... The moment life turns on them... they will see no power in "church".... No power in the "message".... And they will leave... sometimes destroyed...because all of that stuff has no power.

I do not want to be known around town as the church that has great advice!

I don't know what brings all of you here... I don't know what it is that you want.... But the one thing you will get is God's word!.... it's not that we will never talk about parenting or what makes you happy... but it will ALWAYS be centered upon the gospel of Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL CENTRALITY IS THE EPICENTER OF ALL OF LIFE AND ALL THAT TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH MOSCOW IDAHO EXISTS FOR!... this is not an upgrade... it is not the leather seats... it is the whole car!

4. The greatness of God

The first two set the table for the third... *simple people*... with a *simple message* provide the canvas in which the glory of God can be displayed...

Read verse 5

Simple people with a simple message will set the stage for the right purpose and that is God's glory!...the power of God is the only power that eternally saves a sinner from hell...

Complex people, with a complex message... a message focused on many, many things... will NOT set the stage for the right purpose of God's glory.... The stage instead is set to praise the preacher... the teacher... whoever is speaking.

It's always been this way... simple people with a simple message... who was Noah?... a simple guy with a simple message... *"It's going to rain!"* ... *It's never rained before but it is going to rain now... for a long time...*

Who were the apostles?...simple men who grasped the simple foolish message of the cross....

Look at all the people in Hebrews 11... the great chapter we call the Hall of Faith....

Abraham...called out... he went.

Joseph...Moses...Rahab the harlot...Gideon..Samson...David...Samuel... all of them... sure God used them to do some amazing things... but what are they remembered for here?.... "By faith...By faith...By faith..... each displayed faith in their God.

SO what are we to do with all that?.... put their pictures on our coffee mugs... print posters of them?... no.... we are to remember them for a purpose.... Listen to how the writer of Hebrews instructs us:

Hebrews 12:1-3

12 Therefore, since we also have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let's rid ourselves of every obstacle and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let's run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking only at Jesus, the [a]originator and perfecter of the faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary [b]and lose heart.

Simple people with a simple message who fixed their eyes on the Almighty God!