

Subject: Two Kingdoms, Two Powers — Sermon Recap from 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Dear Church Family,

It was a privilege to gather together and open God's Word this week. We pray this recap serves as a helpful reminder of what was shared and encourages you to carry these truths into your week. For those interested in the teaching notes and a number of discipleship materials, please go [[HERE](#)].

Summary: The sermon explored the contrast between two sources of power and wisdom — that of man and that of God — and what it means to anchor our faith in the gospel of Christ and Him crucified. Drawing from *1 Corinthians 2:1-5*, we examined how the Corinthian church was being pulled away from the simplicity of the gospel by persuasive voices offering man-centered wisdom. That same battle is alive today, waged through false gospels, cultural pressures, and voices that seek to add to, subtract from, or reconstruct the truth of King Jesus and His kingdom. Paul's example and his letter call every believer to reject those counterfeits and return to the transformative power of the Spirit of God working through the gospel of grace, truth, and love.

Takeaways:

- (1) Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing. Paul did not come to the Corinthians with impressive rhetoric, personal ambition, or cultural affirmation. He came to proclaim Christ and Him crucified. The gospel does not require our embellishment, our wisdom, or our emotional power to be effective. Jesus is LORD, and that truth stands on its own. We are called to get out of the way and let the gospel do what only the gospel can do.
- (2) The gospel is a spiritual matter, not a matter of the flesh. As *Galatians 6:8* reminds us, those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life. Man's wisdom and power will always fall short of what God alone can accomplish. We are called to reject false teachers and the seductive pull of human reasoning in favor of the simple, transformative message of Christ crucified.
- (3) Guard your heart — there is an ongoing battle for your soul. Two kingdoms are at war for your loyalty, your obedience, and ultimately your eternity. One is ruled by King Jesus and is founded on truth, grace, love, hope, and freedom. The other is built on lies that appeal to our pride and our deepest desires. None of us are beyond the reach of the enemy's schemes, and we must not overestimate our own strength. It is only through the wisdom and power of the Spirit of God — not our own — that we find victory.

We encourage you to sit with these truths this week. Take an honest account of which kingdom is shaping the way you are living, the voices you are listening to, and the foundation upon which your faith rests. If you have never received King Jesus as LORD, there is no better day than today. If you have, let this be a fresh moment of praise, realignment, and renewed purpose to make disciples as He has commanded.

As always, we are grateful to walk this road of pursuing Christ together.

In Christ,

Pastor Jim

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Two Kingdoms, Two Powers

I. Introduction: The TRUTH Will Set You Free

- With faith given by God, we can live a biblical worldview.
- The Bible confronts us as to whom we give authority to reign in our lives...ourselves and mankind or Jesus.

Additional Scripture References: Heb 11:1; 1 Cor 6:9-11

II. 1 Corinthians 1:1-5: Choosing a Kingdom

- The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not complicated so don't fall prey to those implying or saying you need special knowledge, that it's the gospel-plus something else, or that we need to contribute our wisdom and power to be effective.
- Christ is sufficient.
- The Gospel is a spiritual matter.
- We are prone to wander so we must guard our hearts through prayer and testing all things according to God's word through the leadership and revealing power of the Holy Spirit.

Additional Scripture References: Col 2:4-10; Mt 16:15; Gal 6:8

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Two Kingdoms, Two Powers

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

I. Introduction: Understanding Faith

1. In a sense, we live our lives marked by some degree of faith. Faith in the sunrise. Faith in our abilities. Faith in our spouse or co-workers. Faith in our ideas or intellect. Faith in our bank account or the government. Faith in our friendships. Faith in our vehicles and those we share the road with.
2. While these types of faith are not unimportant, Paul (and we) are considering faith in the grander narrative of God or some system of religion we frequently refer to as a world-view. In this sense, faith not only offers us the manner to which we understand our eternal destiny, but offers us understanding of where we come from, how we can know right-from-wrong (truth), and our purpose in this life. This faith guides how we engage in every aspect of our lives as we assent to and rely upon truth in our everyday living experiences.
3. Before moving on, I think it imperative that we again hear that faith is founded in truth. For without a solid, trustworthy foundation (TRUTH) we cannot have the faith to believe in someone or something.
4. For Paul's and our purposes we may simply think of faith as having trust or confidence in something or someone. In **Hebrews 11:1**, the bible tells us that Christian faith "is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen". We might further short-hand this with our faith being trust in something or someone that we cannot explicitly prove. What's more, Scripture tells us that Jesus is TRUTH – this means, contrary to many claims, that 'truth exists, is knowable, and applicable in our lives'. The bible also tells us that faith comes from God (Ro 10:17), that without faith we cannot please God (He 11:6), and that we need

faith to be saved (Jn 3:16) and to be transformed/sanctified/made increasingly like Him for His purposes (Ro 12:2).

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5. Turn a few pages to the right, to 1 Corinthians 6:9-11:

⁹ Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.
- 1 Corinthians 6:9–11

6. This is the group to whom Paul's letter is written. **They have been set-free from the bondage of sin.** By grace, they have been transformed through Godly wisdom holding truth into a restored relationship with Jesus.

A. In this moment, the father of lies enters stage-right with his deception, world-system, and ruthless power continuously seeking to undermine God while killing, stealing, and destroying those created in His image for His glory.

7. With this picture clearly in our minds, we can say there are two ways of handling God's word – with man's authority OR with God's authority. **The first way comes with and from the power and wisdom of man while the second comes from the power and wisdom of God.** The first way comes with man's conception or rejection of truth while the second is TRUTH. **This was true for the Corinthians in Paul's day and is true for us today.**

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II. 1 Corinthians 1:1-5: Choosing a Kingdom

1. From Paul's letter, we know some number of Corinthians had rejected Paul's teaching as being too simplistic or underwhelming. **To some measure, it seems clear that this was because others came with what seemed more wisdom and were certainly better speakers than Paul.** This seems to align with church history which

reports that Paul was not an imposing nor inspiring man in stature and we know from the bible that he had some kind of disability – some have presumed one that affected his speaking.

A. In contrast to Paul, great orators...bigger than life personalities able to “read the room”, weave emotions, life experiences, priorities, cultural hot points, extraordinary man-wisdom, and other attractive threads, had come into the church with a new gospel. Over the years, these voices have morphed into thousands of denominations, cults, and other religions at war against Christ and the drumbeat persists. In more recent times, we have seen these “other gospel” garbage approaches under headers such as:

- i. Prosperity Gospel/Word of Faith Movement;
- ii. New Apostolic Reformation (NAR)/5-Fold/Dominion Theology Movements;
- iii. Progressive/Deconstructed Christianity;
- iv. Oneness Pentecostalism (modalism);
- v. Jehovah’s Witnesses;
- vi. Christian Science;
- vii. Mormonism; and
- viii. Universalism.

B. Equally as destructive in our day are the thousands of voices vying for clicks and monetization via social media, podcasts, and other internet forums. Many of these have a Jesus-Plus gospel or some other variant which need be aggressively repudiated lest it gain a foothold in your life. Other voices use a narrow range of secondary beliefs or hobby-horses (e.g., Christian Zionism) as litmus tests regarding Christian fealty. Despite repeated strong biblical warnings to not do so, many of these voices are willing to burn the church down for non-conformance on these non-essential matters or based on preferences, form, or methodology.

C. It's here, in light of v1, that I want to stop and dig back into our teaching. **Paul is not like the speakers of that day (or today) that desire to deliver a different gospel.**

- i. He did NOT come for their approval, to be worshipped, or some form of benefit for himself;
- ii. **Paul didn't come to argue or debate with them;**
- iii. He didn't come to test their various claims to wisdom and knowledge; and
- iv. **He did NOT come to be culturally affirming in his method.**

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- i. He did go AND write this letter to witness and share the hope of Christ and Him crucified.
 - ii. **He did go AND write this letter in calling them to reject the new, man-wisdom-centric gospel they were incorporating into their worldview.**
 - iii. He did go to defend the hope of Christ within him (1 Pe 3:15)

D. You see, Paul was incredibly gifted and talented. **He was highly educated and had an impeccable pedigree with Jew and Gentile alike.** Yet, he, as should every child of God, purposed to NOT get in the way of the gospel as he emphasizes in v2!

2. In v2, Paul specifically reminds the Corinthians "Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing".

God's testimony is right and true. **It does not require man's embellishment or artistic flair to be relevant.** It does not need our wisdom, emotionalism, or power to be effective. **In yet another warning and reminder, the sufficiency of Christ is something we see the Bible repeatedly addressing...turn with me to Col 2:4-10:**

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Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. ⁵ For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your *good* order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

⁶ As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

⁸ Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; ¹⁰ and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. - Colossians 2:4–10

3. In vs 3-5, Paul connects an immutable truth with the Main Thing. That is the revelation of Christ and Him crucified comes through the power and wisdom of the Spirit of God and not through the power and wisdom of man, including Paul himself. There are some helpful takeaway's from Paul's words here, including:

A. First up is KISS or Keep It Simple Saint. Paul challenges the Corinthians as to who they say Christ is and what the cross of Calvary represents, along with how their answers establish their faith.

i. Jesus Himself poses the question of who the disciples say He is in **Matthew 16:15**. It is the question upon which your eternal destination rests. It is also the question upon which determines the life you will live on this side of heaven.

- Since bible times, other gospels have proclaimed Christ as NOT Messiah, Savior, or Lord, but as prophet, teacher, spirit-child, created being, a great moral person, a political figure, sage, or even mythical figure representing the best mankind can conceive.

ii. While far beyond our available time today to fully explore the volumes of evidence revealing Christ as Messiah, there are several the Corinthians were (and we are or can be) well acquainted with:

- Fulfilled OT Prophecies as well as types and patterns;

- Jesus lineage;
- Jesus own claims;
- Jesus' death and resurrection at Calvary...more on this shortly;
- Eyewitness accounts from people alive in their day;
- The myriad of miracles and signs given by Christ and His disciples; and
- The Corinthians own transformed lives. A fact which Paul presents as inescapable evidence of both the gospel and Paul's authority as an Apostle of Christ.

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Paul's overarching point for the Corinthians and every generation since is that Jesus is LORD. Therefore, we need not look to the finite wisdom of man for that which can only be found in the infinite wisdom of God. It is right and good for us to place our faith (and trust) in Him.

- iii. The cross of Calvary and Jesus crucifixion is inextricably tied to the question (and answer) of who Christ is.
 - It is at the cross that love, justice, grace, mercy, forgiveness, prophecy, and sacrifice converge in offering mankind eternal restoration to our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

For you see, Scripture teaches us that it was at the cross Jesus (fully God and fully man) sacrificed His life in defeating death and offering us, by-grace-through-faith (Eph 2:8-9), atonement, reconciliation, and redemption to Himself. There are no other works...no other wisdom...no special knowledge or power parlayed by a few who know best...no other clever techniques, catchy phrases, or super-spiritual methods...no other power...no other gospel that saves nor sanctifies, but the gospel Paul presented to them and to us.

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- B. The second takeaway Paul is pointing to is the gospel as a spiritual matter and NOT a matter of the flesh. **Galatians 6:8**

embodies this precept...I am going to read this from the NLT:
“Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.”

Just as Paul did with the Corinthian of that day, **God’s word calls us to not be swept away by man’s wisdom and power**, but to reject the false teachers in favor of the simplicity of the transformative gospel message of grace, truth, and love which, by the power and wisdom of God, saves and sanctifies.

C. We will close with a third and final takeaway; one we touched upon in **v1** with Paul bringing it back in to view in **vs 4-5**.

- i. Paul is warning them and us to guard our hearts. **Mankind has forever been prone to fall prey to great speakers using clever words to relay man-wisdom which speaks to our hearts and pride.**

Those words are for everyone hearing this message. **There is an ongoing battle for your soul between two kingdoms.** Both of these kingdoms say you will have a victorious life exclusively through them. **Both kingdoms demand your loyalty, obedience, faithfulness, and, ultimately, your soul.** Both make promises – one based in truth and the other is often times more attractive as it speaks to your deepest desires and great needs birthed in your own pride.

One kingdom is ruled by Jesus Christ, while the other kingdom allows you to see yourself as king.

The second kingdom is built on a foundation of lies, but lies so sweet in disguise that many (even some calling themselves Christians) are seduced to deny, reconstruct, or otherwise refute King Jesus and His kingdom of

freedom, love, hope, grace, joy, rest, forgiveness, peace, and all the other promises of eternal life with Him.

For those thinking “that could never happen to me” OR “that is a great warning for others, but I am good” OR some other similar thought, you underestimate the power of the dark kingdom when it sets out to work on your sin-laden heart. I can’t help but wonder how many of the Corinthians thought they too were untouchable in the kingdom battle for their souls?!

The reality is that in the wisdom and power of man, we are doomed to failure. Yet, because of Christ and Him crucified, we can rely upon the wisdom and power of the Spirit of God to lead us to victory, being eternally restored in relationship with God.

- ii. If you have not received King Jesus and His kingdom of life, today is a wonderful day to do so. Your kingdom or that of the enemy that you have been living for is built on lies, human wisdom, human power, and lies meant to kill, steal, and destroy. They can never deliver you eternal life with Christ for He alone has accomplished that at the cross of Calvary. So, right where you sit, if you want to receive Christ, repeat this prayer after me...

If you have received King Jesus as LORD of your life, today is a great day to praise, thank, and worship Him. It is a great day to take an account of the way you are living your life and make much needed adjustments. It is a great day to purpose to please Him in being His child and His church as we lovingly fill His command to make disciples.

5-Day Devotional

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Two Kingdoms, Two Powers

Day 1: The Foundation of True Faith

Reading: Heb 11:1-6

Devotional: Faith is not a leap into the dark. It is a confident step onto solid ground. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that genuine faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not yet seen. This kind of faith is not rooted in human reasoning, emotional persuasion, or cultural approval. It is anchored in the unchanging character of God Himself. Paul did not arrive in Corinth armed with impressive rhetoric or worldly credentials designed to win applause. He came carrying the one thing that could actually transform lives: the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Every day, you are surrounded by competing voices offering alternative foundations for your confidence and security. Some of those voices are loud, polished, and deeply appealing. But ask yourself this honest question: on what foundation is my faith actually resting? Is it resting on the wisdom and power of God, or has it quietly drifted toward the wisdom and power of man? Identify one area of your life where your confidence is resting more on human wisdom than on God's truth. Bring that area before the Lord in prayer today.

Day 2: The Sufficiency of Christ Crucified

Reading: Col 2:4-10

Devotional: Paul's warning to the Colossians mirrors his word to the Corinthians with striking urgency. In Colossians 2:8, he cautions that hollow philosophies and empty deceptions built on human tradition can cheat believers out of the fullness found in Christ alone. The word "cheat" is deliberate. Something is being taken from you when you trade the gospel for a counterfeit. The cross of Calvary is not a starting point that requires human embellishment to become meaningful or relevant. It is the complete and final word on love, justice, mercy, sacrifice, and redemption. Every prosperity gospel, every reconstructed Christianity, every Jesus-plus system ultimately diminishes what was fully accomplished at Calvary. Christ does not need our improvements. He is, as Paul declares, the fullness of the Godhead dwelling bodily, and in Him you are complete. That completeness is not a theological abstraction. It is the daily, practical reality available to every believer who refuses to be cheated by clever words and persuasive men.

Are there any teachings, voices, or systems you have been drawn to that add requirements or conditions to the gospel of grace? Measure them honestly against Colossians 2:9-10 today.

Day 3: The Kingdom Battle for Your Soul

Reading: Eph 6:10-18

Devotional: Paul's sermon reminder is sobering: there is an ongoing battle for your soul between two kingdoms, and both demand your loyalty, obedience, and faithfulness. The kingdom of darkness does not typically announce itself with obvious hostility. More often, it arrives dressed in the language of freedom, self-discovery, and personal truth. It speaks directly to your pride, your deepest desires, and your unmet needs. Ephesians 6 makes clear that this battle is not fought against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces whose strategies are ancient and whose deceptions are sophisticated. The armor Paul describes in this passage is not decorative. Each piece corresponds to a specific vulnerability that the enemy seeks to exploit. The belt of truth matters because the opposing kingdom is built entirely on lies. The shield of faith matters because doubt is one of the enemy's most effective weapons.

No believer is beyond the reach of this battle, and those most confident in their immunity are often most exposed to its dangers. Walk through each piece of the armor described in Ephesians 6:14-17. Honestly assess which piece you most often neglect. Commit today to intentionally putting it on through prayer and the Word.

Day 4: Transformed by the Spirit, Not Conformed by the World

Reading: Ro 12:1-2 and Gal 6:7-8

Devotional: The Corinthians to whom Paul wrote had been washed, sanctified, and justified as described in 1 Corinthians 6:11. Their transformation was real, documented, and visible. Yet they were drifting. The pull of man-wisdom, cultural sophistication, and impressive personalities was quietly drawing them away from the simplicity of the gospel. Romans 12:2 calls believers to resist conformity to the pattern of this world and to pursue ongoing transformation through the renewing of the mind. This is not a one-time event. It is a daily, deliberate posture. Galatians 6:8 frames the stakes plainly: those who sow to the flesh harvest decay, while those who sow to the Spirit harvest everlasting life.

The Corinthians' own transformed lives were, as Paul argued, inescapable evidence of the gospel's power. Your transformed life carries the same weight of testimony. Guard it. Tend to it. Do not allow the slow erosion of worldly wisdom to undo what the Spirit of God has built. In what specific ways has your mind been renewed since you received Christ? In what areas do you still notice patterns of worldly thinking that need continued transformation? Bring both before God in gratitude and honest petition.

Day 5: Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing

Reading: 1 Cor 2:1-5 and Mt 16:13-17

Devotional: Jesus poses the most consequential question ever asked in Matthew 16:15 when He asks His disciples who they say He is. Everything rests on how that question is answered. Every denomination, every cult, every reconstructed or progressive gospel ultimately answers that question differently than Scripture does. Paul's entire ministry strategy was built around refusing to let anything obscure the answer. He came to Corinth not with superior speech or elaborate wisdom, but with the straightforward testimony of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He was willing to appear weak, unimpressive, and simple in the eyes of sophisticated listeners because he understood that the power was never in the messenger. It was always in the message.

The same is true today. In a world saturated with podcasts, platforms, and personalities all competing for your theological allegiance, the call remains unchanged: keep the main thing the main thing. Jesus is Lord. The cross is sufficient. The Spirit is powerful. That is enough. It has always been enough. Write down in your own words your answer to the question Jesus asks in Matthew 16:15. Then ask yourself honestly whether the way you are living your daily life reflects that answer. Purpose today to let the simplicity and power of the gospel be the defining reality of your life.

Small Group Study Guide

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Two Kingdoms, Two Powers

Opening Prayer: Pray that the Lord would open your eyes to see and understand His word as you discuss the sermon.

Key Takeaways: Query the group for takeaways first...you may stay with one or more of those.

1. Faith is grounded in truth. Biblical faith is not a blind leap into uncertainty. It is confidence and trust placed in the person of Jesus Christ, who is Truth. Without a trustworthy foundation, genuine faith cannot exist.
2. The gospel does not need man's improvement. Paul deliberately set aside impressive rhetoric, personal credentials, and cultural persuasion so that nothing would obscure the power of the gospel. The message of Christ and Him crucified is sufficient on its own terms.
3. The cross is the center of everything. It is at Calvary that love, justice, grace, mercy, and sacrifice converge. No other message, method, wisdom, or power saves and sanctifies. The cross is not a starting point to move beyond -- it is the permanent anchor of the Christian life.
4. The battle for your soul is real and ongoing. Two kingdoms are in direct conflict. One is ruled by King Jesus and is built on truth. The other is built on lies that are carefully designed to appeal to human pride and deep personal desires. No believer is immune to the pull of the second kingdom.
5. The Spirit's power, not man's wisdom, produces lasting transformation. Genuine spiritual fruit -- salvation, sanctification, and perseverance -- comes through the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit, not through clever communication, cultural relevance, or human persuasion.

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. The sermon opened by noting that we all live by some degree of faith every day, faith in a vehicle, a coworker, a bank account. What are some areas of everyday life where you exercise faith without thinking much about it? How is that similar to or different from biblical faith?

2. Before diving deeper, how would you have defined faith before hearing this sermon? Has your understanding shifted at all? If so, how?
3. Paul chose not to rely on impressive speech, personal credentials, or persuasive human wisdom when he came to Corinth. In your own experience, what makes a message or a messenger seem credible or compelling? How do those instincts sometimes work against our ability to receive the simple gospel?
4. The sermon listed several false or distorted gospels that have emerged over the centuries -- from the Prosperity Gospel to Progressive Christianity to Universalism. Without getting lost in the details of each, what do you think they all have in common? What thread connects them?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 together as a group. Paul reminds the Corinthians of who they were before Christ and what has been done for them. Why do you think Paul anchors this letter in that reminder? What does it do for the reader to be reminded of where they came from?
6. Read Colossians 2:4-10 together. Paul warns against being cheated through philosophy, empty deceit, and the traditions of men. What does it look like practically to be "rooted and built up" in Christ as a guard against those things?
7. The sermon posed the question Jesus asked His disciples in Matthew 16:15 -- who do you say that He is? How would you answer that question in your own words today? How does your answer shape the way you actually live from day to day?
8. The sermon described the cross as the place where love, justice, grace, mercy, forgiveness, prophecy, and sacrifice all converge. Which of those words carries the most personal weight for you right now, and why?
9. Paul connects the gospel to a spiritual reality rather than a matter of the flesh. Read Galatians 6:8 together. Where do you see the tension between living to satisfy the sinful nature and living to please the Spirit most clearly in your own life?
10. The sermon issued a direct warning: "You underestimate the power of the dark kingdom when it sets out to work on your sin-laden heart." Do you agree with that warning? What makes believers vulnerable to that kind of deception, even when they feel spiritually secure?
11. The sermon described a kingdom that "allows you to see yourself as king." In what areas of your life are you most tempted to sit on that throne rather than surrendering it to King Jesus?

12. Are there voices -- whether on social media, in podcasts, in relationships, or elsewhere -- that have been subtly shaping your understanding of the gospel in ways that may not align with Scripture? How do you evaluate those voices?
13. Paul's purpose was singular: to know nothing among the Corinthians except Christ and Him crucified. If someone examined your daily life -- your priorities, your conversations, your decisions -- what would they conclude is your singular purpose?

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. **Audit Your Inputs.** Spend time this week honestly evaluating the voices that most regularly shape your thinking about God, faith, and life. Compare what those voices teach against Scripture. Be willing to make changes if needed.
2. **Anchor Yourself in the Main Thing.** Identify one area of your spiritual life where you have drifted toward complexity, addition, or self-reliance. Bring it back to the simplicity of the gospel. What does trusting Christ and Him crucified look like in that specific area?
3. **Know Your Answer.** Write out your personal answer to the question Jesus asked in Matthew 16:15. Keep it simple and honest. Then consider -- does the way you lived this past week reflect that answer?
4. **Guard Your Heart Intentionally.** The sermon warned that no believer is untouchable in the kingdom battle. Identify one practical boundary or spiritual discipline you will put in place this week to guard your heart against deception.
5. **Speak the Hope Within You.** First Peter 3:15 calls believers to be ready to defend the hope of Christ within them. Identify one person in your life who needs to hear the simple gospel. Pray for them by name this week and ask God for an opportunity to share with them.

Closing Prayer Points:

- Thank God for approving and trusting us with the Gospel
- Pray for courage to live lives worthy of our calling
- Ask for the Holy Spirit's power to transform our motivations, conduct, and character
- Pray for opportunities to "be" the church this week
- Intercede for those in the group facing persecution, difficulty, or spiritual warfare

Discussion Questions

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Two Kingdoms, Two Powers

1. Paul chose not to rely on his impressive education or pedigree when presenting the gospel to the Corinthians -- in what ways might your own strengths, talents, or credentials become obstacles to letting the power of God speak through you?
2. The sermon describes two kingdoms, each demanding loyalty, obedience, and ultimately your soul -- in what practical areas of your daily life do you find yourself most tempted to live under the authority of the kingdom built on human wisdom rather than the kingdom of Christ?
3. Paul's central message was to keep Christ and Him crucified as the main thing -- how do you personally guard against allowing secondary theological issues, preferences, or cultural concerns to eclipse that central truth in your own faith community?
4. The sermon warns that false gospels often speak directly to our deepest desires and pride, making them more immediately attractive than the true gospel -- can you identify a specific lie from the enemy's kingdom that has at some point felt more appealing to you than the truth of Christ?
5. Colossians 2:8 warns against being taken captive through philosophy and empty deceit according to the traditions of men -- how do you discern whether the spiritual teaching you are consuming through sermons, podcasts, or social media is rooted in the wisdom of God or the wisdom of man?
6. The Corinthians' own transformed lives were presented by Paul as inescapable evidence of the gospel's power -- in what ways does the ongoing transformation of your life serve as a witness to those around you of the reality of Christ and Him crucified?
7. The sermon draws a sharp contrast between faith founded in truth and faith placed in human wisdom or power -- how does your understanding of Jesus as truth itself change the way you approach doubt, questions, or seasons of spiritual uncertainty?
8. Paul came to the Corinthians not seeking their approval, personal benefit, or cultural affirmation -- how might the church today be tempted to compromise the simplicity of the gospel in order to gain cultural acceptance or numerical growth?
9. The sermon notes that many who call themselves Christians can be seduced into denying or reconstructing the kingdom of Christ -- what spiritual disciplines or

community practices do you believe are most essential for keeping your heart anchored to King Jesus rather than to yourself as king?

10. Galatians 6:8 presents a stark contrast between living to satisfy the sinful nature and living to please the Spirit -- what does it look like in your everyday decisions and relationships to actively choose to live in a way that pleases the Spirit rather than the flesh?

Dinner Conversation Starters

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Two Kingdoms, Two Powers

1. What Do We Put Our Trust In?

The sermon talked about how everyone lives by faith in something—money, abilities, people, ideas, or God. What are some things people often trust in besides God? How can we tell when we are trusting those things too much?

2. Keeping Jesus at the Center

Paul said he wanted to know nothing “except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” What does it mean to “keep the main thing the main thing” in our family, church, and daily lives?

3. God’s Wisdom vs. Human Wisdom

The sermon described two ways of handling God’s Word: with man’s wisdom or with God’s wisdom. How can we recognize the difference between advice that sounds good but is not biblical, and wisdom that truly comes from God?

4. Guarding Our Hearts

We heard that persuasive words and attractive ideas can pull people away from the truth of Christ. What are some voices or influences in our lives—online, at school, at work, or with friends—that we need to be careful about?

5. Living in the Right Kingdom

The sermon described two kingdoms: one ruled by Jesus and one built on lies where we try to be king. What does it look like this week for us to live like Jesus is King instead of trying to rule our own lives?

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Two Kingdoms, Two Powers

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Trusting Jesus More Than Feelings**: Young kids often make choices based on feelings: “I want it,” “I’m mad,” “I’m scared,” or “Everyone else is doing it.” Help them learn that Jesus tells the truth and helps us obey even when our feelings are strong.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) What would your feelings tell you to do in that moment?
 - (b) What would Jesus want you to remember?
 - (c) Who can you ask for help when a friend pressures you?
2. **Knowing God’s Truth from Lies**: Teach kids that not every message they hear is true. Some things sound fun or exciting but lead us away from obeying God.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) Did that show or game make something wrong look good?
 - (b) What does God say about telling the truth and being kind?
 - (c) Should we keep watching or playing things that make sin look fun?
3. **Jesus Is the Real King**: Help kids understand the “two kingdoms” idea simply: Jesus’ way leads to life, love, and truth; sin’s way leads to hurt and sadness.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) Which “kingdom” does leaving someone out sound like: Jesus’ kingdom or sin’s kingdom?
- (b) How could you show Jesus’ love to that person?
- (c) What could our family pray about before school or church this week?

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Choosing Friends Who Help You Follow Jesus**: Kids in this age group are becoming more influenced by peers. Help them evaluate whether friendships are pulling them toward truth, kindness, and obedience—or toward pride, secrecy, and compromise.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) Is this friend helping you follow Jesus or making it harder?
- (b) What would it look like to be brave and kind in that moment?
- (c) When should you walk away or ask an adult for help?

2. **Guarding Your Heart Online**: Digital spaces are full of voices competing for trust—YouTubers, influencers, gamers, ads, and social media personalities. Teach kids that popularity does not equal truth.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) Why do people sometimes believe something just because a popular person says it?
- (b) How can we compare what we hear online with what God says?
- (c) Are there any channels, games, or apps we need to pause or talk about?

3. **Remembering That the Gospel Is Simple and Powerful**: Kids may feel pressure to “perform” spiritually—know all the answers, look perfect, or compare themselves to others. Remind them that our faith rests in Jesus Christ and Him crucified, not in being impressive.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) Does Jesus love us because we impress people?
- (b) What is the “main thing” we believe about Jesus?
- (c) How can we grow in faith without comparing ourselves to others?

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Testing Every Message by God’s Truth**: Preteens and teens are increasingly exposed to worldviews about identity, sexuality, success, justice, suffering, and purpose. Teach them to ask: “Is this built on God’s truth or human wisdom?”

Discussion Questions:

- (a) What is attractive about that message?
- (b) How is it different from saying Jesus is Truth?
- (c) If God created us, what does that mean for our identity and purpose?

2. **Handling Pressure Without Needing Approval**: Paul did not shape his message around popularity or applause. Teens need courage to follow Jesus even when it costs them socially.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) Why is it hard not to join in when everyone else is doing it?
- (b) What are some ways to respond without acting self-righteous?
- (c) When should you speak up, leave the chat, or get help?

3. **Identifying False Promises of the “Other Kingdom”**: The sermon described one kingdom ruled by Jesus and another built on lies that lets us act like we are king. Teens face this in messages about popularity, appearance, dating, achievement, pornography, substances, and online image-building.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) What does social media often promise will make you happy?
- (b) Does it actually deliver peace, joy, and security?

(c) What does Jesus offer that popularity and attention cannot?

Tips for Parents

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Two Kingdoms, Two Powers

1. Build Your Faith on Christ, Not the Crowd

Bible Reference: 1 Corinthians 2:1–5, Galatians 1:10, Proverbs 29:25

Application: Gen Z faces constant pressure to be accepted, liked, followed, and affirmed. Paul reminds believers that true faith cannot rest on human approval, popularity, or impressive personalities. Your confidence must rest in Jesus Christ and the power of God.

Scenario: You are in a friend group where everyone starts mocking biblical beliefs as outdated or hateful. You feel pressure to stay quiet or laugh along so you do not seem “weird” or judgmental.

Discussion: Where are you most tempted to choose approval from people over faithfulness to Jesus?

2. Test Every Voice by God’s Word

Bible Reference: Colossians 2:4–10, 1 John 4:1, Acts 17:11

Application: Not every spiritual-sounding message is from God. Influencers, podcasts, TikTok clips, celebrities, and even some religious voices may use persuasive words while leading people away from Christ. God calls you to compare every message with Scripture.

Scenario: A popular online creator says, “Jesus was loving, so He would never tell anyone their choices are wrong.” It sounds compassionate, and many people in the comments agree.

Discussion: How can you tell the difference between a message that sounds loving and a message that is actually biblical?

3. Keep Jesus and the Cross at the Center

Bible Reference: 1 Corinthians 2:2, Ephesians 2:8–9, John 14:6

Application: Christianity is not “Jesus plus popularity,” “Jesus plus politics,” “Jesus plus success,” or “Jesus plus self-improvement.” The center of the Christian faith is Jesus Christ—crucified and risen—who saves by grace through faith.

Scenario: Someone online teaches that being a “real Christian” means following their exact lifestyle rules, political views, diet, worship style, or end-times chart. They make secondary issues sound like the gospel itself.

Discussion: What are some things people are tempted to add to Jesus as proof that someone is a “real” Christian?

4. Don’t Let Digital Spaces Disciple You

Bible Reference: Romans 12:2, Psalm 101:3, Philippians 4:8

Application: Your phone is not neutral. Algorithms constantly train your desires, fears, identity, and beliefs. God calls Christians to be transformed by the renewing of their minds, not shaped by the patterns of the world.

Scenario: Your feed is full of content about appearance, money, dating, sexuality, drama, outrage, or self-promotion. After scrolling, you feel anxious, jealous, discontent, or spiritually numb.

Discussion: What content is shaping your heart the most right now, and is it leading you closer to Jesus or away from Him?

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.