

4/21/24

Good morning Cornerstone! It is good to be with you this morning. I want to thank you for joining us. If this is your first time worshiping with us, I want to invite you to fill out our connection card. It just lets us get to know you a little more and be able to connect with you more. If Cornerstone is home for you, you can use our app to check in and let us know you are here. There you can also fill out a prayer request so we can be praying for you throughout the week.

We are going to be continuing our sermon series called the Church in Crisis. Where we have been going through the book of 1 Corinthians. The church in Corinth was in trouble. The church had veered off the course that Paul laid out for them. They had exchanged the truth in the gospel for the influence from their culture. Paul writes this letter to bring them back on course to live according to God's will. To do that the church has to draw the line in the sand on where God wants them to be and where the world is attempting to deceive them to go.

Even though this letter was written to a specific church almost 2,000 years ago there is a lot that we can learn from it. We are in a culture that attempts to give us their version of truth and they attempt to control what Christians are allowed to say and not say about the bible. As we are going to read today, we have to be bold in speaking the truth through the power of the Holy Spirit without fear of man or our own insecurities.

Today our scripture is going to be found in **1 Corinthians 2:1-16**. If you have your bibles go ahead and turn there if you would like to follow along with us. If you do not have a paper bible and would like one we have some available for you in the back. You can also follow along with us today on the app with the scripture and our sermon notes available to you there.

But before we dive in the teaching today, lets read a part of our passage this morning together which comes from the book of **1 Corinthians 2:14-16**. So let us stand as you are able, out of reverence for God's word as we proclaim the truth in God's word.

[1] SCRIPTURE 1 Corinthians 2:14-16

"The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ."

This is the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

INTRO

[2] As we dive into our passage today, I want to frame the way we read it to know how this applies to us. Paul starts off this passage talking about how he came and evangelize to them to set himself up for talking about how the Holy Spirit. He describes what the Holy Spirit has already done and how it should be affecting them to make them different than their world. Paul's main point of this passage emphasizes that all believers enjoy the illuminating work of the Spirit. This is to counter all the elevated thinking of the worldly wisdom that caused them to create the factions that he addressed in the beginning of chapter 1.

Looking at both of these sections of chapter 2, it shows us the work that the Holy Spirit that is done in the believers in Corinth is the same work that was done in Paul. It was through the power of the Holy

Spirit that he came to them and preached the gospel so that they can be saved. We will see Paul making reference to many of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The church in Corinth elevated these things to be something they are not intended to be and Paul begins to address how they have been misused by the church as well as setting the stage for him to draw clear boundaries on what they are intended to achieve.

For us today we must acknowledge the Holy Spirit working in our own lives. If we see his work and know the great things that have been done in us, we can know that we have been equipped to preach and share the gospel. We cannot make excuses for why we do not or can not share the gospel with people. It is not about gifting, to say 'I do not share because that is not my gift' is not an excuse. We cannot say that we are afraid of questions people might ask. We also cannot get lost in over thinking all the possible hypothetical scenarios that may come up with to justify our silence. We can share the gospel and should, because as believers we have all been equipped with the Holy Spirit. With that being said let's dive into our passage.

BODY

[3] 1 Corinthians 2:1-2

"And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."

Paul says that he came to them to proclaim the testimony of God and to proclaim it not with lofty speech or wisdom. This repeats the premise that he said in chapter 1:17 that he preached the gospel without eloquent words or fine skill and refined words, otherwise it would have emptied the cross of its power. You'll find that throughout this passage Paul will repeat the same principle over and over again. He does this for a couple reasons.

He wants to elevate the importance of the message that he is giving. He really wants this church to understand. In this chapter Paul is still towing the line that he pointed out in chapter one of this clear distinction between those in the church, that have accepted Christ, and everyone else that is in the world. Even though this message repeats he is applying the same words and concepts to various different situations. So if you think that I am saying the same thing over and over again, you right, but it is only because Paul is doing it intentionally.

The second reason these concepts repeat is because Paul is also trying to divert any attention away from himself and the believers in this church, and turn it towards the Holy Spirit. Another problem that this church had is they were elevating certain believers, even into eldership and leadership positions, because of the gifts of the Holy Spirit done in them. Particularly they would elevate the gift of tongues as someone being extra spiritual. They believed that because they were used by the Holy Spirit to show this gift of tongues, they deserved great honor.

Now Paul will address this more in chapter 14, but he is setting the stage to address it, because this is a problem. The attention that Paul is drawing away from himself and the believers is to say that all of the things that have happened among them is a result of the Holy Spirit. It is nothing that they have done or have control over. He is saying stop looking at the people that the Holy Spirit is working through and focus on the Holy Spirit who is doing the work. Focus on the source. By repeating these concepts, he is continuing to point their attention towards God and away from themselves.

[4] In verse 1 of this chapter, Paul says that he proclaimed the ‘testimony of God’. This is the phrase in Greek, ‘martyion tou theo’ (Mar-te-e-on toe they-oh). It means God’s redemptive work through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Paul says He did not come with lofty speech because he did not want them to be won over to the gospel because of his wise words or skill in communication, but because of the powerful message of the gospel. Again this is what he stated in 1:17.

He expands on that to say that he ‘decided to know nothing among you’. This is Paul using hyperbole, or an extreme exaggeration. Paul obviously did not decide to forget all of his knowledge of the OT, his understanding of the Greek language, or how to breathe. He did not decide to know absolutely nothing. He is saying that he made Christ’s actions on behalf of humanity, the primary focus of his teaching, instead of delivering a speech in the style of the secular rhetoric and knowledge. As a culture that is what they valued. Someone was honorable and worthy to listen to if they demonstrated intelligence and spoke with skill and prowess.

Paul did not want to do that. That was not what was important. What was important was as he says, ‘except Jesus Christ and him crucified’. For Paul Jesus’ death is central to the gospel message; He bore the sins of humanity through his death. Because the Corinthians seemed to have considered the crucifixion to be foolishness, Paul emphasizes the humility of Jesus on the cross when he came and preached it to them. Paul even modeled that same humility when we came to Corinth.

[5] 1 Corinthians 2:3-5

“And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”

Paul is not interested in seeing people come to Christ because Paul is extremely persuasive¹. Instead he wants to see the Spirit working among them². This coming to them in weakness and in fear and trembling is a description of his confidence. In his flesh he was nothing but a weak and scared man coming to a city where he didn’t know anyone but armed with the message of the gospel. Despite his weakness his sense of calling was greater. A calling from God to share the message of the gospel with the gentiles. The fact that he was able to overcome his lack of confidence in order to speak to them the good news of the gospel he says in verse 5, was a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit.

[6] This word demonstration is the Greek word ‘apedeixis’ (ap-e-dex-e-us). The way Paul uses it here means ‘certainty of the Spirit’s work’ among the Corinthian believers. Paul lacked confidence in himself, but was fully confident in the Spirit to actively move and work among the people in the city of Corinth. Paul says this because the believers in the church lived through that experience. Where the culture values wisdom and logic, they cannot deny their experience of the Spirit’s power when they came to believe. Which was demonstrated in their own conversions.

This was done intentionally, he says, ‘so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God’. The Holy Spirit sending Paul in coming empty of his own knowledge and skill, was done purposefully. His goal was so that their faith would not be because of him, his words and skillful communication, but because the gospel is true, and it is powerful. He wants them to only rely on God and not on his understanding.

¹ 1 Corinthians 1:17

² 1 Corinthians 1:28

Paul knew that he wasn't going to be staying in Corinth, soon he would leave to go to the next city to do the same thing over again. Now if they had faith because of Paul's words, in order for their faith to remain they would need continued convincing. Since Paul was going to be gone it would be impossible for him to continue to convince them, and he did not want to create an unnecessary burden for the leaders that he was leaving behind. If their faith was in God, it would be his continued power and wisdom in the work of the Spirit that would continue to grow their faith.

I think of it like this. When you are single and in the dating world, you do not want to be in a relationship with someone that you have to convince to stay in that relationship. Right? Not only would that conversation get old. 'honey please stay, look I cook for you, I pay my own bills, I don't live in my mom's basement, please I'm a great person to be your boyfriend'. Not only would that get old, but you will have to continue to convince them the entire relationship. Paul did not want their faith to be completely dependent on someone's convincing of them, because when they face tough questions or tribulations a faith not founded from God will require continuous convincing.

This is where Paul now moves to talk about the work to the Holy Spirit. He is drawing on the example of what happened when he came to them to share the gospel with them. Now he is going to talk about not only what the Holy Spirit has done in him to bring that about, but also what the Holy Spirit has done and is doing in them as believers.

Paul argues that the Spirit is necessary to understand God's wisdom, since it cannot be perceived through human nature. Paul's wants the Corinthians to recognize their need for true wisdom from God's Spirit before he resumes his appeal for unity in chapter 3.

[7] 1 Corinthians 2:6

"Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away."

When we see this word mature, Paul isn't leaving the church to their own devices on letting them decide who is mature and who isn't. I know just about very Jr. High boy thinks that they are mature, and we all know the truth. In the context of the verse Paul is only creating the distinction between believers and non-believers. So, when he refers to the 'mature' it is a reference to the utmost development of Jesus' Lordship not spiritual development. The mature are those united in the understanding and conformity of the message of Christ. He is saying among the believers we deliver wisdom to each other.

If it was used to mean spiritual growth, it would be Paul being ironic. Since this letter is addressing their lack of maturity in how they are conducting themselves.

This wisdom though, again, is not like the wisdom of the world. Because the wisdom that they have in Christ would be considered foolishness to those in the world. Paul knows that what distinguishes them from the world is that the wisdom of the world is tied to this age. For the believer the wisdom of God is timeless. The wisdom of the world will be bound to the world and as Paul says, it will pass away. God is transcendent of this world. Meaning He exists outside of time, space, and matter. If God is transcendent, then the wisdom that comes from Him is also transcendent. It is a wisdom above and outside of this world and will remain true forever.

The wisdom of this age is the wisdom that the church has been guilty of pursuing. It has caused them to stumble in their walk with Christ. It is the knowledge that comes from the rulers of this age. This term rulers can refer to both human beings as well as divine beings.

In reference to **human beings**, it would be the Jewish and Roman officials that were involved in the crucifixion of Christ.

In the **spiritual realm** it could be that they have believed and followed the deception of the enemy, the devil, and his angels, also known as demons. Their attempts to be spiritual but not under the boundaries of the Holy Spirit could have opened them up to demonic influence. This is pointing to their elevation of people with the gift of tongues. Again, in chapter 14 he addresses the boundaries that this gift is to have. In it Paul says that if it does not fall within these boundaries then it is not from God and is deception by demonic forces.

Paul intends for this statement to address this special treatment. He emphasizes that an ability does not make someone what they are; instead, everything should focus on Christ – the only one worth favoring. The Corinthians would have regarded this as creating a split or divide in their community and would have been counter to the culture.

Now Paul did spend the last chapter speaking against division, but Paul is making a statement that would have divided them, intentionally. This is one of the things that Paul saw as necessary to create the divide. Even though an understanding of the gift of tongues is not listen in our essential truths. Their treatment of this gift has greater implications.

They as under the Lordship of Christ. As a church in submission to Christ and Christ alone, they should remain separate from those that are influence by rulers and demonic entities. They should have nothing to do with them. Because this 'gifting' does not share in the wisdom of the transcendent God. They are not operating in the power of the Holy Spirit, but another spirit entirely.

The wisdom that is shared through the gift of tongues does not follow the wisdom of the world. Which is more than likely what they were doing.

[8] 1 Corinthians 2:7

"But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory."

This secret and hidden wisdom is not that it cannot be known, but that it is not plain to the person looking for understanding of the world, themselves and others. It is an undisclosed secret that has now been divulged through the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that gives revelation to the believers. These revelations can be known and understood only through the Holy Spirit. In the theological sense when Paul uses this term of secret or hidden knowledge, he refers to the contents of the gospel forecast (more than likely the subject of predestination) in the Old Testament. This gospel requires historical fulfillment and the illuminating work of the Spirit to be fully understood.

This is Jesus fulfilling these OT prophecies. It was not understood for the most part when the prophecies were written, but now being a post Christ follower of God, we know they were talking about him. This is why a lot of the Jews at the time had false expectations about the Messiah and ultimately rejected Christ when he came.

Some of us may hear this idea of the gospel being secret and hidden knowledge, only revealed by the Holy Spirit, and think that this is a reason for us not to share the gospel. We will justify it saying that the gospel is just hidden knowledge, they wouldn't understand even if I tried. However...

[9] Romans 10:14-15

“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

We know that the Holy Spirit is the one that reveals to others the truth of the gospel. We, as believers, have to preach so that they can hear. We do so with hope in eager expectation that God's Spirit will bring the revelation so they will believe and call upon the name of the Lord.

We are obedient to this call and trust in the Holy Spirit, because we know that God did all of this for his glory. Paul says in verse 7, 'our glory' but he is referencing the final process of salvation, our glorification in heaven. Jesus provided salvation to believers so that they can be glorified. For God to redeem the sinner, and even glorify them in eternity still brings him glory.

The secret and hidden knowledge was in Christ. It was not in their search for truth in philosophy where they found Christ, but when Paul had preached the gospel to them that they found the hidden wisdom.

Christ chose to be crucified before the foundations of the earth³. Just as we are chosen before the earth was formed to be saved⁴, and those who are saved will also be glorified in heaven⁵. This was a decree given before the ages, before the period of time the world was in existence.

[10] 1 Corinthians 2:8

“None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

Paul uses this phrase 'Lord of glory' to echo the Old Testament name of Yahweh. In Psalm 24:7-10, Yahweh is translated to English, 'King of Glory'. In Psalm 29:3, Yahweh is translated to 'God of glory'. This is Paul affirming Jesus claims that he was God, Yahweh, the God of the Israelites. Jesus is God in flesh.

This verse shows us how the truth of the 'Lord of glory' was hidden. If Christ would not have been crucified, then we would not have salvation. Also, if it were plain and completely obvious, who would not choose Christ. This plain view of Christ, and peoples undeniable draw to accept him, would also mean that men would not have a choice. It would no longer be obedience. Faith in Christ would be a compulsion. Paul proves his point of the hidden nature of Christ's deity by quoting from the prophet Isaiah.

[11] 1 Corinthians 2:9

“But, as it is written,

³ Revelation 13:8

⁴ Ephesians 4:4

⁵ Romans 8:30

*“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him” —*

Paul is using Isaiah 64:4 to assert that people cannot understand things of God through human capabilities⁶. Had the rulers relied on the Holy Spirit they would have known who Christ was and they never would have crucified him, but we would also not have salvation because it was through the shedding of his blood that we have salvation⁷. The hidden nature of Christ fulfilled God’s purpose to bring about salvation.

In the same way the believers in the church in Corinth must rely on the Spirit that has been graciously given to all believers by God. This comes through a love for God. When we have this deep love for Him, it yields understanding of the things of God including his plan of salvation and the plans and purposes for the church. Later in this letter Paul even explains that wisdom and knowledge are considered gifts of the Spirit.

What the Corinthians desire, this need for knowledge and wisdom, when they sought it from the culture. It created a detriment to of the gospel and Christ’s leadership over their lives. Paul is explaining that what they desire, will come after they have accepted Christ and recognized who He is and what he has done for them. Which is why he continues to repeatedly point back to the cross and what it achieved for them as believers.

Isaiah prophecies is that for those that love him, God grants insight regarding his work, to those who follow him and do his will.

Our job as Christians who evangelize to others, our job is not to convert them. That is God’s job to reveal himself, and the individual’s responsibility to respond. We are to be like Paul, where we are to know nothing except Christ crucified. Preach without eloquent words and let the power of the gospel do the rest.

If we share the gospel and they do not come to Jesus, that is not our failure to be convincing. That is not our failure to say all the right things. We have to remember the truth in Christ was hidden to the world for God’s purposes. What no eye has seen, or ear has heard is what God has prepared for those who love him.

When we share the gospel with others, we just might be a small piece in the story of their conversion. Or that situation could evidence of their direct opposition to the truth. It is not your responsibility to convert anyone. God has a purpose in all of it just like he had a purpose for Pilot and for the Pharisees. We are called to share the message of the power and wisdom of God that is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. That’s it.

We only know these hidden truths through the power of the Holy Spirit.

[12] 1 Corinthians 2:10

⁶ Isaiah 52:17; 65:17

⁷ Isaiah 53

“these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.”

God showed believers the hidden wisdom. Christ method for revealing his work to people, like granting them spiritual gifts of wisdom and knowledge, it is done in the giving of the Holy Spirit. Because the Spirit knows God more intimately than we ever could on this side of heaven. What better way to learn about God than through the one that knows the depth of him. What Paul is saying to this church is that if they want is knowledge then they need to walk more closely with Christ, as God reveals his eternal work through the Spirit.

[13] 1 Corinthians 2:11

“For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”

The spirit of that person is the Greek word ‘pneuma’ it is the wind or the breath that is given to man, the vital part of himself⁸. This draws back to Adam in the garden. When God formed Adam out of the dirt and breathed life into him. The Hebrew word ‘ruach’⁹. Just as man knows their own minds, so the Spirit knows the things of God. We are to depend on it, walk in it and see, through its revelations.

[14] 1 Corinthians 2:12

“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.”

We have to have the understanding that the Spirit of God is not anything like the spirit of people or anything ‘of this age’. Anything that can be comprehended, computed, or reasoned in this world is in contrast with the Spirit of God¹⁰. The Spirit that we received from God comes that we might understand our salvation that has been given, as well as understanding the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

When it comes to our salvation, as Paul has said several times in this passage, believers can only comprehend it because of the Spirit¹¹. When it comes to the gifts of the Spirit¹², the spirit’s ability to give gifts is for his purpose. A purpose that is revealed to those with his Spirit. The purpose of the gifts are for building up the church and for encouraging other believers¹³.

We know this and have the ability to teach this because the Spirit has revealed it to us.

[15] 1 Corinthians 2:13

“And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.”

Without God’s help through the Spirit, people lack the ability to understand his plans. It is in the power of the Spirit that we have words taught by the Spirit. This is more than likely referring to the spiritual gift

⁸ Eccl 8:8

⁹ Job 27:3

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 1:20; 2:6

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 6:23

¹² 1 Cor 12; John 6:45, 14:26; 1 John 2:27

¹³ Ephesians 4:11-12

of prophecy, which involves speaking on behalf of God¹⁴. We will dive more into this when we get to chapter 12.

From this we know that the Spirit is going to provide factual content. He will help believers to know the full significance of the facts about Jesus, but he will also give us the desire to act on those facts. This is the knowledge of our conversion and desire and prompting to share that message with others. When it comes to prophecy a passage in Deuteronomy comes to mind.

[16] Deuteronomy 18:22

“When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.”

I bring this up because this shows why Paul came to them in weakness and in fear with trembling in verse 3. He knew that if he was coming as a prophet to tell them about Christ being crucified, especially if he was coming in the power of the Holy Spirit, he had better approach it with the utmost reverence and respect. His desire and the purpose of his calling, was that anyone that might hear his words would fear the Lord, which is the beginning of knowledge¹⁵.

[17] 1 Corinthians 2:14

“The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”

This spiritual discernment is the believer’s ability to make a decision based upon careful investigation with the help of the revelation by the Spirit.

Because by nature our flesh is resistant to God¹⁶. We were once enemies of God¹⁷. By our wickedness we would suppress the truth¹⁸, and we were by nature objects of wrath¹⁹. We understand that it is the power of the gospel and the wisdom of the Spirit that we were changed from condemned to redeemed. We have discerned that through the revelation of the Spirit, that this salvation makes us different than the world around us. We are controlled by the Spirit. Through the Spirit we have the ability to put away our fleshly desires. The natural man does not possess that same ability, nor do they have a desire not to fulfill their fleshly desires. They are controlled and governed purely by their impulses.

But if we understand this change by the Spirit to be true of ourselves, why do we forget this when we witness to others? Why do we forget that it is the Spirit that bring that change within us? Remember we do not possess the power to redeem, convert or convict. You could not find God on your own. When we evangelize, often times we go back to thinking that it is in our own power that souls are won into the kingdom.

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:3, 10;14;1

¹⁵ Proverbs 9:10-12

¹⁶ Galatians 5:17-21

¹⁷ Romans 5:8-10

¹⁸ Romans 1:18

¹⁹ Ephesians 2:1-5

What's worse is that we let ourselves be so intimidated by that insurmountable hill, that we talk ourselves out of sharing the gospel all together. We don't even begin the conversation because we feel like if we are going to try and fail, then why try at all.

If they do not accept salvation, it is not your failure to convince, after all, that is not what you are supposed to be doing any way. Like Paul, we come knowing nothing except Christ crucified. We are so afraid of failing that we do not realize by not sharing the gospel when the Holy Spirit gives us that desire, we fail to give the opportunity. How can they believe in whom they have not heard?

As believers, we have no reason to fear whatever people think.

[18] 1 Corinthians 2:15

"The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one."

This sense of spiritual person is referring to every believer who has access and the ability to comprehend the spiritual truth related to Christ. The truth that has been revealed to us by the work of the Holy Spirit. Because true understanding of all things comes only with the help of the Spirit, which we know grants the wisdom from God. Wisdom being the distinguishing between God's preferred plan and that of the world. God grants believers what they need; these gifts don't come any other way. This gifting empowers them to follow Christ without having to worry about judgement of others. Because those that are in Christ, know that God is their only judge and they have no reason to fear the opinions or judgements of people.

[19] 1 Corinthians 2:16

"For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ."

This is Paul again quoting from Isaiah, 40 verse 13. It emphasizes again the gift that the Holy Spirit is to the believers. Since Christ has no need of an advisor because God's wisdom is incomprehensible. And yet he has enabled believers to understand the wisdom of his salvation through the crucified Messiah, Jesus. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God provides believers with the understanding they need.

This means that anyone that finds all his knowledge upon principles of science, and the mere light of reason, can never judge if something is true or false when it is received by the revelation of God²⁰. Because they cannot understand it without having the mind of Christ.

The Holy Spirit grants believers the ability to discern God's will and works within them to make them more like Christ. Being like Christ, believers can understand the difference between right and wrong, and are empowered to seek God's will over and against the sin and their own desires. The Corinthian factions in chapter 1 ('I follow Paul...I follow Apollos) would be less problematic if they recognized that every believer receives these benefits from the same Spirit. Their division was caused by believing that one teacher or apostle had more of the Spirit than others.

APPLICATION

[20] We who understand the great change that took place in us are to be the vessels to bring about the change in others. When we look at our own conversion story, there might be a person that we can point to. The person that might have prayed with you, or shared the gospel with you.

²⁰ Daniel 4:35

We all know that they are not the ones that saved us. For all of us it was the Holy Spirit creating that draw to himself. It might have been that person's obedience that led to them sharing the gospel but it was the Holy Spirit prompting the right moment and the right time where your heart was prepared to receive it. We don't focus on the individual, we focus on the sort, like Corinth failed to do.

Why is it, again, that we forget that when we are prompted to share the gospel with others?

We get into our own heads and over think it. Asking questions like, 'What if they ask a question that I do not know the answer to?' or 'What if they make me look foolish for sharing my faith? What If this ruins our relationship. We act like every time we are prompted to share the gospel that we are going up against the armchair atheist and we'll have to debate Richard Dawkins or something. We who are spiritual beings, judge all things, but are to be judged by no one. Jesus said why do we fear the one that can harm the body when we should fear the one that can destroy both body and soul in hell²¹.

Even if that were true, and we were somehow in your worst nightmare and enter into a conversation where we feel ill-equipped. You would be right to give up before it starts because you are going into the conversation thinking that their conversation depends on you. How weak the Holy Spirit you believe in must be.

We approach all conversation about sharing the gospel with weakness and fear and trembling because we know we come in the power of the Holy Spirit, and he will give us everything that we will need. It is through this Spirit that we possess a secret knowledge that has been disclosed to us by God. Jesus said that with the faith of a mustard seed you can move mountains²². The idea of having this conversation with someone can feel like a mountain but tell it to move!

We have the Holy Spirit within us, who we believe possesses the wisdom and power of a transcendent God that is outside of time space and matter. If that is true shouldn't we believe that he can work through you to share the gospel with one person you work with, go to school with or are related to?

The purpose of the church is to go out and make disciples of all nations. It is not just up to Pastors to share the gospel. It is not for you Sunday school teacher to teach them about God and your only task is to get them through those doors.

I need everyone to stand up for me. Place you hand on the chair you were sitting in. Do you feel how warm that seat is that you have been sitting in for the last 45 minutes. It's nice right. That is not your contribution to the kingdom of God. When you are here and these seats are getting warm it is you here being equipped for ministry. Learning and growing in his word to leave out those doors to share the gospel and grow his kingdom.

Do not be just another person keeping a seat warm we have to go out and preach to the lost. Look at all that God has done, through Christ, through his Holy Spirit, he has done that in you for the purpose of his glory and that same work has the potential to be true in every single person that you come into contact with.

²¹ Matthew 10:28

²² Matthew 17:20

Preach to the lost. For how can they believe in whom they have not heard. How can they here unless someone is preaching. How can they preach unless someone is sent. You are being sent. God in you weakness with your fear and trembling, and preach the word trust that the Holy Spirit is within you and with you going ahead of you and is working out the purposes for the gospel in your life and in the lives of the people you evangelize to. Trust that he is with you!

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

COMMUNION