

THE GOSPEL

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5 • TV212B

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1 Corinthians 2:1-5

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

Today, we are going to be looking at the book of **1 Corinthians chapter 2 verses 1 through 5**. The title of my message is **“THE GOSPEL.”**

I suppose that I have brought more messages from this one passage of Scripture than any other, single, passage of Scripture throughout the Word of God. I just love it.

I believe that it would be good if every preacher imitated the apostle Paul, I really believe that. It would be good for every preacher to study Paul’s message, to study his methods, to study his ministry, and to study those epistles that he wrote.

I believe that he is God’s pattern for preachers; I really do, God’s pattern for preachers.

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First of all: He was miraculously converted, we know that.

He was converted out of false religion. That is where most of us came from. We were converted out of false religion, or some kind of (ism and self righteousness). Most everyone who really knows God in our day has been converted out of some false religion because just about everyone has some kind of religion.

The apostle Paul was called by Christ, supernaturally called by Christ. He was taught the Gospel by the Lord Himself. He said, "I didn't seek out men." That was one of the two marks of an apostle. An apostle had to see the Lord and Paul said that he did, "*as one born out of due time.*"

He had to get his Gospel, his message, directly from Christ Himself. Paul said, "When God saved me, I didn't consult with flesh and blood. I didn't go up to Peter, James, and John, and those who were apostles before me." But he said; "the Lord taught me the Gospel."

God ordained him to be an apostle of Christ. He was called to be an apostle of Christ. God sent him as a traveling missionary and evangelist to the Gentiles in many countries. This man is God's pattern for preachers.

I also find this, in **1 Corinthians 2** that Paul was sent to the people of Corinth to preach the gospel.

He stayed there about 18 months. Corinth is in many ways like our generation. It is like our nation, (really) the city of Corinth is much like our county in that they were a pagan people.

That's right, they were people given to the "*lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh and the pride of life.*" They were a prosperous and proud people. They were prosperous and proud and very worldly and very sensual. These Corinthian's were a very sensual people, a pagan people, and a heathen people.

Secondly: They were a religious people.

That's right; they were very religious with all sorts of ideas of God. Just like this country, they are of all different denominations, cults, groups, organizations, shrines, and altars. There is religion everywhere. That is what they had in Corinth.

One time Paul said this; "*I perceive that you are a very religious people.*" He used the word "*superstitious,*" but that is religious. Most religion is superstition anyway. He said, "*I perceive that you are a very superstitious (religious) people.*"

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That is much like our country; we have all kinds of religion. Everyone has a different brand of religion, a different idea about God, about heaven, about hell, and about this, that, and the other.

Thirdly: Another thing about this city of Corinth was that it was the seat of learning.

There was science, philosophy, intellectualism, a city of learning and a city of debating, a city of philosophy. What does a servant of Christ preach to a town like that, to a people like that, to a nation like that?

Well, Paul acquaints us with his message and his ministry, his one message right here. He was very clear. When he came to Corinth, that great-pagan city, that very religious city, that city of the seat of learning and science, so-called, and intellectual, he said in **1 Corinthians 2:1**, *“Brethren; when I first came to you, (when I first came to preach to you as God’s ambassador), I did not come to you with excellency of speech (oratory) or of wisdom. I didn’t come to you showing off my ability to speak or my intellectualism.”*

“I didn’t come debating with men and matching wits with the educators, the politicians, and the scientists. I did not come matching wits with men. I did not come with oratory, (*excellency of speech*) or intellectualism. I didn’t come trying to show off my knowledge.”

In **verse 3**, he said; *“And I was with you in weakness.”* Most leaders won’t admit weakness but Paul did. There is not only weakness but fear, *“I was with you in weakness and fear and much trembling.”*

He wasn’t afraid of them. Paul wasn’t afraid for his life. He wasn’t afraid of men or what men could do to him. What is this weakness, this fear and trembling? I will tell you what it is; it is something that most preachers in our day know nothing about. They are so proud and so self-confident and self-righteous. They are cocky and know it all.

The apostle Paul realized what an awful, awesome, heavy responsibility was upon him to speak from God. Now, you think about that, a man speaking for God, a man delivering God’s message to an individual. That is a responsibility and it led Paul to say, *“Who is sufficient for these things?”*

Paul stood before God with an awareness of that great responsibility that was upon his shoulders to be true to the glory of God and true to the souls of his hearers. He said, *“I am in fear (I am scared); and weakness and trembling.”*

He said, *“My fear and trembling is not before men but it is before God.”* It is not a lack of confidence in his message. It is not a lack of confidence in his power. It is not a lack of confidence in the sufficiency of his Redeemer; it is total lack of confidence in us, (in this flesh).

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“We have no confidence in the flesh. The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord.”
This is something our generation needs to learn something about, the fear of God.

In **verse 4**, he says; *“My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom (geared to persuade you to follow me).”* I see these fellows using psychology and all types of methods by saying, “bow your heads and close your eyes. Raise your hands, do this, that, and the other, and with the choir sing softly while the organ plays.”

It is a form of religious atmosphere in the background to get someone to make some kind of decision to follow them, to join their bunch or to join their crowd. It is to get someone to receive their religion or join their denomination.

Paul said, *“I didn’t do that. My speech and my preaching was not with enticing (persuadable) words of men’s wisdom.”* “I wasn’t trying to persuade you to do anything. I came to you preaching the Gospel, depending on the Holy Spirit of God to reveal sin, to convince men of sin, to reveal Christ as the only Redeemer and to bring men to faith in Christ.”

Why do we use these psychological methods, this atmosphere thing, with tears, stories, tales, and poems, to get people under some kind of spell and then strike while the iron is hot? Why don’t we just preach the Gospel to them and let them go home and sit down and count the cost?

Why don’t we let them read the Word and let them cry to God for mercy? Why don’t we let them consider what kind of decision they are making, what kind of responsibility they are entering in into? What kind of life are they stepping into?

Let them think about it and consider it. That’s the reason that you have thousands of church members but only about 150 that will ever come. That is the reason you always have to run around and hunt your church members.

All of them are persuaded under some kind of mass psychology and spell, religious spell, to make a decision that they never made; you made it for them. They said, “You repeat these words after me; Lord be merciful to me a sinner.”

If you can’t call on God from your own heart, that is like telling a man that is drowning, “why don’t you repeat after me, ‘someone throw me a life preserver.’” If he is drowning, he knows what to say. He knows better than you do. He is the one that is drowning; you are not the one that is drowning. He is the one who called for help, not you.

Mechanical words won’t save sinners; it takes a work of God. Paul said, “I didn’t come to you that way, trying to persuade you.” Now listen to **verse 5**, *“I want your faith and your confidence to stand in God, in the power of God, in the wisdom of God, and in God through Christ, not in the wisdom of men.”*

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You must not be a preacher follower by saying, “I like brother so and so. I believe brother so and so.” Don’t follow a man; don’t follow a denomination. Don’t become denominational slaves or a religionist.

Paul is saying, “I want you to know God. If you know God down in the hollow, fine. If you know Him upon the mountain, fine. If I never see you or hear from you again, if you know God, that is my desire that you might know God, *that you might win Christ, and be found in Him.*”

That is the reason. I don’t come to the end of the program and say, “If you have made your decision, write to me.” It won’t do you any good to write to me. I can’t be of any help to you.

Call on Christ. I commend you to the Word of God, to the Spirit of God, who is able to redeem your soul. I can’t do it. There is no need for me to write down a number in a book and say, “I had 10,000 do this and I had a 1,000 do that and a 100 do this.”

That is nothing in this world but making merchandise of the souls of men. It is time someone said something about it. It is time the whole world rose up in arms against this false, religious, con-game of covetousness.

Watch **verse 2**: Paul said, “*For I determined.* (I determined this in my soul and in my heart), *not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*” This is my message. This is my one message; this is my only message, “*Christ and Him crucified.*”

Now I ask you, (an average person will say), “Well, what do you mean; Paul didn’t preach anything but the cross?” Well, in a sense, yes. Here is what we are going to ask; “what is it to preach Christ and Him crucified?”

Paul said, “*I’ve determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*” If I preach Christ and Him crucified, is that just to preach the fact that He was crucified, and then go on to another matter? That is what some people seem to think.

Is it to start in Gethsemane’s Garden and talk about how He bled, how He suffered, and how He died and was mistreated in the soldier’s hall, Pilate’s hall, on Golgotha’s hill? Is that what it is to preach Christ crucified?

I’m telling you this; whatever Paul meant here, whatever he meant by preaching Christ and Him crucified, he indicated that in that message, “*Christ and him crucified,*” was everything a man needed to know, in that one message.

It was everything a man needed to have in that one message. Everything that God Almighty required was in that message, “*Christ and him crucified.*”

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I am going to try to give you briefly, six tremendous themes that are included in Christ and Him crucified. I want you to listen to me. I am going to make good on this from the Scripture.

Paul said, "I'm not here to organize a following. I am not here to amaze you with my intellectualism and oratorical ability. I am not here to take you deep into some high doctrine. I'm not here to get you to be a follower of me. I am not here to get some numbers so that I can report that I had great success with my meeting."

My success is in the hands of God. *"Thanks be unto God who always causes us to triumph in Christ."* He says, *"I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."*

First of all: If you preach Christ and Him crucified it is to preach Christ our eternal Surety and covenant head. That's right, preaching Christ and Him crucified.

When you preach the cross of Calvary, you have to reach all the way back into eternity past and pick up God's covenant of redemption. That's right, God's covenant of mercy, and God's testament made in Christ Jesus.

Let me ask you something; do you think the cross and the sacrifice of Christ was an afterthought of God? In other words, He made man; put him in the Garden. Man sinned and fell then God came up with a Saviour. Do you think that He came up with an idea of saving men this way?

The cross was not a solution to a bad situation, which arose after man fell; I beg your pardon. Listen to me; your Bible says this in **Revelation 13:8**, *"Christ was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world."* That is what I am saying, if you preach Christ crucified, if you preach the Christ who was ordained to die in God's covenant of grace from all eternity.

That's right! You see; the relationship between Jesus Christ and His people goes back to eternity past. Listen; Paul said, *"I thank God for your brethren, (as he was writing to the Thessalonians), because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation."* From the beginning, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."*

Paul wrote in **Ephesians Chapter 1**; *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, according as He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world."* Read it in **Ephesians chapter 1, verses 3, 4, and 5.**

In **Hebrews** He is called *"the surety of an everlasting covenant."* In that passage it talks about the great Shepherd of the sheep. It talks about the blood of the everlasting covenant.

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So, when you study and when you preach the eternal purposes of God to redeem sinners from eternity past, then you must preach it in the light of Christ crucified. Do you see what I am saying? *“His blood is the blood of the everlasting covenant.”*

When Paul said, *“I’ve determined to know nothing among you save Christ and him crucified,”* Paul went back and picked up the eternal wisdom, sovereignty, and covenant of God in redeeming mercies, established before man ever fell.

He preached it in the light of Calvary because that is what the covenant is all about, to redeem, and you can only redeem through a sacrifice. Do you follow me?

Second: I am saying to preach Christ and Him crucified is to preach more than just a man hanging on a cross.

To preach Christ and Him crucified is to open the Old Testament Scriptures. *“Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures,”* Paul said.

When you are reading the New Testament and you come across the word Scriptures; *“He died for our sins according to the Scriptures. He was buried and rose again, according to the Scriptures.”* What is that talking about?

It is talking about the Old Testament. It is talking about the Old Testament Scriptures. Almost every time the word Scriptures is used in the New Testament it is talking about the Old Testament Scriptures.

Christ said to the Pharisees; *“You search the scriptures.”* What Scriptures were they searching? They were not searching Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; they were not written yet. It wasn’t Corinthians, Romans, and Hebrews; they were not written.

He said, *“You search the scriptures for in them you think you have life. They are they which testify of me. Moses wrote of me.”* So, the Scriptures are the Old Testament Scriptures. *“He died for our sins according to the scriptures.”*

If you want to understand and preach the Scriptures you have to preach the cross of Christ, the sufferings of Christ.

How do you explain the slaying of the animal in the Garden of Eden to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve without the cross, of what use is it? That first victim died to cover man’s nakedness.

How do you explain Abel’s sacrifice without the cross? It is meaningless. There is no blood of an animal that can put away the sin of a man. There is no way that an animal could substitute on an altar for a man’s sin and satisfy a holy God. The blood of that animal was pointing to someone else’s blood. It was pointing to Calvary.

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How do you explain Abraham and Isaac on Mount Mariah when the ram took the place of Isaac? Abraham slew the ram and put its blood on the altar before God. Why blood on the altar anyway?

The Old Testament has a trail of blood from the Garden of Eden in **Genesis 3**. All the way to Calvary there is a trail of blood.

How do you explain the Passover when the people coming out of Egypt, God says; *“when I see the blood I will pass over you.”*

In the keeping of that Passover every year, how do you preach the exodus from Egypt without the cross?

How do you preach the tabernacle? The tabernacle takes up most of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Then, the services of the tabernacle all the way through the Old Testament prophecies, how do you preach it? What does that table of shewbread mean?

What is the Ark of the Covenant? What is the mercy seat? What is the atonement? What does that mean? It is useless and meaningless without Calvary's cross. Then, what about the smitten rock, the brazen serpent, Jonah, three days and three nights in the belly of the fish.

You see, my friends; to preach Christ and Him crucified is to preach the Old Testament, all 39 Books, anywhere you turn. Everything in the Old Testament points to Calvary. Everything in the Old Testament is understood in the light of Calvary. That is exactly right!

So, when Paul said to that Corinthian gang, *“I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.”* He is saying, if you know Jesus Christ and Him crucified, you know all that a man needs to know. It is endless learning; it is unlimited learning. You never reach the end of studying and preaching Christ and Him crucified.

Third: To preach Christ and Him crucified is to preach His incarnation.

Do you think that Jesus Christ was the only man to ever die on a cross? No, two men died with Him at the same time. Lots of people died on Roman crosses.

What is so special about His crucifixion? What is so special about His death on a cross? There were a lot of folks who died on a cross. I will tell you; it is who He was.

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When you are preaching the cross and Christ and Him crucified, you identify who Christ is. You see; His death is worthless, except for who He is. Lots of people died on crosses. They never became saviours; they never became redeemers.

You see; who is Jesus Christ? Well, in the person of Christ, God came to this earth. That is what the Scripture says. The Christ is the seed of woman, *“Behold a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son and thou shalt call His name Immanuel (God with us).”*

“Thou shall call His name Jesus; He shall save His people from their sins.” The cross was His purpose to save. *“His name shall be called wonderful, counselor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”* Where was peace made? Peace was made at Calvary.

You see, this was the whole purpose of God coming to earth in human flesh, the incarnation, is to set us free from our sin. That was His whole purpose. *“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the chief.”*

When you preach Christ and Him crucified, you go back to the incarnation and you preach the incarnation, God in human flesh; *“the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us: And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.”*

So, when we look at Calvary and see Jesus Christ on that cross; His death is sufficient and effectual because of whom He is. God died on that cross. That is the reason that Paul said in **Romans 8:34**; *“who can condemn us; it is Christ that died.”* Oh, it is Christ that died!

Who is this babe in the manger? He is Christ, the Son of God. Who is this man the carpenter in the carpenter shop? It is Christ, the Son of God. Who is this man on a tree? It is Christ, the Son of God.

Fourth: To preach Christ and Him crucified is to preach His sinless life.

Listen to me; Pilate said, *“I find no fault in Him.”* God the Father said, *“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”*

Everyone came to this conclusion; He is without sin. He said, *“Which of you convinceth me of sin?”*

I am telling you this; it is His sinlessness that makes His death effectual. He is without sin; therefore, He is able to bear my sin. If He had any sin then He couldn't bear my sin.

You see; Christ didn't die as a martyr. Christ didn't die as a reformer. Christ didn't die as an example; Christ died as a substitute. I've tried to preach that on this program. I have tried to emphasize that because people have to know what they believe.

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How can a person call on Christ if he hasn't heard of Christ, if he hasn't believed on Christ? How can he believe in Christ if he hasn't heard of Christ? *"How shall he hear without a preacher?"*

This preacher is trying to identify who Christ is. He is a representative person. The Lord Jesus Christ came down here to do something for us toward God. He didn't come down here to do something for God toward us, to make us feel sorry for Him or to gain the pity of the creature.

He came down here because God loved Him. *"For God so loved that He sent His Son into the world. He gave His only begotten Son."*

Christ came down here to represent us toward God. His obedience to the law was toward God. His obedience in death and His satisfaction of sin and His sin-offering was toward God on behalf of us who believe.

That is what we preach when we preach Christ crucified. We preach His sinless life, His perfect life, His holy life, because He is God. He is the God-man.

Fifth: To preach Christ crucified is to preach Christ that He has risen, that He is exalted, and He is returning again.

Now listen, He can't rise from the grave and be the *"first fruits of them that slept"* unless He dies. A man cannot rise from the tomb that has never been in the tomb; he must die. So, to preach the resurrection you have to preach the death.

He cannot perform, (now listen to me); the work of the high priest and offer the blood sacrifice unless He dies and has a blood sacrifice to offer. There has to be atonement. *"By Christ we have received the atonement. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission."*

So, the Bible says; *"Seeing that we have a great, high priest, who is passed into the heavens, Jesus Christ the righteous, let us come boldly before the throne of grace."*

Without His death He is no high priest. He has no atonement. He has no sin-offering. He has no sacrifice and He has no blood to present on the mercy seat. So, you must preach His death if you preach His priestly work.

Sixth: He cannot be a Mediator without His death. The Scripture says *"there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."*

A mediator must have a righteousness to plead. Now listen; God in His holiness and us in our sinfulness, what good would it do us to have a mediator if He had nothing to plead on our behalf? Christ has a perfect righteousness which was fulfilled in His life and death in order to plead for us.

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Seventh: He cannot return with His reward for His people unless by His death He has a reward to bring. He will have no kingdom to bring.

“He died that He might be Lord of the living and the dead.” The way to the throne was by the way of the cross. He purchased that right to reign.

So; when you preach Christ crucified, you preach Christ risen, you preach Christ ascended, you preach Christ exalted, and you preach Christ coming again. Now; let me tell you one more thing:

Eighth: To preach Christ and Him crucified is to preach holiness of life and obedience.

What is a believer’s motive for holiness, obedience, and righteousness? Is it not the love of Christ? *“We love Him because He first loved us.”*

Fear produces an obedience of resentment. Promise of reward produces a hypocritical obedience. True love for Christ, because of His love for us, produces a true and genuine obedience of life!