

“My Preaching”

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Chapter two is somewhat of a continuation of the truths taught in chapter one: specifically, those regarding the preaching of the cross. There is a good deal of material given to this subject because it is the foundation of what we believe and what the Bible teaches – the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross for the payment of our sins is where our hope lies.

In these verses we see what our preaching is to be. Not just the pastor’s preaching, but all of our “preaching” – every believer’s message of Christ to the lost must begin at the cross. We don’t worship the cross, we don’t worship a crucified Savior – we worship a risen, living Savior – but if it weren’t for the cross we would have no salvation. It is the entirety of the gospel message that we are to preach, beginning at the cross. As Spurgeon said, “I take my text, and make a bee-line for the cross.”

I. PREACHING IS TO BE DECLARATIVE – VS. 1

A. Proclaimed clearly – it’s supposed to say something

B. He begins this portion of the letter by addressing the believers in Corinth

1. He addresses them as “brethren,” indicating that when he went to Corinth to minister there that he went back to the basics of the message even among the believers
2. As we minister to other believers, particularly in the teaching ministry of the church, we need to be sure we continue to

make the message of the cross clear and plain, even to those that are already saved

C. He didn't go to Corinth to impress them with his knowledge and his "excellency of speech or of wisdom" – he could have for sure, but he didn't

1. "Excellency of speech or of wisdom" – literally, according to elevation or superiority (Vincent)
2. The word for "excellency" is translated "authority" in 1 Tim. 2:2, where it speaks of those in authority over us

[1 Timothy 2:2](#)

(2) For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

3. It's not saying our preaching isn't to be authoritative, for it is – this is saying we are not to use our words or our wisdom to display our superiority over others, but we are to use them to point people to Christ, to give Him the glory (remember what was said in the previous text from chapter 1 on God receiving the glory)

D. "Declaring unto you"

1. The word for "declaring" is most often translated "preach" or "preached" (10 of the 17 times it's used)
2. The word means to declare plainly, openly, or aloud (Zodhiates) – we are to proclaim the testimony of God, the message of the cross, plainly, openly, and out-loud

[Acts 13:38](#)

(38) Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

Philippians 1:18

(18) What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

Romans 1:8

(8) First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

E. "The testimony of God" – our preaching of the gospel is the witness of God – preaching is to be done in a way that declares with the facts of Scripture the narrative of the truth of the gospel, and our life is to bear witness to that truth, our life is to bear it out as we live

II. PREACHING IS TO BE DETERMINED – VS. 2

A. Have a purpose

B. The word for "determined" here, in this context, is one that means to decide (as between right and wrong, good and evil)

1. He chose a particular path to take based on the situation he faced in Athens before he went to Corinth, and then, based upon the situation in the church at Corinth at the time
2. Our preaching must be determined by us, must be decided by us, to be focused and for a purpose – the purpose, as given here, is the "testimony of God" – the witness of

the gospel

C. "Not to know"

1. "Not" goes with the word "determined" and shows what Paul determined, decided, not to do or say
2. "To know" – the word for "know" here is one that carries the idea of using the senses to gain, or extend, knowledge (the word is often translated by the word "see" in its various forms)
3. The point being made is that the Apostle determined, when he got to Corinth, that he wasn't going to extend any knowledge he had regarding Jewish traditions, or worldly wisdom, beyond that of the message of the cross, and the doctrines they would teach (including the doctrines of the church)

D. "Save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" – "I had no intent to go beyond him and in particular, and him crucified" (Robertson)

E. The only message we have for the hopelessness of the world is the message of a crucified and risen – living – Savior. All we teach, all we preach, needs to be anchored in that truth.

Philippians 3:8-10

(8) Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

(9) And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that

which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

(10) That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

III. PREACHING IS TO BE DEMONSTRATED – VS. 3-5

A. Done in the power of the Spirit and nothing else

B. This is demonstrated in verse 3 where the Apostle makes reference to his limitations, which were there to demonstrate that it wasn't of him that the churches grew, but because of the Lord

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

(7) And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

(8) For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

(9) And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.** Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

(10) Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

1. "And I was" – he may not have come with the issues he mentions here but they came on him once he was there (the word "was" means to "come into being," or "become")

2. "With you" – "the implication is that his condition grew out of the circumstances in which he found himself in Corinth" (Vincent)
3. "Weakness" – often translated infirmities – he was sick while there (either after he got there, which seems indicated in the word "was," or when he arrived)
4. "Fear" (where we get our word "phobia" from) – and "much trembling" (where our word "tremor" comes from) – these two go together. He was afraid both for his life, it seems, as he was fearful of not being effective in his delivery of the message he had to give of the cross.

Acts 18:9-11

(9) Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, **Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:**

(10) **For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.**

(11) And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

5. The Apostle Paul asked others to pray that he had boldness. The devil is very capable of causing fear and intimidation in our lives, no matter how bold we are, and that seems to be what was happening here.
6. The message of the cross is a difficult one to preach, and the truths of Scripture are difficult and stressful to teach. That's what is indicated here. It's a battle we face every day – to maintain the "testimony of God" in a wicked world.

C. Vs. 4 – The power to change lives is not in the words (“speech” – “logos”) we use of ourselves, nor is it in the delivery of those words (“preaching” - herald) – the power is IN the Word of God itself. The only words that have power are the ones that God spoke, and that we deliver as from Him.

1. The demonstration of power wasn't in the way the words were presented – “with enticing (persuasive) words of man's wisdom” – that's what the Corinthians were looking for and precisely why the Lord didn't allow Paul to do that
2. “But in demonstration of the Spirit and of power”
 - a) “Demonstration” – only time in the New Testament this word is used – the word literally means to show forth, or manifestation
 - b) “of the Spirit” – The power to change lives does not rest on us and our presentation but rather on the Spirit working through us as we give out His word – this manifestation, this demonstration of the Spirit was seen in Corinth through the miraculous gifts of the Spirit that the city and the church saw as described in chapters 12-14.
 - c) “And of power” – this is defined or described in verse 5 – the power to change lives

D. Vs. 5 – the reason it's all of God is so that we can claim nothing from it other than being a vessel used of the Master for the demonstration of His power

1. "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men" – he, again, comes back to this point to show that it's not of us. This doesn't mean that education isn't necessary or that we aren't to study, as some teach this. Other Scripture would prove that wrong. This is to show that the power to change a life for Christ is in Him.
2. "But in the power of God" (3 times already in this letter the phrase "power of God is used, 14 times in the New Testament) – our faith stands in His power – that's what makes it eternal

1 Peter 1:5

(5) Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Conclusion: Too many today feel that they can't be an effective witness for the Lord because they don't know what to say, or they don't know much about the Bible. These verses show us that it's not because of how we present the truth that matters, but it is the truth that matters – all we have to do is give them the simple message of the cross and let the Spirit demonstrate His power to save.

Romans 1:16

(16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.