

I Corinthians 2:1-7

Here Paul teaches us that human wisdom does not accept nor understand (they even ridicule) the message of the cross and its resurrection. We know that the truly regenerated mind, with God's help, does grasp Paul's message.

*These Corinthians had a number of problems but they were believers just like us. Their failures were causing them not to have godly wisdom to resolve their problems. So Paul writes them with the hope he can edify them with truth that will enable them to handle their problems on their own.

A. I Corinthians 2:1 - And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

1. Paul's practice - Paul is saying he did not use his own human wisdom or man's rhetoric as the power base when he preached the gospel. Paul did not try to impress them with his speaking ability or learning. He was more interested in communicating truth on their level.

2. We know Paul had a terrific education, debating experience, and the human ability to reason and to persuade people. But that was not the main reason why so many believed in Christ.

Acts 18:4 - And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks

Acts 22:3 - I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

3. Also, God is not saying that it is wrong to use human speech, logic, or reasoning as long as it is not absent of God's breath upon it. One's intelligence and presentation is never superior to the gospel message.

* | Natural abilities must take second place because the simple truth of the D.B.R. of Christ supercedes
* | all voices of man.

B. I Corinthians 2:2 - For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

1. Paul's message - Before Paul had preached his first message in Corinth, he had determined, evaluated, judged, assessed, decided, concluded that his message would be simple, frank, and clear about Jesus Christ.

2. Paul's goal in his message was to present who Christ was and what He had accomplished through His D.B.R.

*Paul is not saying his message excluded normal life or other things. Paul shares how he had found everything in Christ and nothing else in life compares to or is as important as Christ. Paul limited his message to the fact that Jesus Christ had been crucified for them.

C. I Corinthians 2:3 - And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

1. Paul's make-up - Even though Paul had tremendous results when he was at Corinth, each time he stood before the people, he had inner-feelings of being overwhelmed. Paul did not doubt the gospel's power, but he did question himself.

2. Paul knew that he himself had a sense of failure, questions about **himself**. He would literally become ill because he truly understood his own **inadequacy** to make the gospel simple and clear.

Galatians 4:15-17 - Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if *it had been* possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Gal. 4:16 - Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? Gal. 4:17 - They zealously affect you, *but* not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

II Corinthians 12:7 - 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.

II Corinthians 7:5 - For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears.

Philippians 4:13 - I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Acts 18:9-10 - Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; Acts 18:10 - For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

D. I Corinthians 2:4 - And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

1. Paul's power - Paul never relied upon his wisdom, experience, or his own ability to communicate. He never trusted in his **per**formance or his salesmanship. Paul did not use the means of rational or emotional appeals (many do). Paul saw no need and no place for impressive, clever techniques to **manipulate** decisions for Christ from his hearers.
- *If a person would have responded to his human approach, they might have changed their thinking. But their heart would not have been changed spiritually.
- **Many have done this and **where** are they?
2. Paul says [but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power] that there is a different way of presenting the gospel..**God's** way! It was the Spirit's power upon His simple gospel message that changed lives.. **period!**

*Evidence could be **seen** in Paul's converts in their deliverance from sin and idols to serving God.

I Thessalonians 1:5 - For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

II Thessalonians 2:13 - But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

Spurgeon said: "The power that is in the Gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher--otherwise, men would be the converters of souls--nor does it lie in the preacher's learning--otherwise it would consist in the wisdom of men. We might preach until our tongues rotted, till we would exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless the Holy Spirit be with the Word of God to give it the power to convert the soul."

E. I Corinthians 2:5 - That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

1. Paul's goal - Paul wanted their faith to be real and in God. If their faith were in man, it would be demonstrated as superficial decisions that would not last. No doubt they would lack real spiritual growth and eventually just fade away.

*Paul wanted them not to trust in the messenger, but in the message itself.

2. Someone may ask: "What is true faith?"

*The faith that too many have is a mere mental assent. But a true living heart faith in Christ stands based on God's power, a supernatural revelation of God that creates understanding in one's heart unable to be shaken.

Question? Why are you still standing?

II Timothy 1:12 - For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

*Remember: "Faith does not contradict reason, but simply goes farther than reasoning can go."

F. I Corinthians 2:6 - Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

1. Paul has constantly shown the difference between the inadequacy of man's wisdom and the power of God's wisdom. Here in verse 6, it is regarding a specific wisdom of God to a specific group of believers (perfect - matured).

2. The "perfect" (matured) refers to those believers who have grown, developed in the faith, and who were led - controlled by the Holy Spirit.

*This shows Paul preached the gospel to the lost, and the mystery to spiritually-minded believers.

To the lost, immature, or complacent believer, God's wisdom is like the tip of an iceberg, but those believers who are growing in faith have the ability to see below the surface where God's depth of wisdom is!

3. Paul will proceed to define the wisdom which he spoke to the mature in Christ. Paul only spoke this wisdom truth to those whose lives were full of grace and who would be ready - open to this new revelation of advanced doctrine (the wisdom doctrine).

I Timothy 2:4 - Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

G. I Corinthians 2:7 - But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

1. The foundation of truth and grace had been laid; now Paul shares an advanced mystery truth. Remember that with some, he had not been able to do because of their lack of maturity. But here he shares a truth that had been hidden in God, and Paul is assured that they will grasp it (only the perfect).

2. Note that Paul calls it the mystery, the hidden wisdom of God.

Ephesians 3:5 - Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

Ephesians 3:9 - And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

Romans 16:25 - Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

Colossians 1:26 - *Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:*

*It is the great revelation of the mystery that Paul proclaimed to the more mature.

3. This mystery wisdom had **pre**viously been kept a secret, concealed from **all** men up to the time it was revealed to Paul (The Body of Christ ruled by the Gospel of Grace).
4. [which God ordained before the world unto our glory:]
 - a. Before time began, in **eter**nity past, God set His plan in motion, and He has seen to it that it would be fulfilled. The mystery Body of Christ is **no** afterthought!
 - b. Not until revelation was given to Paul, was it known that this Dispensation of Grace would be **our** glory also. We know we were created for God's glory, but it is a staggering thought that one day **we** will share in His glory!

Romans 8:18 - For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*.

Romans 8:30 - Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.