

PREACHING JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED

TEXT: I CORINTHIANS 2:1-5

INTRODUCTION:

1. The apostle Paul was a great scholar. W.A. Criswell said, “He belonged to the rabbinical school of Gamaliel. He had gone to the university at Tarsus. He knew the classical Greek poets.”
2. Paul had received the best education that his religion had to offer. He said in 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.”
3. Yet despite his excellent education, Paul wrote in 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.”
4. Paul was depending upon the Holy Spirit – “And my speech and my preaching was...in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”
5. The people of Corinth did not need some new philosophy. They had enough philosophy, and it didn't give them peace with God. The people of Corinth needed Christ, and so Paul preached the cross (1:18, 21; 2:4).
6. And Paul preached the Gospel in “demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (2:4).
7. This is man's greatest need – the preaching of Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (2:2).
8. David Brainerd was devoted to bringing the Gospel to the American Indians. He said, “I never got away from Jesus and him crucified, and I found that when my people were gripped by this great evangelical doctrine of Christ, and Him crucified, I had no need to give them instructions about morality. I found that one followed as the sure and inevitable fruit of the other.”

I. PAUL'S DECLARATION

II. PAUL'S DETERMINATION

III. PAUL'S DEMONSTRATION

I. PAUL'S DECLARATION (2:1)

1. Paul declared "the testimony of God" (2:1). Paul said in Acts 20:27, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."
2. This was Paul's declaration. Paul's emphasis was on the Gospel (2:2; cf. 1:17).
3. There's an old story about a man went to hear two preachers. He went to hear the first one on a Sunday morning, and then the second one in the evening.
4. When he heard the first one, a world-famous preacher, he said, "What a great orator. What a marvelous speaker. What a glorious preacher."
5. Then when he heard the second one, he went away saying, "What a wonderful Savior! What a glorious Lord! What a marvelous Redeemer!"

II. PAUL'S DETERMINATION

1. "For I determined..." (2:2).
2. Paul was determined. He was beaten, stoned, imprisoned, and shipwrecked, but he kept on because he was determined (cf. II Cor. 6:4, 5; 11:23-28).
3. Down through the years, there have been many other Christians with this same determination. David Livingstone said, "I will go anywhere, provided it be forward."

4. When we consider Paul's determination, let us also remember Paul's situation – "among you" (2:2). Paul was with them "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (2:3).
5. Corinth was a very wicked city, but Paul was determined to see a church established there. Despite fierce opposition, "many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).
6. The Lord appeared to Paul one night by a vision, and said to him, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:9, 10).
7. "Much people"! In wicked Corinth! Paul had just arrived in town, but the Lord encouraged him – "I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:9, 10).
8. After these encouraging words from our Lord, Paul continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among the Corinthians (Acts 18:11).

III. PAUL'S DEMONSTRATION (2:4)

1. When Paul preached the Gospel, he did not try to impress his listeners with great oratory. He did not try and use eloquent language or intellectual terminology (2:4).
2. Paul's speech and his preaching "was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (2:4).
3. I remember many years ago turning the radio to a certain station and an articulate man was preaching. He grabbed my attention because I found him interesting and even a little bit persuasive.
4. However, after a few minutes I realized he was not preaching the Gospel. He was preaching a "different gospel," a man-centered message. I later discovered that the preacher was Norman Vincent Peale of "Positive Thinking" fame.

5. Someone said Paul is appealing, but Peale is appalling!
6. Paul won people through the persuasive power of the Holy Spirit. It is “the power of God” (2:5).
7. Back in 18th century England, there was a great Shakespearean actor named David Garrick. He said this about the evangelist George Whitefield, “It is truly wonderful to see what a spell this preacher often casts over an audience by proclaiming the simplest truths of the Bible.”
8. One day Garrick said, “I’d give a hundred guineas (coins that were used in his day but are not used any more) to be able to say, ‘Oh!’ like George Whitefield!”
9. In other words, Garrick was saying he’d pay good money – over \$100 – if he could say “Oh!” like George Whitefield.
10. But all the money in the world cannot buy the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Whitefield preached “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (2:4).

CONCLUSION:

In his commentary on I Corinthians, J. Allen Blair writes, “In Acts 1:8 we read the words of our Lord: ‘Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.’ No one will ever have power until the Holy Ghost comes upon him. I know whereof I speak. There was a time in the early years of my ministry when it was difficult for me to prepare sermons because I faced the job in my own wisdom. I wanted to be profound. I mustered every trace of ability I possessed and poured it into sermons. As sermons go, they were not really bad; but behind them there was struggling, there was agonizing, without the joy of the Holy Ghost, without the liberty and power that only He can give” (*Living Wisely*).