

1 Corinthians

Chapter 2:1-16

February 25, 1996

- **1 Corinthians Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Ungodly divisions result from man's wisdom.
- Chapter 2 Carnal man cannot understand our Spiritual God.

- **1 Corinthians 2:1-16**

- **Introduction & Review**

In the previous chapter, Paul has laid out for the Corinthians his view of the primary purpose of his letter; to address the divisions within the church. While the church was blessed with Spiritual gifts, the church was carnal in its behavior toward each other. Paul will return to this primary topic of division in chapter three but here in chapter two, he continues to instruct on the differences between godly wisdom and wisdom of the world.

- **Exposition**

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.² For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.³ I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.⁴ And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,⁵ that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

- After declaring that the message of the cross does not consist of the wisdom of man, Paul moves on to his next point that his message was declared without the popular oratory "helps". Paul did not employ the worldly technique but rather allowed the impact of his spiritual message to be derived from the spirit. The same message that Paul proclaimed to the Corinthians is the same message that we have been entrusted with. If it is necessary for a teacher to rely on appeals to our emotions, then his message is not powered by the Spirit. A godly teacher will teach the truth of the word of God and allow the Spirit to have His way with the Saints.
- The fact that Paul determined to know nothing except the crucifixion of Christ does not imply that his message never got beyond this point. It does mean that the crucifixion of Christ is a *central* or *foundational* truth but it is not a *solitary* truth. Once we establish the ramifications of the crucifixion of the Messiah, then there are an endless number of truths which come forth.

⁶ However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.⁷ But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,⁸ which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.⁹ But as it is written:

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,

Nor have entered into the heart of man

The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

- When we speak of the rulers or powers we must make sure that we have not adopted a dualistic mentality which believes that Satan is God's counterpart. Satan is a created being and he is as infinitely not God as we are. The creature/creator chasm is infinitely wide.
- Paul states here that the rulers of this age are coming to nothing. I take this to refer to the powers and principalities that were prevalent in Paul's day especially before the death and resurrection of Christ. These rulers played a significant role in the affairs of men in that they occupied princely positions of authority. However, Paul teaches here that the rulers of that age were coming to nothing. This is a hard thing for the modern church to believe because we have been trained to disregard God's promises:

Revelation 12:7 Long ago, Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven down to earth.

Luke 10:18 Long ago, Christ saw Satan cast out. We must rejoice over this *properly*.

Mark 3:20-26 Christ has plundered the house of the Strongman, that is, Satan.

Luke 11:14-23

John 12:27-33 The ruler of this world is cast out.

John 16:5-11 The ruler of this world is judged.

Romans 16:20 This word of encouragement to the Romans was that our peaceful God was going to crush Satan.

Colossians 2:13 Christ triumphed over the powers and made a public spectacle of them.

1 John 3:7-9 The incarnation occurred so that Christ might destroy the works of the Devil.

Hebrews 2:14-15 By Christ's death He destroyed him who held the keys to death.

Revelation 1:17-19 Now Christ holds the keys to death.

- Do we need more than this? Why is it that we have bought into the lie that the opposition is so powerful? The only answer can be unbelief. But we ask, "Well if this is true, why then have we lost so much ground to the enemy?" I think the answer can be found by looking at an Old Testament example. Joshua 2:8-13 If we remember our biblical history, we will realize that the people had feared the Israelites for forty years. The people of the land of Canaan were allowed to rule the land for forty years longer than they needed to. They ruled the land because the people of God did not believe the promises of God and gave away the land. They acted in fear rather than by faith and the enemy flourished.
- Christ did not annihilate or destroy Satan in his person but rather toppled him from his authority. The lake of fire is reserved for Satan and his followers where he will be tormented for eternity. Remember, hell (Gehenna) is not a place for the Devil to exercise dominion but rather is a place of eternal punishment prepared for him.
- There is an incredible promise in these verses; God has said that there has never been anything that has entered the mind or heart of man that can compare with the splendor of the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. We can't even imagine how glorious it will be. We could not use language or images to describe what it will be like. Like nothing ever thought, heard or imagined will be our eternal resting place. I believe that to the same extent that these things are too glorious to comprehend, hell will be more awful than we could comprehend.

¹⁰ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.¹¹ For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.¹³ These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.¹⁴ But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.¹⁵ But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.¹⁶ For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ. NKJV

- By this Spirit of God we can hope in the future glory mentioned earlier. As we live in Christ today, we can get a glimpse of the glorious existence we will have with Him in His heaven. For now, this is heaven on earth.
- It was not our keen intellect or cleverness that enabled us to understand the things of God; it was God who enabled us to hear or see. Many of us can remember a time when the Word of God was just nonsense or foolishness. The Word was just black ink on thin paper. Yet for some it transforms their lives; for others it simply falls by the way and has no impact. The difference is the Spirit. We read and speak of spiritual things that can only be done in the Spirit.
- Paul does not simply state that the natural man chooses not to understand spiritual things, he says that even if he wanted to, he couldn't because it requires the Spirit of God.
- Those who are spiritual, cannot be judged or accused by anyone. If we are standing in Christ, we are cleansed, sanctified and purified. The Devil may cast his assaults or promote his lies, but those who are in Christ are there firmly because He will not let us out of His hand. We are confident, not in ourselves but in the faithfulness of Christ.