

Summit Woods Baptist Church  
First Corinthians Sermon Study Equipping Class

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

\*\*In the previous weeks, we have focused more on observation of the passages. Since Paul is continuing to build on the same themes in this passage, this week's lesson includes more questions that will stretch your mental muscles in connecting dots between this paragraph and everything else we have studied so far. Don't be in a hurry, take your time, and do your best.

Remember to begin your study early in the week so that you have time to really think (and keep thinking) about the passage without being rushed.

❖ Day 1

Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.

For these lessons, the sermon text is provided in a format that visually helps display the structure of the paragraph or section of text. The verbs are underlined. The main clauses remain to the left, and the supporting clauses are either directly underneath when they have equal priority to what comes before, or are tabbed to the right when the clause supports, develops or explains previous clauses. Suggested themes in the text are provided in the box on the left. As the class progresses, you will have the opportunity to learn how to do this yourself.

What Paul did not do	2:1 And I, when I <u>came</u> to you, brothers,
	did not <u>come</u>
What Paul did do	<u>proclaiming</u> to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.
	2 For I <u>decided</u>
	<u>to know</u> nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.
	3 And I <u>was with</u> you in weakness
	and in fear
	and much trembling,
	4 and my speech and my message <u>were</u> not in plausible words of wisdom,
	but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,
Why Paul did/did not do what he did/did not do	5 so that your faith might not <u>rest [be]*</u> in the wisdom of men
	but in the power of God.

\*Note: The verb in the Greek is 'to be'; the translators of the ESV supply 'rest' to clarify the idea.

1. What did Paul not do? (see verse 1)
2. Was this tactic an accident? From where in the text do you get your answer?

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3. According to verse 5, what was Paul's goal?
  
4. From 1:17b-2:16, Paul continually contrasts the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God. Where all do you see that contrast made in 2:1-5?
  
5. The Greek word 'hyperochen' translated as 'lofty' in verse 1 could also be translated as 'superior' or 'prominent' (highfalutin). Think back on what you learned about Corinthian culture in the introductory lesson. How do you think their culture influenced Paul's decision not to use 'lofty speech'?
  
6. In verse 2, Paul again mentions his core message of Christ crucified. How would the Corinthians likely have perceived someone who was crucified when crucifixion was an intentionally humiliating form of execution meant to shame and disgrace the one being crucified?
  - a. Why would any Corinthian be willing to be associated with someone who was crucified?

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❖ Day 2

Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 again.

7. In verse 3, Paul says that he was “with [them] in weakness and in fear and much trembling.” Paul does not explicitly state the cause of his fear and trembling, but look back at Acts 18:1-17. What may have contributed to Paul’s state of mind?
  - a. According to Acts 18, why did Paul stay in Corinth?
8. How is Paul’s coming “in weakness and in fear and much trembling” not contradictory to his “I am not ashamed” statements elsewhere (Romans 1:16; 2 Tim 1:12)?
9. Describe what a gospel presentation using ‘lofty speech’ (verse 1) and ‘plausible words’ (verse 4) might sound like. (Note: the Greek word ‘peithois’ translated as ‘plausible’ can also be translated as ‘persuasive’; and “my speech and my message” in verse 4 refers both to content and delivery method)
  - a. Why are these not the way we ought to present the gospel?

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10. In verse 4, Paul contrasts “plausible words of wisdom” with the “demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” Why would a demonstration of the Spirit be in contrast to persuasive speech?

a. What might this “demonstration of the Spirit and of power” have looked like?

11. In verse 5, Paul contrasts “the wisdom of men” with “the power of God” as the object of their faith. Why is the wisdom of men an unreliable foundation for faith?

a. Why is the power of God a reliable foundation for faith?

12. How does this passage correct those who want to adjust the gospel message to make it “more relevant” or “less offensive”?

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13. How does Paul's approach demonstrate him "boast[ing] in the Lord" (from 1:30 in last week's passage)?

❖ Day 3

Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 again.

14. Verse 1 begins with the Greek word 'kago', a contraction of 'kai' ('and') and 'ego' ('I'). This 'kai' ('and') lets us know that Paul is continuing the same train of thought from the previous paragraphs. Specifically, he is linking back to 1:17b. How does 2:1-5 elaborate on 1:17?
15. In verse 4, the word 'demonstration' is the Greek word 'apodeixei'. It was a technical word in ancient Greek rhetoric indicating a "logical or clear proof" (like definitive evidence in court). How does this help you understand what Paul means about the power of the Holy Spirit on display as he preached the message of Christ?
16. In one sentence, summarize the passage in your own words.

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17. How has this passage impacted you?

18. Do you have any questions you would like to bring up in class?

In preparation for Sunday, pray for Pastor Bret as he prepares to teach us. Pray that those among us who do not yet believe in Christ would place their faith in Him.