

**I Corinthians; Lesson #4**  
**The Manner of Paul's Presentation**  
**Pentwater Bible Church**  
**October 11, 2009**  
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## I CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 2

*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.*

Paul is here continuing on with his introduction that affirms his mode of presentation to the Church at Corinth. He did not prepare a formal speech or insert his experiential wisdom of which he had a significant amount through his education. As a Pharisee his education was the equivalent of a modern day individual who had achieved a doctorate in theology along with a law degree. In fact Paul's significant learning was recognized by others including the Roman Procurator Festus in preparation for Paul's appeal to Caesar. As Paul made a case for Christ to Festus and King Herod Agrippa

*Acts 26:24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.*

As he will plead with the Church at Corinth to discount his manner of speech he pleaded with Festus and Agrippa to accept the gospel. He declared that he was not mad. It was true. They being members of the lofty powerful of that day were not headed toward salvation. Just as Paul told the Corinthians that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called" (I Cor 1:26). They considered his presentation of the gospel foolishness. Paul was pleading with Festus and Agrippa to accept the gospel just as we will see him plead with the Corinthians.

*Acts 26: 25-29 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.*

Agrippa almost believed Paul's impassioned presentation of the gospel. Paul knew that the high and mighty consider the gospel foolishness. This case was no different. They were not going to accept it and Paul knew it. Paul wanted the Corinthians to realize this concept and believe that his message came *from* God and not himself. It came *through* him but not *of* him. Paul could have made a very intellectual case for Christ and wowed them with his brilliance and lost them too. He knew that that display of intellectual prowess would not persuade any to accept Christ. It would just engender debates and philosophizing to no end.

Where does truth come from? It comes from and *is* God (John 4:24; 14:6; I John 4:6). Man's wisdom is faulty and Paul wanted to make that clear for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov 9:10) not fear of man.

*I Cor 2: 2-5 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

Paul knew that only through his complete dependence on the Holy Spirit could the truth be presented and accepted by those at Corinth whom God had chosen to receive it. This was the fear and trembling that he shared with them over this issue. The power of the Corinthians conversion and sanctification would only come through the work of the Holy Spirit. He knew that he had to get himself out of the way and let the gospel and their correction come *through* him but not be *of* him. His speech was not marked by eloquence and persuasive words as the sophists of his day. They were the traveling teachers. The Sophists, whose teachings had an enormous influence on the thought of the fifth century B.C., were in general intellectual descendants of the Pre-Socratic philosophers. They used a rational examination of human affairs for the practical betterment of human life. This approach to life began to undermine the mythological view of the world. Divine causation was not their explanation of natural phenomena and human action. Paul countered this by saying TRUST GOD in all our circumstances. This has significant relevance to us today. We must emulate Paul's example of trusting God for our circumstances.

*Prov 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

So Paul knew that the Corinthians needed to trust God and not the teacher or pastor and that he had to clearly state God's will for them and not Paul's will for them. He was doing all he could to let the Spirit guide him. The power of a conversion and living the Christ like life is not in our own strength but by the power of the Holy Spirit. Which incidentally becomes a theme of this entire message to the Church at Corinth and us too. This can only happen if we are trusting God completely. This is exactly what Jesus was saying when He gave the hyperbolic example of through faith mountains could be moved.

*Matt 17: 20-21 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only*

*do this [which is done] to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.*

CHRIST WAS TEACHING HIS DISCIPLES THAT ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE WITH FAITH IN GOD.

*I Cor 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:*

Paul was not rejecting wisdom of any sort. His disclaimer about his own brilliance did not mean that God put a premium on ignorance and that we should reject wisdom or knowledge of any sort. The exact opposite is true. God faults His children for not knowing.

*Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy children.*

Instead Paul was teaching that the wisdom taught by The Spirit was necessary to accept. Some had in fact already realized that. They were the spiritually mature (perfect KJV). Paul hoped that all would come to that point some day. The reason that the rulers of the world did not understand this is their lack of the Holy Spirit, who *is* the great teacher and illuminator (John14: 26; Jude 20-21 etc.).

*I Cor 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:*

The mystery of which Paul speaks of is one of the eight mysteries stated and revealed in the New Testament. This mystery of which he speaks is not casually given in the Bible. There is great specificity regarding this term. It speaks of something quite different than our modern usage of this term. We see the word as something inexplicable. In the New Testament the word means that something was unrevealed until now, meaning New Testament times. Therefore, it is now understandable and explicable. The following are the eight mysteries revealed in the New Testament:

1. The Mystery of the Kingdom
2. The Mystery of the Seven Stars and the Seven Golden Lamp stands which are the guardian angels over the Church (Rev 1:20).
3. The Body of Christ (Eph 3:1-12).
4. The Mystery of the Indwelling Messiah (Col 1:24-29)
5. The Mystery of the Church as the Bride of Christ (Eph 5:22-23)
6. The Mystery of the Translation (I Cor 15:50-58)
7. The Mystery of Israel's Hardening. (Rom 9:1-11:36).
8. The Mystery of the Seven Climatic Judgments and the Defeat of the Two Satanic Mysteries (Rev 17:1-18; II Thes 2:1-12).

As New Testament believers living under the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 8:13; 9:15; 12:24) we have been given the spiritual understand along with the revelation of Scripture to see the things God has ordained before the foundation of the world. They have only been revealed in our time says Paul.

*I Cor 2: 8-9 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

For had the rulers of the Jews and Romans realized the mysteries that Paul speaks of they would have realized exactly who Jesus was and not crucified Him. They unwittingly took part in God's master plan of salvation. God knew that through the sinful actions of men He could, can and will accomplish His Will. This gives us a small glimpse into the mind of God as He planned out the salvation of the earth for all who would believe. Also how He would bring the Jews to Himself in belief, evangelize the world and make an end of sin. The blessings of salvation were prepared by God the Father, carried out by God the Son and applied by God the Spirit.

Can you sense your calling from God to salvation? Can you sense the gifts He has given to you to serve the Body as a unifying factor in building it up for effective work while we are on the earth? Paul is making the case for our realization of these spiritual embodiments of God within us just before he corrects the Corinthians. We will see soon that their sin was carnal. Carnality battles against the Spirit.

*Romans 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to [fulfil] the lusts [thereof].*

Carnal lusts are not just those, which emanate from urgings of our bodies. This could be food, sexual drives and so forth. The Biblical description of a great variety of lusts is "of the flesh." Paul gives us great insight of this in Galatians.

*Galatians 5:16-26 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance (strife), emulations (jealousy), wrath, strife (factions which are small organized dissenting groups within the Church of Christ), seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live*

*in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another.*

This will be the central message that God seeks to impart to us as His children in the book of I Corinthians. How exactly we should live, dress, behave and act in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Next Session: **October 18, 2009 I Corinthians Chapter Two Continued.**  
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