

Bible Text: 1 Corinthians 2; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5
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Bethel Netherlands Reformed Congregation
8920 Broadway Street
Chilliwack, BC V2P 5W1

Website: www.nrcchilliwack.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/bnrcchilliwack

Congregation, the text for this morning's hour sermon is from the first epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, the second chapter, the verses 1 through 5. Let us slowly read the verses 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 and see what it says.

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. 2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 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: 5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Paul's preaching, five thoughts. Paul's preaching, five thoughts. Not with enticing words. He's preaching but not negatively, not with enticing words as we see in verse 1 and 4a, "when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom," and verse 4, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom." The first thought about what it is not. Secondly, in the weakness, preaching in weakness, that's in verse 3, "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." In the third place, only a crucified Jesus. So preaching only a crucified Jesus, verse 2, "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." In the fourth place about Paul's preaching, in the Spirit, 4b, "but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." And in the fifth place, in order to bring to faith, verse 5, "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." So Paul's preaching: first, not with enticing words; secondly, in weakness; thirdly, only a crucified Jesus; in the fourth place, in the Spirit; and fifth, in order to bring to faith.

Congregation, the Apostle Paul is writing to the congregation of Corinth in Greece. He has been there before. He's kind of founded that congregation and he has left that, years ago he was there, and the Apostle Paul is now in Rome, he's in prison or in a rented house, he is guarded, there are soldiers with him, and he fears for his life. And he's writing a letter, an epistle to the congregations he came to in the past, he visited. "And I,

brethren, when I came to you," that's how it starts, right, in this chapter. "And I, brethren," he is talking to God's people, especially the church, the living church, "And I, brethren, when I came to you years ago, when I began to preach the word of God among you, what happened? What did I do? Did I come with excellency of speech and with earthly wisdom? Did I preach the word with enticing words of man's wisdom or what happened? How did I come to you? I, brethren, when I came to you, I came not with excellency of speech. I did not come with enticing words of man's wisdom."

So apparently as we now can gather, the congregation of Corinth had their preferences and they said, "He should preach this way. He should use those words. He should use that format. He should use that voice this way. He should whatever, move more or difference in presentation. He should back to school and do some classes about how to deliver a message because we know it way better. His way of delivering the message is so simple, so boring, so we like it more lively, more entertaining, more lofty, using a different vocabulary and according to our style and our culture and our time. He should realize what time we live in and what area he lives in. We are educated people also, right? So he should approach us in a better way." But the apostle says, "I didn't come like that," and he did not plan to change either. "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and I preached to you declaring unto you the testimony of God." Do you see that at the end of verse 1, "declaring unto you the testimony of God." That refers to chapter 1, verse 6, "even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you."

So he wants to preach the gospel. He wants to preach Christ and also the format, he wants to be simple. He wants to be transparent. He wants to be normal. He doesn't want to come across like an educated man with excellency of speech. Do you know what he's afraid of? I'm going to use an example for the children. Suppose you're invited to a wedding or something, and there's a meal and you walk into that hall and you see all the tables set and the tablecloths and the chairs, it all matches, and the cutlery is silverware, and the plates beautiful. You know, they spent so much money on the form, on the format, on the visible, and then the food is handed up and it tastes like carton. It doesn't taste good. So wouldn't you rather have it the other way around? Paper plates and good food instead of the best cutlery and plates and bad food?

So the Apostle Paul, he does not want to focus so much on the cutlery and the plate but the food. Not with the outward form of the excellency of speech and format but the content. And the Apostle Paul was an educated man. He could do that. He could preach with excellency of words no problem. He had courses, had done courses in philosophy and Jewish law and traditions and poetry and history and biology, and you know, he has been at the university of Gamaliel. He was very smart and he could do it but he refused to do that. "No, I did not come unto you with excellency of words or speech of wisdom. My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words."

He also did not want to be a manipulator, kind of forcing things down people's throats and working on their emotions like people, like pastors, sorry, working on the emotions and then asking people to make a decision now, to come to the altar because altar calls after services in evangelical for evangelical churches after the service, "Now come

forward to the altar and choose," and work on the feelings, on the emotions with enticing words.

So how do people do that today? How does that relate to today? Now for example, if in the sermon and in the format it's emphasized that it's all about money, if when you serve the Lord, when you accept him, then you will benefit from that, you will benefit in this life already, you will in this life become rich and you will have wealth health-wise and monetary-wise and people are somehow enticed, some people believe it, we call it prosperity gospel, right, people simply believe it and they go to church and then the minister says, "And also give much money to the church, then, because the more money you give, the more you will get." Much enticing words to just get people over the hump and to let people contribute and to enrich themselves. Or I was also thinking but I don't know what your opinion is, I was also thinking of the Jesus movie, right? It's also, that's using today's means and today's instruments to get the message across with enticing words. People like that and they say, "Wow, that's beautiful!" And some people say, "Yeah, but the Lord has blessed that to some people." Well, the Lord can bless anything. It does not make it right.

So think about that, enticing words, speech for effect, and we live in a self-obsessed culture, right? Self-obsessed culture where people like to be tickled, where people like to be entertained so that at church we can just sit back and just enjoy it, sometimes allegorizing or dramatizing the word. For example, during the times of Christmas, having in the church a stable and some hay bales and crib and a baby and a doll, and they say that draws people's attention. Do you know what that is? That's excellency of speech and excellency of things. It takes away of the simplicity of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul says, "Not me. No, I don't like that excellency of speech or of wisdom. I don't like my speech and my preaching, is there a difference, speech and preaching?" Some people say it's different so maybe he says, "In my daily speaking to you and in my preaching on Sundays, my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom." Also not anecdotes and too many stories and about sports and trying to please people and to draw the attention, and about politics and... No, nothing, nothing like that. Just the word, just the word of God, "declaring unto you the testimony of God." That's all.

So the Apostle Paul preaches not with enticing words but, secondly, in weakness. Look at verse 3, "And I was," he refers to the past, "I was with you in Corinth in weakness and in fear," what was he afraid about, "and in much," not a little bit, "in much trembling." So the Apostle Paul says, "Years ago I was preaching in your midst and I felt weak and I felt fear. I was afraid and I trembled. There was much trembling when I spoke to you." Come on, Paul, why? Why so weak and why so fearful and why trembling? Well, let's talk about that.

Weak. Weak in what sense? Bodily weakness? Maybe. Some say he had an eye disease as was explained in Galatians before. He said to the Galatians, "You have dug out your eyes for me. You would have given your eyes to me." So maybe he had an eye disease.

He had bodily weakness. He was also not impressive as a person. I don't think that's what it is. Weakness in the sense that he had no status? He was a tentmaker, after all, a tentmaker, that's all. He worked with his own hands and because he was of the same craft, he abode with them and wrought, worked, for by their occupation they were tentmakers. Or weakness in style, the style of preaching was weak. Or weakness in the way he dressed. Or weakness in other senses. But I think what it especially was is he was weak in his mind. I don't mean that he was challenged mentally but he had that in his mind, he was humble. A humble spirit in that he felt, he felt weak. He felt kind of, "I cannot do this. I can't preach. I'm too weak for that. I'm not capable." That's how he felt. I'm sure about that. And also he had been a persecutor of the church. "Who am I to preach the word of God and to address the audience and the people in Corinth? I can't do it, Lord." He must have prayed, "O Lord, I'm not able. I'm too weak to preach the word of the living God unto sinners. Help me! I'm weak."

So now you know how pastors often feel before they preach the word of God, not only when they preach, also when they speak, also when elders, deacons, pastors go on house visitations and talk to people over the phone. Weakness. They feel kind of, "I have to speak well of the King and I have to speak seriously minded and to the point, and I can't do it." Weak. And yet the focal point of the Apostle Paul was not to be admired but to be understood. His desire was that people understood and the word of God entered into their hearts, and he had no use for being admired. That kind of offended him. Weak.

Not only weak, also fear. With enticing words of verse 3, "And I was with you in weakness and in fear." So was that fear for public speaking? There are some people, they will do anything except public speaking. They just say, "I can't do that. Talking in front of a large group of people, I just can't. I fear people, what they think of me and I'm not able to do it." And so the Apostle Paul, he feared the people maybe? But he also feared God. He felt in his heart preaching is something else than speaking. Preaching is so deep, so profound. It's about the soul. It's about eternity. I have to preach the word of God. I'm accountable for what I say and how I say it. And I may deceive people, hold back people. It's such a responsibility. He feared like Luther. Luther said, I don't know the exact words anymore but Luther said, "I'm not afraid of the devil. I'm not afraid of the devil but I'm afraid of preaching, preaching the word of God, with much trembling because of the profoundness of preaching the word of God." And the Apostle Paul, he saw the greatness of the work and he felt as clay. He felt as a poor instrument. He was too simple, too average. Fear. Not only fear to be harmed and to be ridiculed but fear because of the essence of what he is doing. Fear.

So that's why he did not want to preach in a showy form with excellency of words, and with enticing words, but he wanted to be simple, in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. I read something like it in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "But we have this treasure," oh, it is a treasure, right, the Bible, the word, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels," in pottery, in clay pots, "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." So the Apostle Paul says, "It's not about me. I'm just an earthen vessel. I'm just a piece of pottery. I'm just a pot, a breakable pot, but it's about what's in there. We have this treasure in earthen vessels." Why, Paul? Why in earthen vessels? What's the sense of that? He said

that we do not take away anything of the gospel and that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

He did not want to be a celebrity. He was not waiting for praise. He did not like it when people said, "You did a great job." He thought, "I didn't." And if he felt something like it was a message of God, then he felt it was the temporary help of God for now, and next time he'd need it again. "You see, I don't have it in my fingers. I just can't preach the word of God as I ought to. I need all the time help and help again." Because we are dust and grass and mortal, and who are we? You know, some years after we pass away as pastors, nobody remembers us anymore. It doesn't take so long.

Weakness. You know, this goes parallel with how the Lord converts people. That's not what this is about? This is about preaching in weakness, so the excellency and the power is of God but yet there is a parallel line, something similar, and no wonder because it's about the same God. The way the Lord operates with pastors and preachers is the same way as he operates and deals with his people in general. In what sense? He makes them weak. He gives them fear. He makes them to tremble. He makes room for his excellency and his help and his power and his glory.

So through the word of God, the Lord makes sinners poor, needy, poor in spirit, right, so that they see it, "I am not worthy, the least of God's blessings, and I can't pray and I can't listen and I can't read and I can't understand. I can't do anything." And there is sin in the hearts of all of God's people and those convicted fear and tremble a mighty eternal God and they long and yet they don't dare to come close, and they feel unworthy. That's the mark of the work of God for giving grace and for helping in this life, for helping the pastors, and helping in raising children, and everything, that we cannot do it ourselves. In keeping up your marriage, you cannot do it yourself. You need God's help. You experience your weakness, your fear and your trembling, or are you still strong? Can you do it yourself? Do you have the confidence and you don't rely on the Lord? And you don't pray to the Lord? You don't need that help? You are arrogant and independent, strong.

Well, the Apostle Paul said, "I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling and the Lord used it." So you don't have to do big things in excellency of speech and the best things. Just simple. Pray, ask the Lord for his help in those circumstances when you feel weak and trembling and fearful.

So the preaching of the Apostle Paul, not with enticing words but in weakness and in the third place, only a crucified Jesus. Only a crucified Jesus. Verse 2, "For I determined," I am determined and I am committed, and I have decided, "For I determined not to know any thing among you," not to let you know and know myself anything among you, "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." I decided. He knew that was the right thing to do, to preach Christ Jesus, and that's not with excellency of words and it's not enticing at all.

Well, he wanted to preach the mysteries of the gospel. He wanted people to be acquainted with Christ, with him, the Savior. So he does not mean that he couldn't talk about anything else, of course he did but the Apostle Paul speaks about creation, the fall, and

sinful nature, and regeneration, and the way of conversion, and the Holy Spirit, and the Father. He's not saying, "I only want to talk about Jesus," but that's the core, that's what it all leads to, that's the heart of it, and the heart of the gospel is offensive because the heart of the gospel that he preached those years and preaches again is the Lord Jesus crucified.

Now to us that has a special ring, right, crucified Jesus? Oh, that's such a beautiful message. The crucified Savior, he was willing to hang on the cross to save us. Beautiful. Glorious. Amazing. But that's over the years and through our upbringing that we have that feeling before that for that preaching of the gospel of the cross, but in those times when the Apostle Paul came to Corinth and preached Jesus Christ crucified, people said, "What? The Jesus who was murdered? Who was assassinated, was killed by the people, and you preach us a killed Jesus? You preach a Jesus who was experiencing capital punishment? Who hanged on the cross as an execution as in an electric chair or something? You preach that to us, that's such nonsense. I'm not going to listen to that. I'm not going to listen to a Savior that died. That doesn't make any sense to me. It is absurd." So the Apostle Paul said, "Remember, I came those years and I did not want to win you over in a manipulative way, I did not come with enticing words about your health and stuff, but I preached unto you the offensive gospel of Jesus Christ crucified and you looked at me kind of, 'What is this?' And I thought and I am yet going to preach it because I don't like the enticing words. And it was in weakness and in fear and trembling but I did it."

He preached Jesus. Let me underline this with the Bible in a few verses. I love those texts. Galatians 6:14, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." So he's saying, "I hope the Lord prevents that. I don't want that. I don't want to glory in anything else but in the Lord Jesus Christ and the cross of the Lord Jesus. The cross because through that cross the world is crucified to me and I unto the world. Because of the cross, the world has no glitter and glamour for me anymore."

Philippians 3:8, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung," count them but dung, "that I may win Christ." So everything is just dung. Everything is just something vile compared to the excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ. He wanted his knowledge and preached him, the Savior Jesus Christ. So he did not take the sharp edges off. He did not mitigate the gospel. He did not mollify anything. He did not change the word of God. In all its power, he just left it the way it was. Plain. Simple. Straightforward. Square.

"Who is the image," Christ is, "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him," by the Lord Jesus, yes, by Jesus, by him, "were all things created," by him? Yes, "that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." That he in all things may be the preeminence, the

supremacy, the first, that he may be the first in all things. So let me also preach that same Jesus to you this morning. He is the Savior.

You know, you knew it already. I wanted to remind you of that. Some people in church here are asking, "Can I be saved yet? Is there hope for me yet?" Well, he is the Savior. His name is Jesus because he saves his people from their sins. He takes their sins away. Simple, huh? He takes their sins away. This is not excellency of speech, is it? This is not enticing words but to preach the Lord Jesus, he came to seek and to save them that are lost.

He is the innocent Lamb of God. You've heard that before. That's nothing special. Oh, yes it is. The innocent Lamb of God. He had no sin. The Lord Jesus, the Son of God, did not know what it was to sin. He came on earth to fulfill the law. "Here I am to do thy will, O God." He did everything perfect. He obeyed the entire law. He did not make any mistakes. Nothing. And the Father said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear him." So it's my desire that someone just absorbs those simple things and hears them. The Savior, the innocent one, the Lamb of God who was crucified, the Lamb of God who had no sin was made to be sin for us, that we may be made the righteousness of God in him.

Oh, that Savior was so compassionate with the crowd. He looked at the people and he saw them as sheep without a shepherd and he felt it in his heart, in the compassionate of the heart of the Savior Jesus Christ with the multitude. Not only with the elect, with the children but with the multitude, with the people in general. You know, what a simple message, "I am the way." Sitting in church or listening at home, you just don't see a way out anymore. All the doors are closed and it's so dark and so impossible, and to hear him say, "I am the way." Not with excellency of words and enticing words, just simply, he, the Lord Jesus came in weakness himself. Weakness himself, and in a sense, was trembling in the garden of Gethsemane. He is the life, the way, the life, the truth, the life, when you feel so dead. You can't make yourself alive and you feel kind of death is surrounding you and you can't get out anymore. You deserve death. You deserve hell and he says, "I am the life." We're told to look upon the Savior Jesus Christ as the life and to look upon him in faith.

"I am the resurrection." You know, he can forgive. He's willing to forgive. He came to seek the lost ones. Not the good ones, the lost ones. We read in Acts 4, "Neither is there salvation in any other." This you know. You can look everywhere in yourself and other people and in books and things, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." So don't look anywhere else. There's no other name.

Oh, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." So that looking for access and salvation in the Father, the Lord says, "Nobody, absolutely nobody, the door is closed, nobody can come to the Father but by me. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ," 1 Corinthians 3:11. There's only one foundation that has been laid. "For there is one God and one

mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus and he that has the Son has life, and he that has not the Son has not life."

So he preached Christ, "For I determined not to know anything among you," no other name, no other way, no other opportunity, "save Jesus Christ," Jesus, meaning that he saves from sin and Christ, that's his office, he was anointed as priest and prophet and king. So the Apostle Paul's love was to preach him, to especially draw attention to him, not to himself with excellency of speech. No, not man's wisdom but the offense of the gospel. He did not preach in the first place his birth, important too, not only that he suffered but he rose or has ascended and praised and preached. He did miracles but the cross.

So he encourages us to seek our salvation in Jesus Christ and him crucified and, you know, you're expecting something like this to be preached but in those years in Corinth when he came there years ago, "When I came to you, when I came to you, I did not come with excellency of speech and wisdom declaring unto you the testimony of God." So he preached to the Gentiles. To the Jews and to the Gentiles. Straightforward. The cross of Christ. And he did not say, "Well, I'd better wait for a couple of years." He did not say, "I first would like to work the ground before I do that." He preached right away Jesus Christ and him crucified. Read Acts 17 for yourself and you'll see it. The first time he talked to the people in Athens, he preached about Christ Jesus and him crucified and him that rose from the dead.

So in case you didn't know, tears don't save you. It's not without tears, of course. You know, there's that sorrow, that contrition of the heart when the Holy Spirit works. But you can cry and cry and feel good about your tears and think, "You know, the Lord is working in my heart, right? I cried. I feel something." Don't go that route. It's only in the Lord Jesus Christ and him crucified, you need look no further.

Maybe you sometimes have warm feeling when you sing a certain psalter or a certain text is read, or something comes to your mind, "It's a beautiful text. I love it with an eternal love." You say, "Oh, a text has come into my mind, a beautiful text." But you need Christ Jesus and him crucified. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha," 1 Corinthians 16.

So the preaching of the Apostle Paul not with enticing words but in weakness, only a crucified Jesus, and in the fourth place, in the Spirit. Verse 4b, "but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." You know, the Apostle Paul does not deny that. When he was preaching this simple, offensive message of the gospel of Jesus Christ and him crucified, there is something that happens. He does not deny that, and it was not because he was manipulating and pushing it through people's throat and enticing people in an improper unbiblical way. No, he just simply preached the word and the Lord used that. He felt it in his own heart. He felt helped by the Holy Spirit and he also noticed that the Lord used it. The Lord used it to the salvation of sinners. Those first times in Corinth, the Lord drew people out of the darkness into his marvelous light by the power of the Holy Ghost.

So it was not rhetoric and logic but the Spirit, and the people like rhetoric, right? People like to convince with feeling, with working on your feelings. That's what the Greek culture did, to work on your feelings. So to overrule your understanding and just go right to the feelings and to stir you up, to make you emotional. You know, like with little children at the table and mom starts crying, who else begins to cry? Those children will cry too and why? They don't know why but their mom cries so they cry. So sometimes people cry when the minister cries. Or through manipulative ways people get emotional but that's not the demonstration of the Spirit. That's enticing words. But when the Holy Spirit works, then it's not that it goes right to your feelings, he comes with the word, with the content of the word, with the simple message of sin and grace, and Adam and Christ, and the forgiveness of sins, and the necessity of being born again, and the invitation and the call.

The Lord uses the simple word of God and not logic. You know, if it would be logic, they like logic in Greece as well, logic in the sense of reasoning it through. Well, with reasoning you could not believe in the Trinity. With reasoning you could not believe in election or you could not reconcile election and responsibility. You know that's not how it goes but by the Spirit. And I remember so well as a young person, I was 20, I believe, I went to the curatorium for the first time because I felt the call for the ministry, and the consistory gave me a test and I went to the curatorium and they asked me to tell my story and I was convinced the Lord works in my heart and the Lord will use me, and the Lord can use me, and I was not accepted. I was so confused and kind of angry, and then during a week service in a neighboring congregation, I went to church and the text was from Zechariah 4:6. I never forget it anymore. "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD." I took that as a message for me personally. "Not by might. Not by power. I don't need you. I really don't need you, young man. It's not by your power, not by your might, but you think you are in your zeal, it's by the Holy Spirit."

And you know, I listened to the sermon and it was a direction the Lord showed me. Not by might. Not by power. But in that week it kind of faded off again, so in the next week, week service, I again went to that same church and it was another minister and he preached about the same text. Now I don't make anything of that but I needed it and the Lord reminded me of that. Not by might. Not by power. But by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. And I still like me to learn that. I still need to learn that, then I go in the pulpit. Not by might. Not by power. By my spirit saith the Lord. And that's true for the mission field and it's true for our elders and deacons, and that's in so many different ways the truth because the Holy Spirit is so powerful, so irresistible, and he gives that inward persuasion so that you can no longer deny or dispute it, but you fall for it and you hear it and you believe it.

Oh, that's more than what the Lord Jesus did only to the Pharisees when he spoke with authority. It's more than speaking with authority. You know, unconverted people can also hear it sometimes the authority, and feel this is true, but it is more than that. 1 Thessalonians 1, "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." So not only by the word. If it's only the word, it bounces off. So we need the application of the Spirit to bring it into the hearts. Do you know about that? That through the word the Lord spoke to you and that you are convinced, "He speaks to me." It's the word of God, such a power, so convincing, so much assurance, in a sense, that you are sure of God speaking to you.

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." But they were eyewitnesses of his majesty, the majesty of God.

"Through mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit," Romans 15:19, "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ."

So that does not happen to all hearers, right? You can hear the same sermon, the same word of God, and for the one it is the power of God to their salvation through the Holy Spirit and the other one they don't because it's over their head. That does not let you off the hook. You can't say, "Well, then I'm not responsible." You are responsible for what you hear. But yet it's a fact, we need that Holy Spirit. We cannot make the application.

And the Lord also gives them personally that fear and trembling and also the preachers, and they preach the word of God in fear and tremble when they are going on the pulpit. You know, they don't possess that. They need it time and again, and may the Lord keep us from arrogancy in that we can do it, we have the skill and experience. May the Lord take that all away. May we be fresh in that all the time that depending upon the Lord that he may do it because we never qualify, never can do it. There are many things in life in your jobs after a while you just can do it on autopilot. Just do it. You're good at it. But preaching, that's never the case. You never can do it.

So in case you would like to become a pastor, it's the best work there is but in a way it's also awfully hard. You are never able. And yet it is the best there is because so often you feel kind of inadequate, you say, "I can't do it." It seems that especially those days, those sermons, they go the easiest.

Last thought, five, that faith should stand. Verse 5, "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." So that fifth verse is kind of, what? Children, look at that verse. What's the most important word in the verse, verse 5? What's most important? That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. What is this word? It's the word "faith," right? That is the purpose, so that your faith, so that your faith should not stand in the wisdom nor be founded upon the wisdom of men and founded upon the eloquency and the rhetoric and the logic and the exciting words of a preacher. It's upon the word of God. So when people get a text, this sometimes happens, sometimes when someone gets a text, it comes to their mind, and if the text is really from the Lord, it's not only these words, it's also the power, the content of it. The content, not the fact that they get a text but the content of it. The power of the word.

So faith, that's the purpose. So the Apostle Paul reminds the people in Corinth, "Remember when I came to you? I did not come with excellency of speech, I preached Jesus crucified, I was in weakness, but the Holy Spirit worked and so your faith did not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." You could say the word of God said it, this is what's written here and with the word of God I believed. That word came to me with power. Because faith is not just a feeling. Faith is not just a warmth coming over your heart. Faith is not just the overwhelming love or something like that. Faith is that you trust what he has said. In fact, the word "amen" is Hebrew and that's the word that's used for believing. So believing is to say amen, to say, "Yes, I believe it."

So to believe the word of God, the word of God condemning you, telling you you're hell-worthy and you say, "I believe it." And the word of God telling you there is a way of salvation and the heart responds by the Holy Spirit is, "I believe it." And the word of God preaching to you the Lord Jesus Christ and him crucified as a willing Savior offered to sinners, and through the Holy Spirit you believe it. Because faith is by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Do you see? That's the same as here. Faith is by hearing, not by the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

So remember, children, the Lord Jesus being baptized and by John the Baptist and he rose from the water wet and I see a dove coming down, a dove landing on the Lord Jesus and for some reason noise in the air, a voice of God, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear him." So that's the testimony of God of the gospel. Hear him. Also in this morning hour to you listening along and you here in church, hear him. There's no other name given among men by whom we must be saved and it's not by enticing words but it is by the simplicity of the word of God. Hear him. Amen.