

1Corinthians – Week 8

I. Review (1Cor. 1:26-30)

- A. Paul strengthens his argument that the gospel he preached contradicted human expectations...
 - i. He tells the Corinthians to think about their status in life when God saved them...
 - a. Most of them were not considered wise by worldly standards
 - b. Most of them did not hold prominent positions
 - c. Most of them did not come from prominent families
 2. Paul was making a point that God chooses people that have nothing to brag about.
 - a. Those who were filled with their own wisdom and importance lacked the humility to receive God's grace.
 - b. But God has a tendency to save those who are considered "nobodies" in society!
 - ii. Therefore, do not boast in men, boast in the Lord because...
 1. It is Christ who makes us right before God, not man's wisdom!
 2. It is Christ who makes us holy, not man's wisdom!
 3. It is Christ who frees us from sin, not man's wisdom!
 4. It is Christ who teaches us how to live and love rightly, not man's wisdom!
 5. And it is Christ who imparts true wisdom, not man's wisdom!
 6. Boast in Him! In what He has done to "nobodies" like us!
 7. Stop boasting in man's wisdom or in his eloquence of speech...

II. Continuation

- A. Paul is now going to show that the success of the gospel does not depend on human wisdom or eloquence of speech...
 - i. 1Corinthians 2:1 (ESV), "*And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.*"
 1. Background:
 - a. According to NT scholars, in ancient times, a philosopher would come to a city advertising a meeting where he would speak.
 - b. If he proved successful and attracted enough students, he would stay on in the city.
 - c. Paul points out that he did not come like philosophers, who seek popularity by way of eloquent and skilled speech.
 2. Although Paul was a well-educated man, he refused to present the testimony of God using the art of elocution!
 - a. Definition: Elocution is the study of effective public speaking, especially in the area of pronunciation, grammar, style and tone.
 - b. "*Lofty speech and wisdom*" focuses more on the presentation of the message than on the contents of the message.
 - c. This verse is not saying that God's preachers should not be articulate and passionate when presenting the word of God:
 - i. Paul is merely discouraging any method that causes people to say, "*What a marvelous speaker!?*" as opposed to "*What a marvelous Savior!?*"

- ii. 1Corinthians 2:2 (ESV), *“For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”*
 - 1. Paul uses a synecdoche here:
 - a. Definition: Synecdoche – when a part represents the whole (i.e., *“nice set of wheels”* is a synecdoche for *“nice car”*)
 - b. *“Jesus Christ and him crucified”* includes preaching the resurrection, repentance and the judgment to come (cf. Acts 17:30-31).
 - 2. There is something else we can learn here as well:
 - a. Paul’s focus was not on worldview issues like today: abortion, homosexuality, taxes, etc.
 - b. He decided to know nothing among them except *“Christ and him crucified.”*
 - c. Many today forget this simple focus:
 - i. As disciples, our job is not to march in picket lines or with signs or to be political activists, but rather, our job is to preach *“Jesus Christ and him crucified.”*
 - ii. Yes, people are living sinfully and acting ungodly! Why? Because they do not know God! Therefore... tell them of Jesus!
 - iii. Introduce them to the One who can change their lives, their hearts, and their worldview!
- iii. 1Corinthians 2:3 (ESV), *“And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling”*
 - 1. Paul has many enemies who wanted to harm him
 - 2. He was also aware of his own natural disadvantage as a public speaker (cf. 2Cor. 10:10)
 - a. He knew how the Greeks valued eloquent speech.
 - b. With this, he shows concern about the success of his message
 - 3. In view of these circumstances, the Lord reassured him, during his time at Corinth, with these words...
 - a. *“Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent,¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.”* Acts 18:9-10 (ESV)
 - 4. With this being said, the success of his message relied solely on God, not on human elocution!
 - 5. That is why Paul goes on to say...
- iv. 1Corinthians 2:4-5 (ESV), *“and my speech and my message were not in plausible (Grk. enticing; persuasive) words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,⁵ that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”*
 - 1. Paul’s message was simple!
 - 2. His preaching was a demonstration, not a performance!
 - a. Conviction of sin comes by the power of the Holy Spirit (John 14:8), not by man’s wisdom!
 - b. God causes the growth (1Cor. 3:6), not man’s wisdom!
 - c. Even the Corinthians’ ability to speak in tongues was the result of the Spirit’s power (cf. 1Cor. 12), not man’s wisdom!
 - d. Even today, God’s power is seen by our love for each other, by our love for the lost and dying, by our love for the hurting, in other words, God’s power is seen by our living as Jesus lived.
 - e. Man’s wisdom does not have the power to do all of the above.
 - 3. Faith must rest in the power of God; not in the wisdom of men.
 - 4. Boast in the Lord!