

1Corinthians – Week 9

I. Review (1Cor. 2:1-5)

- A. As you recall, Paul had been addressing the division that existed in the Church ...
 - i. Paul rebuked them telling them to follow Christ, not individuals
 - ii. And in chapter 2, Paul encourages the Church not to be distracted in their message...
 - 1. And that the effectiveness of the gospel depended on the Holy Spirit and not on human wisdom or eloquence of 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. Paul's desire was for their faith to rest on God's power and not on lofty speech and human wisdom.
 - iii. Paul's focus was Christ and Him crucified, not worldview issues.
 - 1. People are living sinfully because they do not know God!
 - a. Therefore, as disciples, we are called to introduce the sinner to the One who can change his/her life, heart and worldview!
 - iv. Like Paul, when it comes to preaching the gospel, we may experience fear due to our own human weakness or concerns.
 - v. But remember what the Lord told Paul....
 - 1. *“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)

II. Continuation

- A. We know that a normal course of development for a child is to go from simple thinking to more complex reasoning.
 - i. They should move from basic skills (like crawling, walking, single-word speech) to more complex skills (running, climbing, speaking in sentences)
 - ii. If a child does not mature in this way, we take him to the doctor because we recognize that there is a problem.
 - iii. Such children are called ‘handicapped’ because they do not develop as they should.
 - iv. Paul urges the Church to mature in their faith rather than to stay where they are and suffer a spiritual handicap.
- B. Paul's reference to the Holy Spirit's power in verses 4-5 lead him to elaborate on the Spirit's ministry of enlightening the minds of believers
 - i. 1Cor. 2:6 (ESV), *“Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away.”*
 - 1. Although the world views the message of the cross as foolishness (1Cor. 1:18), Paul states that the message actually imparts true wisdom.
 - 2. The term “*mature*” is applied to the Christians the same way Paul applied it in Phil. 3:15, *“Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.”*
 - a. Therefore, Paul is referring to those mature in Christ.
 - b. Later on, in the next chapter, he rebukes the Corinthians for being immature (1Cor. 3:1-4)
 - 3. *“The rulers of this age,”* in the context, point to the Jewish and Roman officials who has Christ crucified (v. 8)

4. The world's wisdom and rulers are destined to pass away:
 - a. Those considered to be "wise" in Jerusalem came to nothing when Jerusalem fell in 70AD
 - b. Those considered to be "wise" among the Gentiles came to nothing when the Roman Empire fell.
 - c. Even today, those considered to be "wise" (i.e., Oprah, Dr. Phil, influential political officials, etc.) will pass away.
 - i. Isaiah said it best when he said in Isaiah 40:8 (ESV), "*The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.*"
 - ii. All human pomp, splendor and wisdom shall come to nothing, for all shall go down to their graves!
 - iii. But wisdom which comes from God shall never pass away!
- ii. 1Cor. 2:7 (ESV), "*But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.*"
 1. Paul is not saying that the message of the gospel is currently shrouded or unintelligible, but that the wisdom of God which had been hidden from men has now been revealed with the preaching of Christ!
 2. What did God decree before the ages?
 - a. Read Ephesians 3:2-12:
 - i. That the promise of Christ would be given to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews.
 1. Through the gospel, Jews and Gentiles would become one and that the Gentiles would be co-heirs with Israel (Eph. 3:6)
 2. Through the gospel, Jew and Gentile may approach God with freedom (from sin and condemnation) and confidence (Eph. 3:12)
 3. All this is made possible by the death of Christ!
 4. And for this reason, Paul decided to know nothing among them except Christ and Him crucified (v. 2).
 - b. And this was all for our glory!
 - i. This concealed plan of God was designed to benefit us for an eternity!
 - ii. And unlike the wisdom of men, this shall never to pass away!
 3. This mystery, this concealed plan of God is summarized by Paul...
 - a. 1Timothy 3:16 (ESV), "*Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.*"
 - i. That is...
 1. Jesus came (from Heaven) in the flesh
 2. The Holy Spirit furnished evidences that He was the Son of God (miracles, including the resurrection)
 3. Ministered by angels
 4. Christ and Him crucified was preached beyond Israel
 5. Christ and Him crucified was believed by Gentiles as well as Jews
 6. Jesus ascended to Heaven.