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## The Preaching of the Cross | 1 Corinthians 1:17b-31...continued

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Verses 17-22 are included in Session 4

- Verse 23 –
  - **we preach Christ crucified** - Sadly, the modern Christian world is providing either signs or wisdom in order to win people to Christ, when our motto ought to be **we preach Christ crucified**. A sign will *wow* the audience, and wisdom will *enrich* or *enlighten* the audience, but only the proclamation of **Christ crucified** can present salvation to the audience.
  - **to the Jews a stumblingblock** - The crucified Christ was called **a stumblingblock** in Isaiah 8:14-15, and it was prophesied that many would stumble over Him. The Jewish nation became so enamored with the Kingdom that they failed to see the *Suffering Servant* as an equal part of the Messianic role.
  - **unto the Greeks foolishness** - For **the Greeks** (a term that has broad reference to worldview as much as nationality, and probably more than nationality) **Christ crucified** is simply *moronic*. The Greek word for **foolishness** is *μωρος* [moros].
- Verse 24 – It has often been said that the Bible speaks of three groups of people: *Jews, Gentiles, and the Church*. While one could debate the identity of **them which are called** (is it the Jewish nation or the Body of Christ, or both?), this third group is clearly in contrast to the thinking of both the **Jews** and the **Greeks** (v. 23). The third group sees **Christ crucified** as **the power and the wisdom of God**.
- Verse 25 - This is a strong reminder to get your theology from the pages of Scripture, not from the creeds, confessions, and catechisms of man.
- Verses 26-29 –
  - In these verses, **your calling** is used as an illustration of the manner in which God rejected the world's wisdom and used **the foolish things of the world** (the events leading up to and including the crucifixion?) in order that, in the end, **no flesh should glory in his presence** (that is, to boast before Him).
  - Sadly, (as in the note in v. 23), the modern Christian world desires the seemingly wise and powerful things of this world to grow its ranks.
- Verse 30 - Believers are made to be **in Christ Jesus** by God, and Jesus is our **wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption**. We should not seek these things through any other means other than being **in Christ Jesus**.
- Verse 31 - When we trust Christ for the four things of verse 30, we can only **glory in the Lord** and never in ourselves.

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## Paul's Manner of Declaration | 1 Corinthians 2:1-7

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- Verse 1 –
  - Though there is a period at the end of v. 1, verses 1 and 2 are part of the same sentence, in my interpretation. A simple diagram would be: I | determined / nor to know.
  - As in 1:17, Paul refutes the wisdom of using **excellency of speech or wisdom**. In spite of this, seminaries spend far more time teaching *homiletic* than *exegetis*.
- Verse 2 –
  - This particular word for **to know** is a word of mental focus, not of experience (though the experiential knowledge may be there also).
  - A good interpretation would be, "I decided to focus on only one thing: **Jesus Christ, and him crucified.**"
  - Mystics determine to focus on one thing, *knowing Jesus by an experiential journey with Him*. This is not found in this verse at all.
- Verse 3 –
  - When you look at Acts 18:5-6 it looks like Paul was "strong as goat's breath." But the encouragement of the Lord in Acts 18:9-10 (**Be not afraid...**) reveals an underlying fear.

- **Weakness** is ἀσθένεια [astheneia] from *a* (the negator) and *sthenos* (strength, from which we get *calisthenics*).
- **Fear** is φόβος [phobos] from which we get *phobia*.
- **Trembling** is τρόμος [tromos]
- Verse 4 –
  - Take note that Paul *did* use words (**speech** is *logos*, translated *words* in Young's Literal).
  - He *did not* come with a **non-verbal demonstration of the Spirit and of power**. Rather, his words were themselves such a demonstration in that they were not filled with human wisdom but were so convicting and convincing that even the chief ruler of the synagogue believed (Acts 18:8).
  - Peter says that his words were not **cunningly devised fables** but were eyewitness reports of **the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ** (2 Pet. 1:16).
  - The power is in the powerful implications of the Word. Paul certainly performed miracles, but none are recorded in Corinth (late in his ministry) and the performance of miracles would go against his argument that the *message* is powerful in itself, not needing supplements.
- Verse 5 - Our faith should be *simple and childlike* in its origin. Faith that is bred in showmanship will require ever-increasing showmanship to survive.
- Verse 6 –
  - Paul is clearly not against **wisdom** but against *worldly wisdom*. His teaching is that faith should be birthed out of a simple gospel presentation from the Word. Later, for **them that are perfect** (that is, those who have come into faith, which is the *desired end* of the Gospel presentation), there is a time of wisdom beyond the simplicity of Gospel facts.
  - The word **perfect** is from the root τέλος [telos], the ultimate end of a matter.
  - The wisdom of believers is neither **of this world** nor **of the princes of this world** who will soon **come to nought** (it is specifically the world's leaders who are spoken of as coming **to nought**).
  - **Come to nought** is καταργέω [katargeo], a compound of three Greek terms: *kata* (the prefix of ultimate conclusion), *a* (the negator), and *ergo* (effective power). Thus, the leaders will come to a point of having *zero effective power*.
- Verse 7 –
  - A **mystery** in the Bible is something previously unrevealed, and that can only be known by revelation.
  - This mystery was not a surprise to God, but rather was ordained by God.
  - Paul is the "Apostle of the Mystery," this mystery being revealed to him and through him.
  - The mystery is the offer of salvation to all the people of the world prior to the establishment of the Kingdom and thus entirely unrelated to the Law and to Israel.
  - The understanding of the mystery is essential to good theology.
- Verse 8 –
  - The **princes of this world** (literally, *of this age*) are both the Jewish leaders and the Roman leaders, each of whom had part in the crucifixion.
  - Jesus asked the Father to forgive them **for they know now that they do** (Luke 23:34).
  - Peter said that their actions were **through ignorance** (Acts 3:17).
  - Paul's testimony in this verse is thus the third report of the leader's lack of knowledge.