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February 9th, 2020
1 Corinthians 2:1-12

The Things Freely Given to Us

Christ and His Cross

The Mysteries of God

the Spirit of God

There was nothing, no art, no science, no learning, more prized by the ancient Greek and Roman world than the art of public speaking. We of course could run circles around them when it comes to science, but when it comes to language and especially oration the ancient Greeks were masters.

Corinth was no exception. The people of Corinth loved speakers that were, dynamic, poetic, witty, clever, funny, confident and entertaining.

Now here comes Paul. He comes to these men, and he comes, what does it say in our text? “in weakness, fear and trembling.”

He was not a good speaker. We saw that last week. He is not a dynamic confident individual, that people should follow him. He is not even a good writer.

His letters are powerful to be sure because they are filled with Christ, but if a college student handed in an essay that emulated Paul's style to their writing professor. I'm pretty sure he would send them back to 5th grade. In Ephesians chapter 2 Paul goes on and on for ten verses, that's almost half the chapter that is a single sentence. In verse 1 Paul states “you” but then doesn't finish the thought till verse five, “made alive.”

So how could this man, Paul who wasn't dynamic, wasn't a good speaker, wasn't even a great writer, walk into city after city and gather people to follow Christ? How could he be called the greatest missionary? How could he leave behind a legacy far surpassing the works of the greatest orators of Rome and Greece?

Simple because he had a message. A message which was so amazing that the skill of orator and writer no longer matters. God became man and died for your sins and gives heaven to you freely.

If you are Tom Sawyer and your trying to convince your friends to help you paint a fence you have to be clever and witty and personable and convincing in your language. But if you have a bucket of rocky road ice cream and you want to share it with your friends, you can hang the crudest sign and they will still come flocking.

What Paul had to share was so great that the weakness of the messenger made no difference. What did he have to share? **The things that have been freely given to us by God**

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. ² For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. ³ I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴ And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

First and foremost Christ and him crucified.

So says Paul, "I am determined to preach nothing among you except Christ and him crucified."

As long as I am telling you the wonderful glad tidings that your sins are forgiven that Christ died and rose again, then the delivery and the skill of the deliverer is immaterial.

In fact the skill of man's oration and writing can be counterproductive to the preaching of the Gospel says Paul. Because then Paul says you might be persuaded by the cleverness of men and not the power of God. You might put your faith not in God but in the preacher.

Look here at this congregation. You have had 6 different pastors and I daresay that each and every one of them was very different in many ways from the others. And yet so many of you are still here. Hopefully that is because you have found that the wrapping doesn't matter, what matters is that each and every one of them was bringing to you Christ and the forgiveness of sins which he won for you on His cross.

When you go to a restaurant does it matter which waiter brings you your food? No, unless the waiter is so incompetent that he keeps dropping it.

The food is prepared by Christ, the message is of Christ and the power of the message is the power of Christ. The waiter, the messenger, the pastor is immaterial. Because we do not put our faith in the preacher and believe in him, but rather in Christ and the power of God.

When I was writing this sermon I was curious so I went online and googled how to be a more effective preacher. Many sites came up, but the few that I looked at were all things the distracted people from the message. Things like

- It's not about knowing Christ it's about putting your knowledge in action

- Make sure you are giving the people something to do

All of these things take the focus off of Christ and what he has done for us and put the focus on what you do, or what I do. But this is not what Paul preached. Paul says I didn't come in cleverness or peddling wisdom, but I came to tell you that Jesus died for your sins

Paul came to bring Christ and Him Crucified

1 Corinthians 2:6-9 ⁶ However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory, ⁸ which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

So a pastor ought to preach Christ and the forgiveness of sins every Sunday. Does this mean then that I simply get up here every Sunday and tell you your sins are forgiven, Jesus died and rose and that's all you really need to know? No it does not mean that and Paul makes it clear here.

The Corinthians might have said to Paul, does that mean that you don't have any wisdom to offer? You can imagine they might have been worried that there was no room for growth, no room for learning. NO says Paul that isn't what I am saying.

You can add a "do" to verse 6 if you happen to have your bibles here. "However, we **do** speak wisdom" That is the force of what Paul is saying.

It's not the wisdom of the world. It's not even anything that world will recognize as wisdom. It is the wisdom of God, more than that it is the wisdom which was hidden by God but is now revealed.

It's not the wisdom of man but far far better it is a hidden treasure, the wisdom of God.

The wisdom of man says do this and that but not this or that and you will be thin and beautiful and popular.

The wisdom of man says do this and that but not this or that and you will be successful.

The wisdom of man says do this and that but not this or that and you will be happy.

But the thing that none of them even considered. The thing that none of them even imagined is that God will do this and that and you will do absolutely nothing and you will be saved.

Now concerning the this and the that which God did there are a thousand different stories of what God has done for me and you and everyone.

And so we search these stories and we learn how God did this thing, and we say, "No way." And how God did that thing and we say, "That's amazing."

And there is no end to the things that Christ has done for us, and there is no end to the way in which these things apply to my life. And there is no end to the opportunities to grow in learning and to appreciate the wisdom of Christ.

But it is always, Christ did this and Christ did that for me. And at the heart of it all is the cross of Christ.

So yes we do preach wisdom, but not the wisdom of men that requires cleverness to sell it, but the wisdom of Christ which is best adorned without the wisdom or cleverness of men so that it might be all about Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:10-12 ¹⁰ But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. ¹¹ For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

Because its all about Christ and all about searching out the things of Christ for this very reason God has given to us His Spirit.

Notice what Paul says far from sermons and bible class and Sunday school being boring we have access to search out even the deep things of God. But we need His Spirit to do it.

Man is so proud of his ability to search out the deep things of this earth. And indeed he has searched out many deep mysteries of the world around us. But how much better indeed to search out the deep things of God. Yet this is not possible without the Spirit of God. Men have the ability to search out the things of this world but we do not have the spirit of this world but the spirit of God to search out the deep things of God.

Paul reminds us that the rulers and philosophers of this age are passing away. Searching out the things of this world is great and useful. We have a bunch of people that are planning a trip to see the creation Museum. And there you can hear people like Dr David Menton and Dr Jason Lisle talk about the wonders of

this world. And that is great and wonderful but these things are passing away. Remember in Daniel how he saw the vision of the statue, which was the kingdoms of this world. And a rock that was cut without hands rolled down and smashed the statue and grew. A kingdom without end. Its good to search out the things of this world but they are passing away. It is far better to search out the things of God which will never pass away.

And so we hear Sunday after Sunday the stories of Christ and what he has done. And when we hear these stories Sunday after Sunday we grow in the deep things of God and in the mysteries of Christ and in Christ and His cross.

Because even though these stories are always about Christ and what he has done still they touch our lives in so many different ways . And every time we hear them we learn something new about Christ and the things he has freely given to us.

Just some of the things that Christ has freely given to us are, His cross, His hidden wisdom and His Spirit.

Amen