

# 1 Corinthians 2

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[ 0 : 00 ] Paul says, I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. People say many things about Paul.

One is that he was a misogynist. We were here quite a lot recently. A man who hated women despised them, did not give their place.

We should know where the English translation is brethren or brothers, that the word in the Greek is actually siblings, so it's brothers and sisters. And many times people say these things and expand it.

It's obviously the brothers and sisters. There's no distinction between male and female as far as membership of the kingdom of God is concerned. So Paul was not a misogynist.

But he was, you could say, a person of a one-track mind if he's saying, I resolved to know nothing amongst you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. But that's a good thing.

[ 1 : 06 ] He might have been a one-note preacher, but that one note was the essential note. One message. If he preached in Thessalonica or Athens or Corinth or wherever he went, he had the same message.

Jesus Christ and him crucified. Not just Jesus Christ. Not the spirit of Christ, whatever that's supposed to be. I met a man once at the Calendash Stones on the summer solstice.

We went over in a soup kitchen. There were all these hippies and new age travelers and whatnot hugging stones and stuff like that and talked to one or two of them about Christ.

And, oh yes, the Christ spirit is in the stones, they'd say. They didn't know what they're talking about. It's some sort of mystery they make up. It's the Christ of God we're talking about.

Not the Christ of our imagination, but the Christ you've portrayed in the Bible. There's only one. Because remember, Christ is not his surname. Christ means the anointed one, the Messiah, the anointed of God.

[ 2 : 13 ] Jesus was his first name, wasn't it? Because he was going to be the saviour of his people. He would save them from their sins. But Christ, because he's the anointed one. Anointed as prophet. So he could instruct people.

Anointed as priest so he could atone for this and anointed as king so he could govern or rule.

Because we don't think of govern perhaps in the same way. It's just a strong rule. But we think of this slightly lower thing of the governor is not the big shot.

But he is the big shot. He's the one who rules. So Jesus Christ and him crucified. And that was his basic message. That's what he stuck to. Charles Spurgeon is called often the prince of preachers. Certainly in the English language, it would be hard to find someone who's been more influential as a preacher than Spurgeon was. And still continues to be to this day. Not only can you read, but you can actually hear, well, whether it's a computer-generated voice or a person reading of everything, hear the Spurgeon's preaching in audio.

But whatever. He was asked, why do your sermon seem alike, Mr. Spurgeon? And he said, I take my text wherever I can find it.

[ 3 : 30 ] And then I make a beeline for the cross. That's what he was interested in, the cross of Jesus Christ. So was Paul. And here we discover something great about the preacher, the great preacher like Paul.

Or any great preacher like Spurgeon. If he could count the end of his ministry and he would save him, well, all he spoke to us about was Jesus Christ and he was crucified. That would be a great thing.

That would be a faithful man. That would be someone who took the crucial cross, the crux, the crucial element and brought it in front of people and confronted people with the truth of the gospel.

Not with some sort of social gospel. Not with some sort of nice stories. But with Jesus Christ and him crucified. You know, there's so many ways we can get news today, aren't there? I mean, things are going out of fashion. Newspapers. Who buys newspapers? I'm not saying maybe people here do buy newspapers. I don't know what I'll ask for a newspaper. No, not exactly when. [ 4 : 41 ] Who buys the Stone Age's Edge, for example? I don't know. I guess some people must do because it's still on for sale. And I think I wanted to get one last week because our class reunion was in it.

But generally speaking, you know, you get your news in all sorts of places, don't you? Not just on the television, which we've done for generations, but also on your phones or any gadgets that you use.

You might get it from all sorts of networks. You might get it from networks that are not very trustworthy that specialise in fake news. Some young people do that and they deliberately do that. But anyway, you can get your news from all sorts. You can get your sports news. If you're a sports fan like me and many others, you find out what's going on in different sports in different areas, don't you? whether it's BT Sport or whether it's BBC Sport or whatever it is, you can find it on all sorts of things or a dedicated news sports channel.

But when you want to hear about Jesus Christ, there's really only one place to come and that's the Bible. If you want to know how to get to heaven, there's only one way to find that and that's by hearing the Word of God, hearing from the Word of God as it's read, as it's preached, as it's proclaimed, as it's discussed, this is the message you need.

[ 6 : 02 ] So there's all sorts of ways you can find out who won. I know there were no domestic football yesterday. It's been an international weekend, isn't it? I have to say I'm superly quite glad that this will be in Scotland.

I don't know why we're doing a soft spot for Israel, I guess. But anyway, we can get these things in all sorts of ways. But if we want to hear about Christ, this is where we need to come, to the cross. We need to hear what Paul had to say. So the grass withers, the flower fades, only the Word of God will last forever. And Paul said, I don't want your faith to rest on man's wisdom, but on God's power. Because many people, well, let's come to the message. This is his message. We're going to talk about his message. And we've got his method and his motive. Three ends.

It's quite easy to remember, perhaps. Even if the project isn't necessarily easy to remember. But Paul gave us his message here in verses 1 and 2. He says, I, all the kingly brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God's lofty speech of wisdom.

[ 7 : 15 ] For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and the crucified. That's my message. That's what I'm going to bring in front of you. That's what I've got to say. I don't want to know anything else. That's what I've got to tell you about.

And then he says, in verses 3 and 4, he says, I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. In my speech, in my message, were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power.

So that's the way he did it, his method. The way he didn't do it and the way he did do it. He contrasts them. And then his motive, verse 5, that your faith might rest in the wisdom of God, but in the power, sorry, the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

So that's what he's talking about. So he says, when he starts off with his message, when I came to you, brothers and sisters, remember, did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom, such a plain Peter testimony of God.

For I resolved in him nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. He starts off with a negative. He says, I didn't come to do this, but I came to do that.

[ 8 : 22 ] And that's an oratorical style of the day. And there were many styles of the day. The Greeks were great believers in rhetoric, in flowery speech, in eloquence, in being orators.

There were great speakers, talkers, persuaders. Remember we were reading in Athens, they thought, I had nothing but getting to hear some new thing. They were ideas people.

They were philosophers. And anything went with some of these people. And some preachers were taken over by this idea and they thought, well, I have to be a flowery speaker.

I have to be eloquent. I have to win people over with the power of my arguments. But that's not how Jesus does it. That's not how God works.

That's how the Holy Holy Spirit works. Yes, he uses gifted people, but he gifts people that he calls. I mean, for example, Spurgeon, just to take him for a minute.

[ 9 : 24 ] Spurgeon was not exactly the guy you'd expect to be the top preacher. He just not taught this class in university and in seminary. He was converted in his routines and I think he became a preacher pretty shortly after that.

He didn't have any really real formal education as a theologian or a preacher in the house. He was gifted because he was called. Well, Paul was a classical scholar.

He was a scholar. He was the top of his class. That's true. He was the top of Gamaliel's school of rabbinical teaching which was very prestigious. He spoke numerous languages.

He was very able to speak to all sorts of crowds in Aramaic, in Hebrew, in Greek, probably in Latin. He could do all that. But he didn't rely upon these things. He relied upon the Spirit of God, the power of God, and the Word of God, the power of God and Jesus Christ, the demonstration of God's power.

[ 10 : 34 ] So we can have all sorts of smart guys, wise guys turning up, people that look smart, well-cut suits or whatever they're wearing, you know, and they've got flowery oratory.

They could be smooth, they could be swive. They could have a nonsense message to give. Like someone like, let's just say someone, David Attenborough, the person that, I think in Britain, is voted the most trustworthy man, or Britain's biggest grandpa or something stupid like that.

Who cares? He doesn't know the truth. God's Word says he's a fool because he says in his heart there is no God. Who should know more about God than many because of all the things he's explored in creation without acknowledging the Creator?

And you can have the clever wit of someone like Stephen Fry or someone like that. You know, bamboozles him with his wit. He's just too quick. And he makes you feel bad as well.

He makes you feel stupid. Jerry Paxman's another one. These guys, they can have these sorts of abilities but if they don't have the Word of God, if they don't have the love of God in their hearts, what good is that?

[ 11 : 45 ] What good is it to listen to these guys? What good is it to read all the wonderful speeches ever made? I like reading speeches. I like great speeches but they're not going to help you unless they're about Jesus Christ.

Ultimately, they may help you in various ways, they may broaden your education and so on. I don't deny that. But ultimately, what we need is the truth of Jesus Christ and Paul's message is all about Jesus Christ and not just about Jesus but Jesus at the cross.

Jesus is the Savior. Not just Jesus through his lifetime but Jesus at the end of his life and the death that he came to accomplish. Let's not forget that. So we don't want people saying at the end of a sermon oh, that was a great sermon.

But what people say isn't he a wonderful Savior? How often do we do that ourselves? Send the message oh, do we enjoy it? It might so much and enjoy it.

Are we invigorated? Are we infused with all of who Jesus Christ is? We ought to be brothers and sisters if we are in Christ. And if we are not, then that is something to aspire, to desire, to want, to need.

[ 13 : 04 ] So he resolves, he says. He resolves. He made a conscious decision. He did not just drift into this. Oh, well, I suppose that's what we'll do. He said, I resolved.

I made it my mission not to know, not to know anything amongst you except Jesus Christ and then crucified. So he didn't go down on any sidetracks.

He wasn't misled off some sort of tangent. He kept straight on. Straight down in the middle. Straight to the cross. And that's what is the message.

Straight out to the people. He preached clearly. He preached simply. He preached boldly.

That's three great things to say about a preacher, isn't it? Or a message more important than the preacher. The message. It's got to be clear. It's got to be simple. And it's got to be bold.

[ 14 : 00 ] That's not because people are stupid. That's not because people can't think. That is because there are so many ways to be distracted up here or down there. We all know it, don't we?

We're distracted by so many things. We can be distracted by all sorts of side things. And God forbid that I'm guilty of distracting anybody here today. but we need a clear and bold message.

The truth. You know why we need that? We can see why we need it. Because so many people in our pews have been sitting in those pews for 40 or 50 or 60 or even 70 years. And they still do not

get it that Jesus Christ and him crucified is what it's all about.

There's still some people thinking I've got to do better. I've got to be more like my father was or my mother or the elder down the road or whatever it is. I've got to do better so that God can bless me. This is not the case. We need Jesus Christ. That's all we need. I said all. I said that differently. He's everything.

[15:05] Paul said I need to treat you with Christ.

He didn't want to talk about philosophy. He didn't want to talk about Socrates and Plato and people like that. He wanted to say Jesus Christ is the Savior. He didn't want to be thought clever himself. Because if you're up here and you want to be thought clever that's one thing. And there are people that want to be thought clever by the audience or whatever. But that is not going to make Jesus Christ glorified to them is it?

Because Jesus is going to be going to be magnified and glorified. He's the one that deserves to be he's the only one that deserves to be glorified. And it's Jesus Christ in his person in his work.

Not just not just understanding he was the founder of a new religion like like Muhammad or someone like that.

[16:17] No. Not just as a historical actor who don't know into Elijah and Alexander the greater Julius Caesar but he's known as God and man as the God who was incarnate who came into this world to live with and amongst men and to live a perfect life but also fundamentally to die.

He didn't just come to live he came to die and he came to accomplish a death. Death will take us all. It takes it's taken everyone in history up to this point except Jesus.

Well of course we know Enoch and Elijah were transformed by the power of God that's different but generally speaking we're born and die. Jesus Christ came to accomplish a death and of course he rose again and then ascended up on high and that's where he is now.

So we don't have to understand every little bit of theology about the hyperstatic union between divine and human and that sort of thing.

We don't have to understand that. We don't have to understand all we just have to believe it and accept it. We need to accept the plain teaching of scripture on these things and Jesus Christ came to die for the unrighteous for the ungodly for his enemies for those who would crucify him for those who did crucify him and what did he say Father forgive him for they know not what they do.

[18:00] You know you know what I could say ten words right now and close the Bible and say that's enough and maybe that's what you should do.

I'll tell you what those ten words are and it's ten really easy words and it's the gospel in a nutshell. Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead.

Easy to remember isn't it? Christ died for our sins five words Christ died for our sins you know in the old days the class would be saying it together wouldn't they? You'd learn things by rote you'd say it often you'd remember that Christ died for our sins that's how we used to learn isn't it?

We used to learn verses in Sunday school or catechisms or psalms whatever it was and you'd do it only by repeating it a lot of times before you get it into your head and you remember it and maybe we really disliked doing that but maybe now we're grateful for it that we still have some of that stuff language or other language Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead that's the gospel that's what the gospel is about there's also the fancy stuff you can bring in but that's what the gospel is about Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead if we believe that we believe the gospel if we really believe it not just saying it anybody can say it anybody a parrot could say it you train a parrot to say that it wouldn't mean anything to the parrot but we aren't parrots are we we're people we're human beings we're created in the image of God we have a spiritual aspect we have a soul we have a soul that needs to be saved whether it's saved already or whether it's not saved we have a soul that needs to be saved my soul needs to be saved your souls need to be saved and the way we know we're saved in the end is continuing on to the end because that's what the

Bible says those who continue to the end in the truth in the faith will be saved so this is the way Paul preached no no pontius pulled no soft peddling no extra stuff just the gospel and he knew and he spoke in weakness and fear and much trembling he did not go with a lot of confidence confidence you know one of the good things of coming to a different congregation or coming to preach at all is generally speaking in our congregations and certainly in this congregation the elders praying before you go in they pray with the preacher because they know the preacher can do nothing unless the Holy Spirit is with us what's the point we'll go off to their own go home and I know there are preachers they've gone to the point without thinking there is any need for prayer we

must never do that we must always know there is a need for prayer it's not a rope thing it's not a oh it's time to pray we better do that no it's we need to pray because without God we can do nothing so that was Paul weakness and fear much trembling didn't know how he was going to do it he did it in the strength of

[ 21 : 17 ] God he was against so many awful people he preached in chattel sometimes remember when he said I would that you and everyone here were like me except for these chains he wasn't talking about figurative chains he had shackles on he was a prisoner preaching in chains he was not confident selfish he relied upon the power of God Jesus the power of God the wisdom of God he trusted in the spirit of God in the Holy Spirit's power because Paul was like Elijah like us a man of life passions he was weak he was frail he was sinful you couldn't explain how he got onto that or Spurgeon or how could he get onto that only because they were trusting in the power of God and they were not in any way proclaiming their own message but the message of the cross and the method being used was the method of making yourself nothing making yourself just a channel of God's truth no one should take any credit for that anyone takes credit for gifts is wrong we shouldn't take credit for gifts if we have gifts and we all have gifts and many people have gifts that they don't recognise or they don't use or aren't recognised by others and aren't used by the church but we all have gifts whatever those gifts are and if we have any gifts as we have gifts we must not take any credit for them some people take credit for their abilities and various things but ultimately they're given to us by God ok we can hone them we can work hard and so I'm not saying anything about that about achievements but if we have gifts of expression we should use them if we have gifts of hospitality or caring or be supportive be sympathetic be empathetic it's all sorts of things

I mean nobody is good at everything are they you know you can't be good at everything and you have to recognise that other people do other things better than you do and that's good that's right because we're a people of God we're many branches we're many members that's the picture in the New Testament and many members with many talents and we're all part of the same church the church of Jesus Christ and therefore anything that affects another should affect us too we should have that brotherly feeling that sisterly feeling towards others but that's a little bit off the point we've got here to the motives the motives that Paul had so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom but on God's power he doesn't want people to think okay I'm in the church therefore I do certain things certain churches like that if you do X Y and Z that's fine and God will reward you accordingly you do your best that's nothing to do with the gospel is it the gospel is about Jesus Christ and his righteousness that's what it's about nothing else he didn't want to talk about the wisdom of men he wanted to talk about power the power of God that was his motive his motive was that we should focus on God because that is where our salvation is his motive was the glory of God and I suppose by the same token the salvation of sinners that was all part and parcel of the same motive really so we need to build our life on like Paul did Jesus Christ and no one else Jesus Christ and him crucified not some sort of bloodless Christ not some sort of sanitized Christ not some sort of Christ that might be up and there might be a picture with a halo around his head or something like that but Jesus Christ who came to live amongst us and to die and to take our sins to himself to receive in his body the punishment that was due to us you know we sang in the beginning my God my God why have you forsaken me that was not something to cry from the cross I know we read it in the Psalms we sang it in the Psalms and of course David wrote it as inspired with the Holy Spirit all those centuries before before before Christ but it's all about Christ isn't it he's the only one that's been forsaken in that way and he was forsaken it was not some sort of empty announcement he really was forsaken and he needed to be forsaken for us to be saved Jesus Christ needed to as some people say be the victim of cosmic child abuse that's nonsense what he needed to do was the greatest change to take upon himself the punishment that is due to us and to impute to us his own righteousness the great exchange that's the great exchange that's what we need to believe in the great exchange some people are too proud to believe in that some people say I don't need Jesus Christ what have I done wrong that was a pretty good life better better better better better better

God isn't great in a prayer of friend God is at absolute standard and we've all fallen short of it even the youngest we've all fallen short of it but Jesus Christ is our hope and he must be our hope that was Paul's hope that was Paul's message that's what any message in the book must be about Christ whatever it is whatever the subject is it comes back to Jesus Christ doesn't it like Pope's version said whenever I find my text that's fine but then I make the evangelist cross okay some say

every servant can't be an evangelistic service that's true but we need to remember and we need to hear of Jesus Christ and we need to focus on Jesus Christ we need to build our life on him we have to take the word of God and we have to treat it honestly with respect and faith and we need to pray pray as people of God for the power of

[ 27 : 59 ] God to be upon us as a people and to reach out to those around about you who are not saved as yet whether they're here or elsewhere whether they're in your own homes or your family or elsewhere whoever it is your friends your neighbours and we have to trust God that he will he will do what is right he will change lives it's his salvation he brings his salvation we cannot save anyone we can't save ourselves or anyone else but we can trust that's what we need to do like Paul we have to trust in Christ and him crucified that's our message that's the only message that's worthy of this or any other public amen let us pray