

# BECOMING THE CHURCH

## “Keeping the MAIN thing, the Main Thing”

(1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

The Main thing: (when a couple is getting married, what is the most important thing that is supposed to happen that day? Flowers? Who sits where? Dresses? Tuxes? Faint? Honeymoon? NO! The Main thing = they get hitched)

**Everything** for the Christian hinges on the CROSS! = THE Main Thing! For the Christian, our EVERYTHING centers on the cross. Our past, our future, and our present depend on the reality of the cross!!

**Last week:** 1 Cor. 1. 18-31: The historical reality of the Crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. = foolishness to Jew (sign =show me) and Greek (reason with me), but to us, to Christians, = message & HOPE of salvation.

**The Cross** = The cruel instrument of death, shame, of torture, of ultimate submission  
= for us, = cross = The **means** of salvation. The **miracle** of salvation = God’s power and plan = God’s glory.

This is craziness (foolishness) to right minded humans. The supreme God of the Universe (all powerful) chose to DIE – that we little, helpless humans might be able to live eternally with God in heaven in His holy presence.

**GOD chose this!** This **is** His RESCUE plan. This is HIS Redemption plan. And it is senseless to us. And it becomes the greatest news in the world, in redemptive history = the cross (Jesus’ death) becomes the center point of human history because Jesus was raised victoriously from the dead! **And He is ALIVE today!!!**

### READ 1 Cor. 2:1-5

“And when I came to you, brothers *and sisters*, I did not come as *someone* superior in <sup>[a]</sup>speaking ability or <sup>[b]</sup>wisdom, as I proclaimed to you the <sup>[c]</sup>testimony of God. <sup>2</sup> For I determined to know *nothing* among you (except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.) <sup>3</sup> I also was with you in weakness and fear, and in great trembling, <sup>4</sup> and my <sup>[d]</sup>message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of <sup>[e]</sup>wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith would not <sup>[f]</sup>rest on the <sup>[g]</sup>wisdom of mankind, but on the power of God.”

Paul is setting up here his framework to remind the church at Corinth that the gospel is NOT a secondary issue for the Christian. It is primary!

- It is primary in your life as a Believer. You became a Believer through the power of the gospel.
- It is primary to those around you who need to hear the gospel. NO other message on the earth is more important to their soul than the gospel. It is the MAIN thing!!
- It is primary to the lost in this world, everywhere. The hope of the gospel is our driving force to love, serve, and share this truth with the lost world. Nothing should matter more to their souls.

Here is Good News when you share the gospel:

“And when I came to you, brothers *and sisters*, I did not come as *someone* superior in speaking ability or wisdom [cleverness], as I proclaimed to you the testimony of God.

**Vs. 4:** “and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom,”

**-The Testimony of God [=mystery of God]** = the message of the Cross (that life comes through Jesus’ death and resurrection from the grave!).

**A. The power of the gospel message is NOT dependent on you as the messenger to get all the words right.**

**- Every been on a date, and you wanted to say something sweet, but so nervous you messed up the words? (even though you rehearsed them over and over??) = they still got the point. They saw your heart (your motivation was to bless them).**

**Vs. 2: "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."**

**B. The power of the gospel message is to allow God's WORD to speak for itself**

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures." 1 Cor. 15:3-4

- Do you know God's Word? Can you share it? (Romans Road: 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 10:9-10, 13) 1 J 5:13
- Are you living God's Word? Can people see how God's Word is shaping your life? Changing you for the better?

**Vs. 3: "I also was with you in weakness and fear, and in great trembling,"**

**C. The power of the gospel message is that God uses frail and broken people to deliver His eternal, supernatural Truth to other broken people.**

### **READ 2 Cor. 4:5-12**

<sup>5</sup> For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants <sup>[d]</sup>on account of Jesus. <sup>6</sup> For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. <sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in <sup>[e]</sup>earthen containers, [fragile Jars of Clay] so that the extraordinary *greatness* of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; <sup>8</sup> *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed; <sup>10</sup> always carrying around in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. <sup>11</sup> For we who live are constantly being handed over to death because of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our mortal flesh. <sup>12</sup> So death works in us, but life in you."

- For over two years Paul was with the growing church at Corinth. They saw his good days and his bad days. His encouragement and discouragement. When he was accused, arrested, abused, and mistreated by the mob and the Roman officials.
- The church witnessed Paul's Humanity. He was not a superstar. He was a fragile, broken, sinful messenger of God who had been redeemed, saved, called, and poured out for them.

<sup>4</sup> and my <sup>[d]</sup>message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of <sup>[e]</sup>wisdom, [Not in human wisdom, not in human reason] ... but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith would not <sup>[f]</sup>rest on the <sup>[g]</sup>wisdom of mankind, but on the power of God."

- 1) The gospel is a divinely powerful message to the human heart. The Reality or the truthfulness of the Message is not affected by the messenger. (we can't change its truthfulness, even if we mess up how we share it)
- 2) The gospel is centered on the perfected work of Jesus accomplished on the cross and enacted through His resurrection. Nothing can change that fact of history. We don't have to embellish it, exaggerate it, dress it up, or minimize it. The facts speak for themselves. **Just share it!**
- 3) Because the gospel message is both a historical reality and a divine action of God, the message of the gospel is a spiritual one. The Holy spirit of God is at work to help BOTH the hearer and

the sharer of the message – to receive, understand, and accept God’s truth of the message in order to transform their heart from death to life.

When He comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment. (John 16:7)

**REMEMBER:**

= There is power in the Name of Jesus. He is God. Every knee will bow at His name.

“For this reason also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, Phil 2:9-10

= There is power in the message of the gospel.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed <sup>[a]</sup>from faith to faith” Romans 1:16-17

= There is power in the messenger – you – filled with God’s Spirit to help you share His Truth, His story, His gospel.

**Vs. 4-5:** “... but in demonstration of the **Spirit** and of **power**, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith would not <sup>[f]</sup>rest on the <sup>[g]</sup>wisdom of mankind, but on the power of God.”

God has called us to be vessels of the good news. He supplies the message, the words, the opportunity, the power to share it, the power to pray for it, and the power to execute it. AND God brings the fruit!!! He supplies the Holy Spirit in us for

- but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth.” Acts 1:8
- for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.” Luke 12:12
- But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:26
- When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, He will testify about me. And you also must testify. John 15:26-27
- But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. John 16:13

In sharing the gospel, **the MAIN thing is to SHARE the gospel**. People are watching your life to **see IF** you believe what you are sharing (by how you act everyday throughout the week).

- **Does your life itself share the message of God’s transforming?**
- In sharing the gospel, do you know the message of salvation? Can you lead someone to understand it?
- The **BAD NEWS:** They are a sinner, someone who needs to be saved (to be rescued), to be redeemed by a Rescuer. (They can’t be saved unless they realize they are lost). Spiritually dead. Wanting. Insufficient.
- \*\*= Man’s two great problems: **1) SIN and 2) DEATH**
- The Bad News is that **there is none righteous, no not one** (Romans 3:10). **We all sin and fall short of the glory of God** (Romans 3:23). Every one of us has transgressed the laws of God in our thoughts, words and deeds more times than we could ever imagine. The First Commandment is, **“You shall have no other gods before me”** (Exodus 20:3). We are all guilty of making something else MORE important to us than God Himself. We are all equally guilty. We are all equally damned. Rejected by God because we have rebelled against Him.

- “The one who believes in Him is not judged; **the one who does not believe has been judged already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup> And this is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the Light; for their deeds were evil.” John 3:18-19
- The **GOOD NEWS** (gospel) = God’s story = God sent Jesus Christ to this earth to live a sinless life, to show us how to have a relationship with God the Father, - and He was rejected, punished, tortured, and killed on a cross. He died. And He was buried for three days. Jesus died for OUR sins. For YOUR sins. He took our place and received our punishment for our sins.

Jesus became my substitute, taking my sins on him and then the wrath of God my sins deserve.

The substitutionary atonement is at the heart of the gospel. This is where we see and understand the great love that God has for us, that the Son would allow the Father to place our sins on him and punish him in our place. **Remove this and you lose the depth of our sinfulness and the greatness of God’s love for us.**

- All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and **the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.** Isaiah 53:6
- **For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin**, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21
- **He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree**, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 1 Peter 2:24
- **For Christ also suffered once for sins**, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, 1 Peter 3:18
- On the third day, God rose Jesus from the dead, alive and victorious

**Jesus’ resurrection meant that He defeated both SIN and DEATH.**

**Jesus offers YOU eternal life right now, if you will trust in HIM with your life, invite Him into your life, repent of your sins and allow Him to rescue you. To save you!**

This IS the MAIN Thing! It is what keeps the Church in business ( it is the message and purpose of every Believer – to share the gospel with the lost and show the world the love of Jesus).

### **What is your MAIN Thing?**

**Those who died in the crash:** - One guy got out to help those trapped. To rescue them.

- If you died today, how would you be remembered?
- **Funeral of a local lady (she had a nice porcelain doll collection). She loved dolls.**