**DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT’S POWER**

1 Corinthians 2:1-16

Key Verse 4

“My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power”

**Introduction**



In today’s passage, Paul teaches us that God’s wisdom is revealed by the Holy Spirit. It means that we should depend on the Holy Spirit, not on mere human wisdom. Human wisdom has no power to save a person from sin and Satan. Only God has the power to save a person. May God help us to be powerful Bible teachers by depending on the Holy Spirit everyday!

1. Read verses 1- 5. What was Paul’s resolution when he was with the Corinthians? (1-2) How did Paul come to the Corinth? (3) What did he do to demonstrate the Spirit’s power when he preached? (4-5)

1-1, Read verses 1- 5.

And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. **2** For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. **3** I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. **4** My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, **5** so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.

1-2, What was Paul’s resolution when he was with the Corinthians? (1-2)

***And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.***

* Before coming to Corinth, Paul was in Athens (Ac 17:16-34). He was distressed to see that the city was full of idols.
* The Athenians spent most of their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas. As Paul reasoned with them, a group of philosophers began to dispute with him.
* Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” Paul preached to them the Creator God who made the world and everything in it.
* He told them that God cannot be represented by man’s design and skill. He proclaimed to them repentance and the message of Jesus’ resurrection.
* Upon hearing this, some of them sneered and others wanted to discuss it further. But only a few of them believed. Paul was disappointed. He felt that he had failed as an evangelist.
* Despite the experience, Paul made a resolution when he came to Corinth. What was that? He decided not to rely on human wisdom. Paul resolved to know nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified.
* We learn from Paul how we can be good Bible teachers.We should not rely on our human wisdom. We are tempted to beautify the cross, but we do not need to.

1-3, How did Paul come to the Corinth? (3)

***I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling.***

* These words seem strange for someone who is trying to impress his hearers.
* But they are the words of a man of humility after Christ’s heart. Paul was genuine and sincere in all that he says. He did not pretend at power and authority.
* He did not hide his weakness, but shared it with the family of God. Indeed God loves the humble man who relies on God in all things, even in exposing his own weaknesses and fears.
* Therefore, in all humility of heart Paul expressed to the church at Corinth the condition he was in at the time he had come to them.
* Those who try to impress, often are in the habit of seeking the praise of men. In the Gospel work, it is evident that there are always those who seek the praise of men and those who seek the praise of God.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 reads,

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

* Again Paul had no confidence in himself. He humbled himself before God. He wasn’t sure how the Corinthians would respond to the message of the cross.
* He might have been apprehensive. His memory from Athens was still fresh. However, he decided to preach the message of the cross with absolute faith.
* God came to Paul in a vision, “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.”
* So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half teaching the word of God (Ac 18:9-11). Corinth was a difficult city to pioneer due to a pleasure seeking culture.
* But Paul preached the gospel boldly there. He did not depend on himself, but on God’s power. God blessed his message without fail.

1-4, What did he do to demonstrate the Spirit’s power when he preached? (4-5)

***My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.***

* Paul says that his message and his preaching were not particularly wise or persuasive. He preached simply the message of the cross.
* When he preached the message of the cross, God demonstrated the Spirit’s power by changing the hearts of sinners.
* A synagogue ruler named Crispus and his entire family members were converted (Ac 18:8). Many penny-pinching merchants accepted Christ as their Lord.
* It was the power of God that changed these people. Paul said that God demonstrated the Spirit’s power in them.
* Likewise, we should preach the gospel of Jesus’ cross and resurrection simply and with conviction. We don’t have to worry about the wisdom of our message.
* Our wisdom cannot change anyone spiritually, no matter how persuasive. Only the Holy Spirit can change a person in Christ.
* To be excellent Bible teachers, we need to have absolute faith in the power of the Holy Spirit.
* D.L. Moody (1837-1899) was an American evangelist with only a grade school education. He went to England standing before highly educated people and preached the simple message, resulting in the Cambridge Seven.
* The gospel is a message of God’s power. Human wisdom is useless for salvation. Only God’s power can set us free from our bondage to sin and death, changing us to faithful disciples of Jesus.
* Paul’s message touched their hearts and brought a change within that no man could ever hope to bring to the broken soul.
* His simple Gospel invited faith, and faith invited repentance, and repentance invited forgiveness and forgiveness invited the Holy Spirit who came upon them.
* Then they were rescued them from eternal condemnation and brought them back to God as his holy and beloved children.
* To every man or woman who are interested in how to deliver the message of the Gospel, Paul offers us a secret.
* The message must be simple such that even a child could understand it. The message must expose sin and its consequences.
* The message must exalt Christ and his sacrifice of atonement on behalf of the sinner. The message must be directed at the core of the heart each person.

1. Read verses 6-9. To whom did Paul give a message of wisdom? (6) How is God’s wisdom different from the world’s? (7) What did the rulers of this age do to Jesus when they didn’t understand the message of God’s wisdom? (8) To whom does God reveal this wisdom? (9)

2-1, Read verses 6-9.

We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. **7** No, we declare God’s wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. **8** None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. **9** However, as it is written: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”— the things God has prepared for those who love him—

2-2, To whom did Paul give a message of wisdom? (6)

***We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.***

* Paul teaches us that God’s wisdom is different from that of worldly wisdom. When we have God’s wisdom, we grow in spiritual maturity.
* If we need to know something nowadays, you can simply “Google” it on our smartphones. The wisdom of this world brought much progress to human life.
* But no matter how advanced the wisdom of this age may be, it cannot lead us to God, because we need God’s wisdom to know him and his will.

2-3, How is God’s wisdom different from the world’s? (7)

***7 No, we declare God’s wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.***

* His wisdom or his salvation plan through his Son Jesus Christ was hidden plainly in the Old Testament, beginning from Genesis 3:15.
* God had a plan to send his Son as the Savior of the world. Jesus would crush Satan’s head through his cross and resurrection.
* However, none of the rulers of the age, including the Jewish leaders, understood or accepted this wisdom of God. It was hidden from them.
* All the wisdom that the world boasts about, it could not fathom even the simplest of Godly wisdom. His wisdom will only rescue the sinful race from inevitable eternal condemnation.

2-4, What did the rulers of this age do to Jesus when they didn’t understand the message of God’s wisdom? (8)

***8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.***

* Pontius Pilate was an expert in law and politics, but he had the Lord of glory crucified, because he didn’t understand God’s secret wisdom.
* Why did God hide His wisdom? It was to give it to only the people whom he loved. He did not want to throw pearls to pigs who would trample on it.

2-5, To whom does God reveal this wisdom? (9)

***However, as it is written: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”—the things God has prepared for those who love him—***

* When we open our hearts to God, he reveals to us his wisdom by his Spirit. The Spirit moves our hearts to love and accept Jesus in our hearts.
* This verse might have been intended to comfort those who were going through trials, persecution, and sufferings due to their love for Jesus.

1. Read verses 10-16. What does the Spirit of God do? (10-11) How can we understand what God has freely given us? (12) Who can discern and explain spiritual things? (13, 14) What privileges does the spiritual man have? (15-16)

3-1, Read verses 10-16.

these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. **11** For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. **12** What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. **13** This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. **14** The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. **15** The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, **16** for, “Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

3-2, What does the Spirit of God do? (10-11)

***these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 11 For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.***

* Just as in many things, we understand each other because we have a human spirit that shares the same human experiences and culture, which help us understand the world we all live in, so also by the Spirit of God who lives in us, we ***understand spiritual things*** which God has shared with us. And indeed they are glorious things that God reveals to his beloved children.
* God’s Spirit is our spiritual search engine. Instead of “Googling” on the internet, we pray and ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit.
* Only through the Holy Spirit can we understand God’s heart. The word of God is the truth of the Spirit. When we get into His living words, we can see God’s heart.

3-3, How can we understand what God has freely given us? (12)

***12 What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.***

* God created us a spiritual being as well as a physical being. Man = body + spirit. We also learn that there is a spiritual world and there is a physical world. \*
* Unfortunately when man sinned, both man’s body and spirit died. Man came under the rule of Satan—the spirit of the world.
* That’s why Jesus had to come to baptize us with the Holy Spirit. Paul reminds us that we believers received the Spirit who is from God.
* We have to know the difference between life with the Spirit of God and life without the Spirit of God.
* So what was the problem among the Corinthian believers? The problem was that they thought they had a lot of wisdom. They were proud of their own knowledge.
* They were eloquent speakers and great debaters. In their pride, they began to quarrel among themselves. The message of the cross was set aside.
* In this situation, they could not live a life with the Spirit. The Holy Spirit could not work among them, because they would not open their hearts to God’s words.
* We often times mistreat or take for granted the indwelling Spirit within us, putting him in a corner somewhere, and ignoring him.
* Our life does not show that we are filled with the Spirit. We must repent of our sins and turn our hearts to God in order to be filled with the Spirit.

Luke 11:13 reads,

“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

* We should realize that there is a big difference between a life led by the Spirit of God and one that is led by human wisdom.
* Consider, for example, the life of King Saul in the Old Testament (1Sa 9). At first, Saul was humble. He had the Spirit of God and he was very powerful.
* The Spirit of God enabled him to conquer his enemies and establish the kingdom of Israel. However, a short time later, he became proud before God.
* Saul disobeyed God’s servant Samuel and God’s words. When he relied on his human wisdom instead of God’s command, something terrible happened to him.
* The Spirit of God left him (1Sa 13). His life became miserable from that point on. He suffered from the torment of evil spirits. He lost his kingship, his family and finally, and he lost his life in disgrace.
* We learn that to be led by the Spirit of God, we must humbly obey the word of God.

3-4, Who can discern and explain spiritual things? (13, 14)

***This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. 14 The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.***

* The man controlled by the spirit of this world rejects spiritual things as foolishness. They are blind to the spiritual reality.
* On the other hand, the man led by the Spirit of God has the privilege of understanding and accepting the secrets of God.
* It is like he has a radio that is tuned to a correct station; he can hear a powerful sermon or listen to beautiful music.
* But the person who has no radio receiver or who has incorrect tuning cannot hear the sermon or the music. All they can hear is noise. They are lackig in spiritual discernment.

3-5, What privileges does the spiritual man have? (15-16)

***The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments,***

* Spiritual persons can make good decisions with the help of the Holy Spirit. Some people in the Corinthian church tried to judge Paul, as they were quarreling with one another.
* We are told that Paul was a short man who was not handsome. His writings were excellent, but he wasn’t an eloquent speaker.
* So they judged him based on his human qualities. But Paul says that he wasn’t bound by their judgment.
* He had spiritual eyes to see through their problems. He was free in Christ.

***16 for, “Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.***

* When the Spirit is with us, we can think like Jesus. We can have compassion like Jesus, and we can love like Jesus.

Philippians 2:5-7 reads,

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”

* The mind of Christ is a humble mind. The mind of Christ stems from God’s sacrificial love.
* On the contrary, some Corinthian believers were proud. They were self-righteous. They caused divisions in the church by forming their own groups rather than humbly praying and working together.
* Paul told them to know the mind of Christ by submitting to the Spirit.

**Conclusion**

We learn how important it is for us to be led by the Spirit of God. There are many intellectual people saying wise things. They are persuasive. The problem is that their wisdom cannot save us from sin and death. We need God’s wisdom, being taught by the Spirit. May God help us to believe and preach the message of Christ crucified with absolute faith! May the Spirit demonstrate his power in the lives of ***young people***! “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.” **One word: Demonstrate the Spirit’s power!**