

WORD OF THE CROSS ONLY

For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified..and my speech and preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (1 Cor. 2:2,4-5) . In 1 Cor. 1:18, Paul called what he preached the word of the cross. Let's learn what is meant by "word of the cross" and "determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Note in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, when Paul told what he preached to them, that included the resurrection of Jesus as well as Jesus being seen by others after Jesus' resurrection. So this lets us know the "word of the cross" includes more than just sticking to the topic of the cross itself. In 1 Cor. 2:12-13, Paul talked about speaking the things freely given to us by God, which is more than just specifically the cross itself. So get ready for the next paragraph; it can change your life to know what is meant by "word of the cross" and living your life by it.

"The word of the cross," preaching only Christ and Him crucified means: telling who Jesus is, His life, death by crucifixion, His resurrection, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, His exaltation to the right hand of the Father, the Gentiles can now be children of God by faith, and all the Godly, spiritual ramifications of all of this like sins purged, made righteous by faith, made new creations, being able to be led by the Spirit, and "much more". Plus, "word of the cross" does not include worldly wisdom like psychology, sociology, and any form that worldly wisdom takes on. Worldly wisdom is not needed as we will see as we press on in this study.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:17 through 2:5. Now let's focus on verse 1:17. Paul makes the point that he was sent to preach the gospel, not with worldly wisdom words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. Worldly wisdom words are not needed especially since inserting them into the message zeros out the cross! Watch out for worldly wisdom words entering your vocabulary...disorder instead of normal rambunctious boy, dysfunctional instead of sin, recovery instead of repentance. Worldly wisdom words can be like leaven and leaven the whole lump. Paul was vehemently against anything that tried to nullify the cross. Recall in Gal. 5:2 Paul mentioned that if you believed the teaching that you need to be circumcised to be saved, Christ would

profit you nothing. Strong words. In Gal. 1:9 he even said let those be accursed who would preach a different gospel. So we need to take seriously and avoid anything that would nullify the cross. It is very peaceful to not use trendy worldly wisdom words. They are not needed. It is only Jesus that is needed. Worldly wisdom disagrees with the word, so is not needed. The only way it could be needed if it agreed with the word, but that still means it is not needed, since you have the word to begin with.

The word of the cross (as seen in 1 Cor. 1:18-21) is so powerful when spoken with the fragrance of Christ in the Spirit; they are words of spirit and life that save and bring abiding salvation...they are words you can base the rest of your daily life on. The word of the cross brings to nothing worldly wisdom words...the worldly wisdom words stop being a basis for your life and the people that use them stop influencing your life and you stop speaking worldly wisdom words... now that is the word of the cross bringing to nothing the wisdom of the world...no influence!

The goal of worldly wisdom, the wisdom of man is for you not to know God: its means is the teaching of worldly wisdom. The goal of God is for you to be saved: its means is to preach the word of the cross only (see 1 Cor. 1:21).

Much of what is called culture wars is: worldly wisdom with its keeping people in their lost condition and its cross nullifying effect (1 Cor. 1:17) **versus** word of the cross only with its saving effect and bringing to nothing the wisdom of the world (1 Cor. 1:19). This is why you see so much emphasis on the world trying to shut Christians up. The word of the cross and wisdom of the world are great rivals. God's word of the cross overcomes. The word tries to be silenced by those that are brought to nothing, overcome by it. I recall reading, several years ago a word of the cross, Holy Spirit emphasis ministry to the drug and alcohol addicted was experiencing a recover rate in the high 70 percent range and costing \$25 per person per day. The state counterpart was experiencing single digit recovery rates and costing over \$300 per person per day. The state at first tried to shut down the exceedingly successful, exceedingly inexpensive program because they did not have licensed worldly wisdom on the staff. The governor stepped in and stopped the attempted closing by allowing faith based programs to continue operating.

Christ alone and his ongoing work is all we need. Colossians 2:3 tells us that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 2 Peter 1:3-4 tells us that God has given us all things that pertain to life and Godliness which is by knowledge of Jesus, God's promises and by believing them we partake of divine nature. There is no higher life or higher way of life than that! It is all anyone should desire.

In 1 Cor. 1:22-31 we see that fleshly things like worldly wisdom, slick worldly talk, physical strength, worldly power, or noble birth are no grounds to glory before God. What gets one in right standing with God is faith in the word of the cross. God then redeems you, makes you wise, makes you righteous in His sight, and sanctifies you...these are all world overcoming things as gifts of God due to faith in the word of the cross only.

Many put pressure on themselves and can be overcome by thinking they have to use slick worldly wisdom talk to tell others about Jesus and defend their faith. That would be trying to fight flesh with flesh...grounds for being overcome due to God and His power being left out. It can be like 2 Tim. 3:5, having the form of godliness, but denying its power. In 1 Cor. 2:1-5, we see that Paul avoided worldly talk and stuck exclusively to the word of the cross and its ramifications. Paul spoke unctuated by the Spirit of God...the result demonstration of the Spirit and power. People could put their faith not in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. When you stick to the word of the cross, bring nothing else in, speaking at the Spirit's leading there will be demonstration of the Spirit and power.

It is good to speak words given to you by God through His Spirit's leading, because when they are spoken in the Spirit there will be demonstration of power by hearts being touched. And there will be much assurance so that it can be said that God is truly among you so that people can base their faith not in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Determine to stick with Jesus and what He did for us in words and thought life...it is all you need...so peaceful, so powerful.

In 1 Cor. 2:3-4 we see that Paul was in weakness, fear, and trembling, yet not so much that it shut out him hearing from the Spirit of God leading him in what to speak and him speaking it. The result was demonstration of the Spirit and power. People based their faith in the power of God, not worldly wisdom. Try to make something that is not

lord to be lord and you are in for a splat. Worldly wisdom is not lord. To rely on it is certain for being overcome. When challenges come up, it is like having a cell phone on ready to hear from the Holy Spirit. If fear and trembling comes on you, then you do not want to turn off the phone. You answer its ring and speak what told. There will be demonstration of the Spirit and power.

So remember when you read “word of the cross” or “I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” know that it is talking about Jesus pre-existence with God as the Word of God, Jesus becoming flesh, living the sinless life, being the ultimate sacrifice, bearing our sins, overcoming death and the grave, being raised to the right hand of the Father, pouring out the Holy Spirit to indwell, baptize, anoint, seal, fill, guide, lead, teach us, to produce the fruit of love, joy, peace, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self control in us. By faith in the word of the cross it makes us the righteousness of God by faith, eternally redeems us, perfects love in us, gives us all things that pertain to life and Godliness, gives us promises to enable us to partake of divine nature, purges our sins, forgives us, gives us true grounds for confidence, by His stripes he healed us, He bore all that could restrain us from living for righteousness, for serving the living God and “much more.” This is why we need word of the cross only, not Jesus plus worldly wisdom.