

Sermon Reflections

The Foolishness of God as Seen in the Messenger of the Gospel (I Corinthians 2:1-5)

Guest Teacher: Jim Dowdy, former Pastor-Teacher and GBC Co-Laborer

Summary: Proclaim the crucified Christ. God will mercifully save and transform sinners through His own power, in spite of your weakness.

1. Preach the Gospel (vv. 1-2)

- We learn in I Cor 1:21 that we are to preach, and we learn in 2:1 what we are to preach (the “testimony of God”). What is the testimony of God? How can you ensure that the crucified Christ (v. 2) remains the focus of your preaching? Does every sermon/lesson need to focus exclusively on the cross?
- Paul further explains how (not) to preach, indicating that his preaching was not “with lofty speech or wisdom.” What are the risks of using lofty speech or human wisdom when preaching? Do you ever find yourself seeking to please your listeners when preaching or teaching the gospel? How can you ensure that you do not seek to entertain or relativize the message?

2. The Weakness of the Preacher (v. 3)

- Paul experienced “weakness,” “fear,” and “much trembling” when he was with the Corinthians. Do you ever experience these characteristics in your ministry? Do these discourage you? It is God’s DESIGN that His gospel is made known through weak messengers. Rest knowing that the power of the cross shines brilliantly through your weakness.

3. Avoid Manipulation – Seek Spirit-Transformed Lives (vv. 4-5)

- Can you think of any examples of “plausible words of wisdom” or manipulative tactics used by preachers today that actually should be avoided? Do you ever seek to make your teaching sound more humanly plausible?
- Instead, what does it look like to demonstrate the Spirit and power of the gospel message? Are there any ways in which you need to adjust your methods so that you do not manipulate your hearers?
- Paul sought faith that rests in the power of God rather than the wisdom of men. What are some ways to know that someone’s faith is resting in God’s power and not man’s wisdom? While preaching, do you faithfully rely on the power of God to work in the hearts of those listening?