

Exegetical Notes – 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

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Introduction: Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 that Christians should boast only in the Lord. The Church must not think as does the world. The Church must not put its faith in people. The Church must boast only in Christ and what God is doing through Christ in their midst. If they focus on Christ and Christ alone and boast only in Him, the members of the congregation will be united and the divisions among them will resolve. In 1 Corinthians 2:1-16, Paul says that this was the example he set for them from the beginning.

1 Corinthians 2:1-16

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.

- When Paul came to the Corinthians, he did not seek to be eloquent or wise according to the standards of the world. He simply wanted to tell them about Jesus. Personally, he was worried that they would reject his message and that he would be unable to convince them that Jesus Christ died to save them.
- But his unimpressive presentation became a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit of God. God moved through him and in spite of him and the Corinthians believed in Jesus Christ.
- They were not saved by human wisdom, but by the power of God.

Verses 6-10a

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. 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—***

¹⁰ these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

- There is wisdom in the simple message of the cross. But it is a wisdom known only to those who believe. The wise and powerful in the world cannot see the truth in the message of the cross. To them, it is just foolishness. If they had understood God's plan, they would have accepted Jesus and not crucified him.
- Paul quotes Isaiah 64:14. His point is that God's ways often do not make sense to the minds of men. But the truth of God and of God's word is revealed to those who follow Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

Verses 10b-12

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.

- The Holy Spirit leads Christians into truth. The Holy Spirit shows us the deep things God has revealed to us through His word. It is impossible to understand God and/or God's word apart from the Holy Spirit.
- As the secret thoughts of a man are known only to that person, so the thoughts of God are known only to the Holy Spirit.
- So, the Scripture cannot be understood if we think like the world. It can only be understood through the wisdom the Holy Spirit brings. However, in the power of the Holy Spirit we can freely understand the gift of God that is ours through Jesus Christ.

Verses 13-16

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.

- Paul speaks words that come from the Holy Spirit of God. Those words explain “spiritual realities” which can only be understood by those who believe in Jesus.
- To those who do not know Jesus these great spiritual truths seem like foolish talk and cannot be understood. That is because these great truths can only be understood by those who listen to the Holy Spirit of God.
- The person who is listening to the Holy Spirit makes correct assessments about all things because he listens to the Holy Spirit. He is not subject to the judgments of the people of the world because their thinking is of the world. They do not understand the mind of God because no one can understand the mind of God except through the Holy Spirit.
- Those who are in Jesus, have the mind of Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we who are in Christ, must reject any “wisdom” that does not find its basis in the word of the Lord.

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