

Which Person?

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Bible Text: 2 Corinthians 11:1-4

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2 Corinthians and the 11th chapter. And I am just going to read the first four verses. Paul writes:

Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.¹

I believe, without a doubt, that salvation is in a person. It is in the Savior. And I confess the same thing that is said of Simeon, it says in Luke two: "Then took he him up in his arms."² When Mary and Joseph brought the child to the temple this old man Simeon took the child up in his arms and blessed God and said:

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.³

But my title this morning, my message is this. Which person? Which person?

Most in modern day Christianity would be quick to respond by saying, "Jesus."

And to that I would have another question. "Which Jesus?"

And I have a fear, like the one that the apostle Paul speaks of here, a fear concerning the deceptions of our day and he as well as myself saw a need to distinguish things. Which person?

Well it is obvious that this name that is so often used in our day by so many is a different person to different people. Isn't that right? This name, spoken to men and women is a

¹ 2 Corinthians 11:1-4

² Luke 2:28

³ Luke 2:29-30

different person to each and every one that hears it. But we are not talking about some mystical Jesus. And we cannot use the name and then let each individual believe what they will about the one that comes to their mind. Everybody has got a Jesus from their traditions. They have got a Jesus from a few pointed out places in the Bible. They have got a Jesus from their family environment. They have got a Jesus from all the various preachers that they have heard and so we cannot simply use that name and leave it to each one to believe what they will about Christ.

It is eternally dangerous to do that. And it would be like you having a deadly disease which only one doctor could cure and me saying to you, “You need to go see Dr. Jones here in the US.”

How many Dr. Jones or Dr. Smiths do you think there are in the United States of America? Where would you begin? What if you got to every one of them and still missed the only one that had the cure for your disease?

Paul says here—and every true gospel preacher knows this in their experience, feels this in their heart. He says, “I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy.”⁴ Look at verse two. “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband.”⁵ Do you see that? “I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”⁶ Just to one husband, the Lord Jesus Christ. And Paul’s desire and goal was to present Christ to them in truth that he might present them to Christ in truth.

It wasn’t a game. It wasn’t a general feeling about everything. It wasn’t an out and out one size fits all. And if you notice here in verse three he says, “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve...”⁷ He didn’t come right up to Eve and say, “I am the devil. If you believe me you are going to die and you obey what I say. You are not going to obey what God says.” He beguiled her. He tricked her. He deceived her. And it says “through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ [Jesus].”⁸

The serpent beguiled Eve by telling her that God did not really mean what he said. And he cast doubt on God’s Word and truth. And when Paul says that he fears for these he writes to, these believers, professing believers anyway, he said he feared lest they be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

I have sometimes heard people use that word “simplicity” there to almost express that it is not needful to know or understand hardly anything about the Lord Jesus Christ. But what that word “simplicity” means is singleness. He says, “I fear lest the devil deceive

⁴ 2 Corinthians 11:2

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ 2 Corinthians 11:3

⁸ Ibid.

you by his subtilty, like he did Eve and corrupt you from the singleness or the oneness of the Lord Jesus Christ.” There is not but one Christ.

Paul says, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,”⁹ not a man, not simply a man. He said, “the man.” That is what I want us to be concerned with, the singleness that is in Christ, the mediatorial work of that one man, the man Christ Jesus.

Now I want you to think about this. When Simeon looked at that baby what did he see? What did he see? I mean it is not a...this is not rocket scientist. When he looked at that baby that he held in his arm what did he see? What could be seen by the natural eye except a baby? There wasn't any halo around him. There wasn't any glow about him. And the only way that he could ever know who this baby was, was for the Spirit of God to have born witness to who this child was. But that would not have meant anything to Simon had he not known something of the Scriptures.

Suppose he didn't know anything about the Scriptures. Somebody said, “That's the Christ.”

“What are you talking about? And more especially how do you know that?”

He looked down at this person, a living person. And he saw in him—because the Spirit of God revealed it to him—he saw in him that he is God's salvation, that he is God's Christ. But he couldn't have had he not had some knowledge of the Scriptures, of the Old Testament Scriptures that spoke of Christ. And the Spirit of God revealed to him that this one is that one.

Do you see what I am saying?

The person that he saw and of whom he said these words, the person that he saw, he saw by faith. He saw by faith the Jesus of holy Scripture. And he quoted an Old Testament passage and he connected this Jesus to that prophecy. It was the sight of faith.

And in salvation we do not simply see a person as such. We see by faith this person as he is sent forth in the Word of God.

Listen to what the apostle says in Hebrews 11. He says, “Now faith...”¹⁰ There is no salvation apart from faith in Christ. But he says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”¹¹ Is that right?

Somebody says, “You show me and I will believe.” That is not faith. There was a sense in which Simeon saw that person, saw that baby. There was a sense in which he saw him and it wasn't faith. But he saw him by faith. He had an evidence of that which was not

⁹ 1 Timothy 2:5

¹⁰ Hebrews 11:1

¹¹ Ibid.

seen. He believed because of God's Spirit. He believed that Word and testimony of God concerning the Christ that it was this person that he spoke about.

"Faith," Paul says, "cometh by hearing... hearing by the word of God."¹²

He could no more believe what he had not seen any more than you and I could if we were holding that Christ child apart from this work of God revealing who he is by the Word of God.

I like what Peter says, same thing. 1 Peter one and verse eight. He speaks of him, "Whom having not seen, ye love."¹³

You mean to tell me that Christ can be loved by some who have not seen him, that have not seen him according to the flesh. He says, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."¹⁴ You have not seen him. You have not touched him. You don't know what he looks like after the flesh and neither does anybody else in our day and though you have not seen him you love him. How do you love him? Believing? Do you just believe that he is?

The devil's believe that.¹⁵

Do you just believe a few generalized things about him as far as a historical record is concerned? He said, "Believing," and that believing is a believing of the Word of the truth of the gospel because you cannot separate the living Word from the written Word.

Listen to Paul in chapter four. He said, "While we look not at the things which are seen..."¹⁶ If you can see it with your natural eye, that is not what the kingdom of Christ is about. He says, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."¹⁷ You can't see eternal things with the natural eye. The things that are not seen, the things that the Lord's people are enabled to see by the eye of God given faith, those things are eternal and lasting.

Christ himself in John 20 says this to Thomas. He said, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are they that have not seen. They have not looked me in the eye—flesh-to-flesh—like you have, Thomas. But you looked at me eyeball to eyeball prior to this and you didn't believe, but now you believe. But it is not because you have seen me. And blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."¹⁸

¹² Romans 10:17

¹³ 1 Peter 1:8

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ See James 2:19

¹⁶ 2 Corinthians 4:18

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ See John 20:29

And then Paul shows the danger in verse four. He says, “For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus...”¹⁹ That is what he is getting at, another Jesus. Does that mean that there are those who preach, who believe in, that there are religions under the big banner of Christianity that actually preach, believe another Jesus? Absolutely. Absolutely.

One of the first things that Peter—after the resurrection of Jesus Christ—one of the first things that he stated was this. He said, “Neither is there salvation in any other...”²⁰ He could have just blended in. He could have just preached this generic god. But he said, “Everything that has been done in this miraculous way, this one that we are preaching.” He is not just simply some generic god where he could have said on this occasion, “Jehovah, God’s servant,” or something like that and blended in with those religious Jews. But he said, “No. It is Jesus of Nazareth and there is salvation in no other.” And, “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”²¹ No other.

He got in trouble for that. But that is the way it is.

One name, one salvation, one Christ who says in John 14, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”²²

I hear people say, “Well, I...I have got a little truth,” or someone who has got a little truth. If you don’t have Christ you don’t have any truth. You don’t have any life. You don’t know the way. And yet he himself sets forth as the way of distinguishing him some things that are absolutely essential. Paul says this, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”²³ Just one Christ, one salvation, one Mediator, one Priest, one righteousness, one King, one Son of God, one Savior, one salvation, one righteousness.

Turn back over to Galatians and the first chapter and listen to Paul here in Galatians one. In verse six he writes to these Galatians and he says, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.”²⁴ Another gospel is another Jesus. He says:

Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

¹⁹ 2 Corinthians 11:4

²⁰ Acts 4:12

²¹ Ibid.

²² John 14:6

²³ 1 Corinthians 3:11

²⁴ Galatians 1:6

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.²⁵

The one I am preaching. He said, "If I or anybody else comes along and preaches any other Christ, any other gospel, let him be accursed." He said, "I include myself in that. If I go off the deep end somewhere and stray out into something wild or it proves out that I am a false apostle, nevertheless, what I have said, what I have preached concerning this Jesus of Nazareth, that is the gospel. Let every person who departs from it be accursed."

You see, it actually comes down to this and I have thought about this a lot this week. Salvation is not really in a person. Salvation is in the person. That is the difference. It is in the person. It is in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in that one whose name is so often counterfeited and spoken and used irreverently, the subject of bumper stickers and all kinds of stupid stuff. But it is not in the one they speak of. It is in him.

And yet unlike Simon, in this world most likely we will not see Jesus in the flesh face to face.

Now that being the case you show me how to know this person without a description of this person.

Well I say "I want you to...I'd like for you to get to know my friend Joe. Joe could help you. Joe...it would do you good if you knew Joe. You really ought to believe on Joe. Joe is a real person." Then I turn and walk away. You have never seen him. You don't know him. How in the world could you ever love him, depend on him, be a friend to him, be rescued by him or anything else? There is no way.

So how are we to distinguish the person from the impersonators? Three things. I am going to give them to you pretty fast.

Number one. It has to be by a clear declaration of who he is. Who are we talking about? First of all, I want you to look back in Romans 10. Just turn back to Romans chapter 10 and look down in Romans 10 at verse 13. Paul says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."²⁶

Did you know that that has been reduced in our day to nothing more than uttering the word, the name of Jesus?

"I called on Jesus name. The preacher said I am saved now."

²⁵ Galatians 1:7-12

²⁶ Romans 10:13

Well, to start with, to call upon the name of the Lord means—according to all that I find in the Old Testament—it means to approach him and worship him in that one way that he has appointed through that one sacrifice of blood that he ordained before the world began as the one way of righteousness, the one way of our being accepted by him.

You go back in the Old Testament and it says that Abraham built an altar. What did he do? And he called upon the name of the Lord there. You see another one. He came to this place. He built an altar and it says he called upon the name of the Lord. He didn't just utter a name. The name Jesus he didn't even know about. But he sought to stand before God. He sought to be accepted by God. He sought to be righteous in the sight of God, in that one that God had told him he would send, that one who would be that one that brings in everlasting righteousness. He looked on Christ. That is what he is talking about here.

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”²⁷ But now listen to what he says next. You never hear this part.

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!²⁸

I remember hearing brother Mahan say one time, “You can't believe on one of whom you have never heard anymore than you can come back from where you have never been.” And that is the truth. You have never seen Jesus. I have never seen Jesus. How do we know now which one is the real Jesus? How do we know which person?

First of all, by this clear declaration of who he is. I like what an old preacher, probably more than one I'm sure, but an old preacher referred to him as, “that unique person.” He is not just a person. He is that unique person. What does that mean? One of a kind, never been another like him, never will be another like him. And when he is preached as this unique person, distinguished in who he is as this person, he is found to be completely different from just a person. He is the Son of God.

He is really man and he is really God.

I read recently where someone was charging another or a group of individuals as being Gnostics. When I read it I thought, “I don't know much about Gnosticism, but this guy knows less than I do, evidently.” But I know this. The chief thing about gnosticism is this: a denial of the deity of Christ. No, he is Emmanuel. And he didn't leave us to try to figure out what that meant. He said, “Which being interpreted is, God with us.”²⁹

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Romans 10:14-15

²⁹ Matthew 1:23

The Word that John says in John one that was with God and was God, he said, “That word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”³⁰

It is not enough to say that he was a good man or a great man. He is the God man and nothing else.

“Great,” Paul says, “is that mystery of godliness, that God was manifest in the flesh.”³¹

That is something that has to be maintained. It has to be declared. He has to be distinguished as this eternal Son of God because the deity of Christ infinitely exalted and secured and made sure the success of the work of Christ. He could do what he did because of who he is and because only God can satisfy God. That is just the way it is. God will never accept anything that he doesn’t give. Nothing can ever go to God but what comes from God and every attribute of God.

If you read the New Testament, if you read the gospel, if you read the epistles you will find the attributes that belong to God of very God as being attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ. Omniscient: he didn’t have to hear what a man said, he knew what was in the heart of man. He had the power not simply to heal, but to raise back from the dead. It is attributed to him that he is the Creator of all things. “All things were made by him,”³² and for him. Not only that. It has to be said again and again that he was absolutely sinless, perfect. He, that one who was made sin for us is the one who was made sin, but who knew no sin. He knew no sin.³³

When he is hanging there on that cross, we could have been standing there looking at him, I mean watching him, listening to every word. Will he at some time, some way actually become a sinner? No. Because right until he draws his last breath he is speaking words that show his blessed sinlessness. He is not railing on God. He is not casting against his enemies at the foot of that cross. He is saying, “Father, forgive them.”³⁴ He knew no sin.

And he is the one who is described as, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.”³⁵ He was never polluted in any way because the Lamb of God had to be the one typified by all those Passover lambs. He had to be the Lamb without blemish and without spot. He is the one who was tempted as we are in all points, yet with out sin. He has to be distinguished by a clear declaration of who he is. And whatever it is—now listen—whatever it is in our day that men seize upon and set up in opposition to the true Christ, whatever about him is set up in opposition to the truth about him, that is what we have to distinguish.

³⁰ See John 1:14

³¹ See 1 Timothy 3:16

³² John 1:3

³³ See 2 Corinthians 5:21

³⁴ Luke 23:34

³⁵ Hebrews 7:26

And then the second thing is this. There has to be a clear declaration of what he has done. You see, that is really how men find out who the real Jesus is, which person it is, by that which he has done.

Now you look back here in this chapter we are looking at, Romans 10. Look back at Romans 10 and look back at the fifth verse, Romans 10. “For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith...”³⁶ This is totally different from that which is called the righteousness of the law.

But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt ...the Lord Jesus...thou shalt be saved.³⁷

Is that all that is there? No. I said in our day it has been almost reduced to that. No, it says, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead...”³⁸ That’s not just something...that is not just a person. That is something about a person that God hath raised him from the dead which literally means something like this, that God accepted on the behalf of those who believe all of Christ’s work, his sacrifice and showed his pleasure in receiving it by raising him from the dead.

Somebody said, “Just believe on Jesus.”

You just do and you will perish because you will never know the right one except there be a clear distinction and declaration of what he has done.

He says, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”³⁹

We don’t just believe in Jesus. We just don’t even believe that he is man and God at the same time, that he is God manifest in the flesh, that he lived a sinless life. If that is all he did we would still be lost. No, we believe something about him. We believe something about him.

I said to some of you fellows this morning—I won’t say who—but if I said concerning you I could say, “Well, his name is so and so and he is the skinniest little rail and knot of a fellow you have ever seen.” I wouldn’t be telling the truth about you or me either one. You see, we can only distinguish this person not only by who he is, but by what he did.

³⁶ Romans 10:5-6

³⁷ Romans 10:6-9

³⁸ Romans 10:9

³⁹ Romans 10:10

Jesus said to some men, “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”⁴⁰ He didn’t say, “If you just don’t just believe on me...” He said, “If you don’t believe that I am he...”

What is he talking about? The Christ. The Messiah. The salvation of God. The Son of God. “If you don’t believe that I am he...” Actually, it is, “If you don’t believe that I am...if you don’t believe that I am God, if you don’t believe I am Jehovah come in the flesh you will die in your sins.”

And I know you know this verse. I have read it to you, quoted it to you, preached it to you so many times concerning what was said of Mary by the angel, what was concerning her son. “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS.”⁴¹ How many Jesus do you expect? I am talking about just the name naturally itself. How many children do you expect in Mexico and various places in the world where there have been somebody named Jesus? Jesus. Well, how would we know that this is the Christ?

“For he shall save his people from their sins.”⁴²

And, my friends, what I am saying to you this morning is any Jesus—I don’t care who calls him this—that does not, that has not saved all his people from their sins, he is the wrong person. He is just the wrong person. Paul said this. He said, “We preach Christ crucified.”⁴³ He said, “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”⁴⁴

You see, the Scriptures identify the true Christ by a specific, particular work of obedience. They identify him by the work that the father gave him to do. They identify him by a work of righteousness, the work he finished and the work by which all his people are saved. They distinguish him by an obedience which is an obedience unto death, even the death of the cross.⁴⁵

I will say this. His work is distinguished by what he came to do, by what he actually did and by the results of what he did. Now you want to find out the one, you look at this book and you find out what work that he came to do. “I came to do the will of him that sent me.”⁴⁶ Find out what he actually did and find out the results of what he did.

Do you realize that most people in what is called Christianity in our day that supposedly believe on Jesus, most of them believe that what Jesus did, the results of what Jesus did is left in the hands of fallen sinners, whether to make it effectual, whether to make it successful. What they are actually believing is that the results of Christ’s work didn’t

⁴⁰ John 8:24

⁴¹ Matthew 1:21

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ 1 Corinthians 1:23

⁴⁴ 1 Corinthians 2:2

⁴⁵ See Philippians 2:8

⁴⁶ See John 6:38

really do anything. How foolish. He came to do the Father's will which was to die that death as the substitute of God's elect and display the righteousness of a God as a just God and Savior in saving every one of them. He came to save them and he did. He came to redeem them and he did. Just as was said of him in the Old Testament, "When he comes, he shall not fail."⁴⁷ He came to be the one sacrifice for their sins forever. He came to purchase, to redeem the Church with his own blood. He came to lay down his life for the sheep. And a Savior whose work makes things possible or available is no Savior. And a Savior whose work is successful or effectual only to those who make it so by their decision or faith is no Savior. And a Savior whose work does not save every sinner that God desires to save is no Savior.

And then, quickly, here is the third thing. There has to be this clear declaration of who he is and a clear declaration of what it is he has done. And there has to be a clear revelation by the Spirit of God. Essential for anybody to know who he really is, for anybody to believe on him or to trust and to love this person, there must be an almighty work of grace and power in their hearts.

Well, let me just read you a few words out of Isaiah 53 concerning him.

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.⁴⁸

That is the reception of Christ by every son of Adam naturally, even God's elect because to our natural eyes, to our flesh, to our natural understanding there is nothing about him that would appeal to us, no beauty, no glory that we should desire him because we don't even see ourselves. The Holy Spirit must come to us, must come in us, indwell us, give us spiritual life, give us faith to see him and to believe. That is what our Lord said he would do. He said, "I will send the Comforter. I will send the Spirit of Truth and he will take the things of mine and show them to you."⁴⁹

I was thinking recently about a statement that I sometimes hear about powerful preaching. What powerful preaching? Is it loud preaching? Is it great oratory? Is it great illustrations? Is it dogmatic preaching? I think those things are what most people call powerful preaching. But let me tell you what powerful preaching is. Powerful preaching is the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ when it is taken by the Holy Spirit and powerfully used by him to reveal Christ in us. A man can stand and he may be a monotone. He may never raise or lower his voice. If he is speaking the truth in Christ. If he is declaring clearly who he is and what it is that he has done, if he is a man of ignorant background, no literate education, whatever it is, if the Spirit uses it to reveal Christ to one of his sheep, brother, that is powerful preaching. And a guy can blow and rare and

⁴⁷ See Isaiah 42:4

⁴⁸ Isaiah 53:2-3

⁴⁹ See John 15:26, John 14:26

be dogmatic and forceful and everything like that, but if God doesn't use it, it is like a bullet falling out in the end of a gun barrel and dropping to the ground.

“Not by our might, not by our power, but by my Spirit,” saith the Lord.⁵⁰ He is the great revealer. And we may preach the gospel clearly, but if he doesn't reveal it to us, then you will never see it. If Simeon had not had the Spirit of God reveal...how many children do you supposed were brought? That was the Jewish custom. How many children do you suppose were brought into that temple in a year's time that he held? How did he know that this was the one? The Spirit of God revealed to him, “This is him. This is him.”

He has to take the things of Christ and reveal them to us. And, as Paul said, reveal him in us. He has to come to our blindness and our deadness and our ignorance and our rebellion and reveal the Lord Jesus Christ. Like Christ said to Nicodemus, “We have to be born again.”⁵¹ That simply means we have to be birthed from above.

Paul said:

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed.⁵²

In this gospel is the righteousness of God revealed, that every sinner he saves, that every one of his elect that he chose and blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ before the world began, every sinner that Christ died for, every sinner that the Spirit of God calls, it reveals that God is right to do this because he has dealt with them in his Son. This is the righteousness of God.

Turn over to 1 Corinthians chapter two, 1 Corinthians chapter two. I have shown you this, but I hope you know this. I hope you understand this, but let me do it one more time. Paul said, “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.”⁵³ It wasn't that he couldn't do that, I don't think. It wasn't that he didn't have this ability, but those things are nothing when it comes to a man or a woman or a young person knowing Christ. He said, “I declared unto you the testimony of God.”

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:⁵⁴

⁵⁰ See Zechariah 4:6

⁵¹ See John 3:7

⁵² Romans 1:16-17

⁵³ 1 Corinthians 2:1

⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 2:2-4

Now, let me say this and I believe this is the truth. I believe that some people in our day who claim to love the gospel, if they had heard Paul preach they would be kind of disappointed. You see, if what you are looking for is how something is preached instead of what is preached you will always be disappointed. The gospel will never come to your ears, never come to your mind, never come to you as that which is good news. He said, "I was in weakness, fear."⁵⁵ He didn't exude confidence.

I have to say, when I stand up and preach I have been scared a lot in my life, but I have never been any more scared that I am then. I fear not to tell you just exactly what God says. He said, "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."⁵⁶ So what do you believe?

"Well, I believe what preacher so and so preaches."

"Well, what does preacher so and so preach?"

"Well, he preaches what I believe."

Don't believe what I say because I say it. If what I say is what God says, believe it. If it is not, don't believe it.

He said:

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:⁵⁷

"This isn't something new," Paul says, "It is that wisdom, that mystery," which simply means heretofore not clearly revealed, "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."⁵⁸

He said, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."⁵⁹

He didn't prepare it for them because they loved him. They now loved him and they found out that he prepared it for them. Just like it was said in Simeon's day, Isaiah's day and every day, "Eye hasn't seen this. Ear hasn't heard this. It's not even entered into the heart of man, this glorious good news."

⁵⁵ See 1 Corinthians 2:3

⁵⁶ 1 Corinthians 2:5

⁵⁷ 1 Corinthians 2:6-7

⁵⁸ 1 Corinthians 2:8

⁵⁹ 1 Corinthians 2:9

But Paul says these Corinthians, who I am sure were a rag tag lot coming from where they came from and out of the backgrounds they came from, he said, “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit...by his Spirit...”⁶⁰ Even so...No, he says, “For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?”⁶¹ I don’t really know what is in you. I don’t know really what you think. Probably if I knew exactly what you really thought about me I would run out that door. I don’t know.

He said, “Neither can you know the things of God save the Spirit of God reveal them.”⁶²

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know...”⁶³ I love this verse. We have received the Spirit of God that we might know... That has a two fold meaning. That we might know in the sense of having the knowledge of this and that we might know in the sense of loving what he has made known to us, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Now I hear preachers sometimes make fun of knowledge. Buddy, I want that knowledge. That’s the knowledge of the truth. That is the knowledge of Christ. That is God given knowledge. That is the knowledge that he gives through this Word and by which he reveals Christ and in Christ shows us the things that are freely given to us.

You are a bankrupt sinner. You need that. That will be good news to you if you find out something is freely given to you of God in Christ, a free salvation. Our Lord said to the fact that all these natural men receive not the things of God. They are foolish because they are spiritually discerned.⁶⁴ He said on one occasion when they did just that, exactly that, they showed and demonstrated they had no interest in it. He says:

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.⁶⁵

It must be this work of God’s Spirit. It must be this revelation.

On one occasion he looked at his disciples. He was speaking to these people in parables. And they said, “Why do you speak in parables?”⁶⁶

⁶⁰ 1 Corinthians 2:10

⁶¹ 1 Corinthians 2:10-11

⁶² See 1 Corinthians 2:14

⁶³ 1 Corinthians 2:12

⁶⁴ See 1 Corinthians 2:14

⁶⁵ Matthew 11:25

⁶⁶ See Matthew 13:10

“He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven... it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.”⁶⁷ They are left to think what they want to think, do what they want to do, believe what they want to believe, seek to stand before God in their unrighteousness, not given unto them. It is given to you.

When Peter confessed...when the Lord Jesus said, “Who do men say that I am?”⁶⁸

They said, “Well, they say that...some say you are Elijah, some say that you are one of the other prophets and such as that.”⁶⁹

He said, “But who do you say that I am? They say you are a person. Who do you say that I am?”⁷⁰

In so many words he said, “We say you are the person. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”⁷¹

And our Lord said, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”⁷²

That is what the new birth is about. It is a revelation from God, a revelation from heaven by the Spirit of God through the gospel as to who Jesus Christ is and what he has done for us.

You see in Luke two what we read about Simeon. It says, “And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.”⁷³ Until he had found out which person the Savior is. That is what I want us to know is which person and to look only to him, to plead his shed blood alone, to see in his person and work the righteousness of God. May God help us to believe.

Father, this day we give you praise and thanksgiving in glory and pray that you would take your Word and go forth in power taking your message to wherever and to whomever you will, blessing it to be used of your Spirit that men and women and young people might be brought to see thy salvation, to know which person and to believe on him. We thank you for your mercy to us and we pray and give to you all glory in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

⁶⁷ Matthew 13:11

⁶⁸ See Matthew 16:13, Mark 8:27

⁶⁹ See Matthew 16:14, Mark 8:28

⁷⁰ See Matthew 16:15, Mark 8:29

⁷¹ See Matthew 16:16, Mark 8:29

⁷² Matthew 16:17

⁷³ Luke 2:26