

1 Corinthians 2:1-5
The Reason For the "Foolishness" of Paul's Preaching

Pastor Eric Douma
May 16, 2010

<p>Content</p> <p>1:17... but to preach the gospel</p> <p>1:23 But we preach Christ crucified</p> <p>Form</p> <p>1:21...through the foolishness of the message</p> <p>1:17 ...not in cleverness of speech</p>	<p>Content</p> <p>2:1 ...proclaiming the testimony of God</p> <p>2:2 to know nothing except Christ...crucified</p> <p>Form</p> <p>2:3 ...in weakness and in fear and in much trembling</p> <p>2:4 ...not in persuasive words of wisdom</p> <p>2:5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.</p>
---	---

Boasting Only In The Lord's Power

1 Cor 1:30-31 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us freedom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, "Let him who boast, boast in the Lord."

2 Cor 2:1 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.

ka gw "In this case the conjunction suggests the closest possible tie to v. 31" (Gordon Fee, NICNT).

mar t u r i o n "testimony" Deut 6:19; 2 Thess 1:10

mu s t e r i o n "mystery"

By The Spirit and Power – Not Sophia

1 Cor 2:2-5 (For) determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

For = explanatory (vs 1) "the testimony of God"

Acts 18:5 But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

Paul's Weakness and Fear

1 Cor 2:2-5 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

1. Paul arrived in the condition of weakness and fear.

2. Paul manifested weakness and fear during the ongoing relationship.

1 Cor 16:10 Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid...

What Was Paul's Weakness?

Asqeneia = often denotes illness

Matt 25:43 I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.

A metaphorical meaning here would not comport with the rest of the evidence in the Corinthian correspondence. What precisely the "weakness" might have been, however, lies beyond our abilities to recapture. The word ἀσθενεία is the ordinary one for "illness." Since Paul had some time previously preached in Galatia as the result of an illness (Gal. 4:13-14), and since later to the Corinthians themselves he will speak of "carrying about in his body the death of Jesus" (2 Cor. 4:10) and of a long-lasting "thorn in his flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7) it is possible that there was a recurrence of such an illness while he was among them. (Gordon Fee, NICNT)

By The Spirit and Power – Not Sophia

1 Cor 2:2-5 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

λογισμῶν τῶν ἀνθρώπων “in words of wisdom” – Paul did not use what they respected – yet they were converted!
ἀποδείξει = (hapax legomenon) - In Greek rhetoric it was a technical term for a compelling conclusion drawn from the premises.

Spirit And Power

Romans 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit...

Hendiadys = two words expressing the same reality – 1 Cor 2:4 “...the Spirit, that is Power”

*The Corinthians’ very conversion was a demonstration of the Holy Spirit’s power because it is impossible to believe apart from His work!

The Corinthian Misunderstanding of The Spirit

For them “Spirit” meant the gift of tongues; it meant to have arrived in the “excellence of wisdom” (v. 1; cf. 4:8, 10), to have entered into a new existence that raised them above merely earthly existence, quite unrelated to genuine ethical behavior. For Paul, on the other hand, “Spirit” included inspired utterances—as long as they edified—but for him the emphasis lay on the Spirit’s power, power to transform lives (as here), to reveal God’s secret wisdom (2:6–16), to minister in weakness (4:9–13), and to effect holiness in the believing community (5:3–5). In other words, the purpose of the Spirit’s coming was not to transport one above the present age, but to empower one to live within it. (Fee, NICNT)

Regeneration: The Work of The Holy Spirit

John 3:3-8 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born can he?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God...The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

God's Promised New Covenant

Ezekiel 36:25-27 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from your filthiness and from your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

God Saves – Not Sophia

1 Cor 2:2-5 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

Summary

This paragraph has had an interesting history of application in the church, depending on where the emphasis has been placed. Some emphasize what Paul did not do, that is, preach with excellence of word and wisdom, and glory in a more rough-hewn presentation (which, interestingly enough, is often accompanied by a kind of bombast that seems intent on persuasion of a rhetorical kind, despite protests to the contrary). Others wish to emphasize the “positive,” the “proofs” of the Spirit’s power, which they see as in contrast to mere preaching. On the other hand, the polished oratory sometimes heard in American pulpits, where the sermon itself seems to be the goal of what is said, makes one wonder whether the text has been heard at all. Paul’s own point needs a fresh hearing. What he is rejecting is not preaching, not even persuasive preaching; rather, it is the real danger in all preaching—self-reliance. (Fee, NICNT)
