

Message for Sunday, February 8, 2026

Scripture 1 Corinthians 2: 1-16

Title: Conviction

Welcome

Announcements

Giving Options-online, in box in back, mail etc; Special Offering for February is Human Relations (same video to play); Ash Wednesday Service is at 5:30PM on February 8th. Book Club is on March 3 at 10:30AM; Hospitality help needed and Cookies needed for hospitality.

Fellowship of Love

Song

Call to Worship

L: Praise the Lord! Happy are those who delight in the Lord!

P: We come to this place, where generations before us have gathered.

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L: Here we remember the light of God that shines in our lives.

P: Here we allow God's light to shine through us.

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L: Let us worship our radiant God.

P: Praise the Lord! Happy are we who delight in the Lord!

Unison Prayer

Amazing God, you have gathered us from many places to come together and praise you this day.

For this we are grateful! As we worship today, may our minds be opened to learn your wisdom.

May our eyes be opened to places that need healing.

May our hands be opened to do your good work.

May our hearts be opened by your Holy Spirit, who gifts us and guides us.

In the name of Christ, we pray.

Amen.

Offering

Song

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:1-16 NRSVue

2 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the testimony of God to you with superior speech or wisdom.

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² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

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³ And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

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⁴ My speech and my proclamation were made not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

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⁵ so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

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⁶ Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are being destroyed.

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⁷ But we speak God's wisdom, a hidden mystery, which God decreed before the ages for our glory

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⁸ and which none of the rulers of this age understood, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

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⁹ But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"—

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¹⁰ God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

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¹¹ For what human knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also, no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God.

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¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

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¹³ And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

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¹⁴ Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

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¹⁵ Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.

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¹⁶ "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Message: Conviction

I have shared in the past that I got my undergraduate degree from the University of Valley Forge in Phoenixville Pa. This university is an Assembly of God based school, and it has provided many of the foundations for belief that I continue to utilize today. When I have spoken of this school I have often taken a more aggressive stance about some of its beliefs, the one that I level my sights on the most is its fundamentalist roots, but occasionally I'll speak about the belief in speaking in tongues and other gifts of the spirit that a Pentecostal school would focus on.

As is the case for many of us, I find that I tend to argue with those closest to me. Not because I disagree with their position as it is, but more often because of the nuance of that position. What I mean by this is that I'll argue with people who I agree with on 90% percent of things, but it's that 10% that will get me going. This is true of my educational growth in my undergraduate into my MDiv. An unfortunate by-product of this is that I don't talk about the good things as much as I should.

One of the great things about Pentecostalism is its desire to increase our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit and to realize where the Holy Spirit is at work. This is a much-neglected part of theology in mainline protestant circles, one that I am often guilty of as well. I will talk about God, I'll talk about Jesus, and then I'll make passing references to the Holy Spirit, when in our trinitarian belief it is an equal member of the trinity. Today's passage is not one that I'm going to overhaul our understanding of the Holy Spirit, but it is one that when we look at what Paul is doing here we can see that he is calling us to a different understanding of how God is at work in our world.

To make it clear, Paul is still dealing with the issue of Christians seeking worldly wisdom or applying worldly wisdom to the church. We have talked about this several times, and I talked quite strongly about it last week. Being that this is a letter we need to remember that Paul does not do a complete 180 and head to another subject. Instead, he is building on that issue to talk about his role in sharing the gospel and suggesting to us as believers what our role in sharing that gospel is.

Now I have to say there is some variety in understanding for this passage today. This variety doesn't change the meaning of the passage but it's something that I want to bring up because it is good for us to remember. There are some scholars who think that Paul is using sarcasm in this passage to talk to the Corinthian church. Now why do I think that's important. Well, the predominant reason is because being so far removed from scriptural times we have a tendency to miss the humor, sarcasm, or intent of a passage. I think it's good to keep that in mind because it reminds us that the authors were very real people dealing with very real issues.

Paul has stated to us that the way the world does things is wrong. Paul has then claimed that the way the church in Corinth is doing things is wrong. If both are wrong than why do we have to listen to Paul? This is what Paul is attempting to lay out to us. Not only is he laying this idea out to us he is also attempting to show us that as Christians the person who delivers the message of the gospel doesn't matter.

Remember one of the things that Corinthian wisdom chases after, and I would argue our society chases after, is that our faith must make sense. Paul says that his preaching contains no amount of rhetoric that could convince a person of faith in Christ. Now does Paul not use rhetoric? To claim Paul doesn't use rhetoric is not just wrong, and let's be honest it is stupid. Is Paul educated? Without a doubt. There is evidence of education and training in the book of Acts. This is the reason why some scholars are thinking he's using sarcasm. It's no different than me saying, well you should preach, I mean it's not like I trained for 5 years to be a preacher, or that I've done it for 19 years, or that I even studied more theology. Honestly I'm just an idiot I really don't know what I'm doing or why I'm doing it.

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I don't think Paul is only using sarcasm here. I think Paul is also pointing the church in Corinth to something that we are in desperate need to know. That is that ultimately who ever brings the message doesn't matter, it is the conviction of the Holy Spirit that matters. It is the Holy Spirit in your life that convicts you of what you need to hear. Do I think I am the best preacher in the world? Not at all, though I do pride myself on having more good days than bad ones. Yet ultimately it is not the words I speak to you today or any day that matter, it is what the Holy Spirit brings to life in you.

The reason I think we all need to hear this is for two reasons. First is because I think there is a misunderstanding of the role of the pastor in the church today. I am not the ultimate dispenser of truth. On the best days I am a conduit of conviction for the Holy Spirit. Not every message is for you, and not every message should be taken to heart. Secondly, when was the last time you shared your faith? You see most of us have a reaction to that and say, "I'm not an evangelist." I didn't ask you if you had training, I asked you if you shared your faith. There is a difference.

You see it is the Holy Spirit that brings people to God. If you have ever thought about sharing something about your faith, it is not up to you to be eloquent or to know exactly what to say. Or even if you say the right theological thing. The point of sharing your faith is to allow the Holy Spirit to work in someone else's life. I don't often harp on reaching out and sharing our faith, but I do think that is something that we all as believers are called to. And the way we are called to do it is by speaking like who we are and in the manner that we have been born to.

One of my largest frustrations of the church is the desire to shape everyone to be like us. To speak like us, to sound like us. But here, Paul encourages us to be agents of the Holy Spirit like he was. To be the method of conviction, not of sin, but of the gospel of Christ. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer/Lord's Prayer

Song

Benediction

Goodbye