

A Simply Crucial Message

1 Cor. 1:22-25

Overview

1. The Message is Sent Out
2. The Message of the Cross is Central
3. The Message is Simple
4. The Message is a Sword
5. The Message is Sufficient

I. The Message is Sent Out (v.17)

1. The Preacher (Paul)
 - A sage of great philosophical and religious wisdom.
 - An apostle of great spiritual power and miracles

His agenda: “to preach the gospel (v.17)” so that others can know the ultimate reality: God’s glory and love in Christ.

2. The Audience (v. 22)
 - Pharisees (“Jews”)

Their agenda: to know ultimate reality through searching the scriptures, studying prophecies, and seeking signs.

- Philosophers (“Greeks”)

Their agenda: to know ultimate reality through logical proof, human reason, experimentation, discussion and debate.

II. The Message is Central

“We preach Christ crucified.” (v.23)

1. What we mean: *Christ WAS* crucified
2. Why we start here
 - The cross is the only remedy for the sinful old nature and mind
 - You can’t skip steps. You can’t teach dead men to think like living ones

Why we keep coming back

- All recurring Corinthian problems stemmed from self and ego
- Worship begins with the death of self
- The church only works when we are dead to self

Rom. 6:11: “So you also must **consider** yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

III. The Message is Simple

1. One point: The old *you* must die
2. One provision: Christ died instead
3. One prescription

- Release (your mortal life and agenda)
- Receive (God's eternal life and agenda)

IV. The Message is a Sword (v.22-25)

1. To Pharisees: An Offense
2. To Philosophers: An Impossibility
3. To Saints: An Epiphany

Luke 8:18: "Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away."

What Pharisees Think: An Offense

- "The scribe," "Jews" (v.20)

A crucified Christ is **offensive!**

- Gk: *skandalon*, "scandal," snare, trip
1. It dishonors the beautiful figure of Messiah!
 2. It nullifies our pious works!
 3. It saves unworthy sinners!
 4. It's not necessary for decent people!
 5. It's a curse, not a blessing!
 6. It's not something God would ever do!
 7. It's not what we *expected* God to do!
 8. It's an oxymoron (Christ crucified)!
 9. It doesn't benefit our preexisting religious community (Israel).
 10. It's not high-minded doctrine worthy of the mind of God.

What Philosophers Think: Impossibility

- "The debater," "Greeks" (v.20)

A crucified Christ is **absurd!**

- Gk: *moros*—"moron," foolish
1. It's an event, not an argument for faith.
 2. It's a legend, not a real solution to society's problems.
 3. It demands human surrender, when the key is human progress.
 4. It offers death, not a path to happiness and justice and self-improvement.
 5. It's too black and white. Too exclusive.
 6. It's self-contradictory. (Die to live?)
 7. It's not that unique or special (many slaves were crucified).
 8. It's not fit for polite discourse (Cicero).
 9. It denies man's essential goodness.

What Saints Think: Epiphany

- “Those who are called,” “both Jews and Greeks” (v.24)

A crucified Christ is power and wisdom

Questions the Cross answers:

1. What can close the gap between God and me?
2. How did God deal with B.C. sins?
3. How can a loving God permit torture and evil without intervening?
4. Does God know how bad it really is down here? Does He even care?
5. Does God love me?
6. How can God love sinners and still be wrathful toward them?
7. Does God's mercy mean He lets sinners slide?
8. Does God have a plan to overthrow injustice?
9. What is God's action plan for overcoming death?

V. The Message is Sufficient

- Sufficient to convince the called
- Sufficient to save
- Sufficient for transform
- Sufficient to reveal (wisdom)
- Sufficient to humble
- Sufficient to unify

1 Cor. 2:2: “I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

Rom. 1:16-17: I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed . . .”

Rom. 10:13-14, 17: “For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? So, faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”