

*“I Determined to Know Nothing except Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified”*

*1 Cor 2:1-5*

*Celebrating the Centrality of Christ in the Local Assembly*

Although ministry expression is shaped by the diversity of personalities and cultures in which it is found, the core value or bottom line in ministry is always to be the same.

Paul provides for us the bottom line in ministry. Our present Evangelical culture has become intoxicated in its usage of current cultural methodology. Churches are often reflecting the current “fad” or “gimmick” as it relates to Church growth and ministry direction. I believe the first century Church was no less enticed by seductive voices calling out to abandon the straightforwardness of ministry for a more “fashionable” approach to reaching its current generation.

Paul notes four elements concerning the nature of ministry and the necessity for a Christ-centered focus.

I. Ministry must not be done in the power of the flesh (vv. 1, 4a)

This is a present danger. Pizzazz does not equal power, tinsel is not transformation, and bigness does not equal blessed. We have become plastic in our approach to Christianity and Christ. We can look good, but be nothing but white sepulchers.

As much as ministry and money appear to go hand in hand, there is something that is to drive ministry more intensely than money or methods and it is the content of the message preached.

True ministry results from the overflow of knowing nothing except Christ crucified.

This does not mean we do not endeavor to have a ministry expression that is excellent, efficient, and effective, but none of this is at the expense of Christ crucified. Nothing is to replace the simplicity of Christ crucified.

II. Ministry must be done in the simplicity of Christ crucified (v. 2)

The true strength and power of any ministry is its handling of God’s Word. Does this Word taught take precedence over all other areas of ministry? When an individual comes to WBC, what impression will we leave him with?

III. Ministry must be done with the weight of its importance (v. 3)

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Paul felt the burden of bringing the Word of God to people. This is no small task. The difficulty does not lie in the task itself, but in the weight of what is being brought. This is God's Word. Nothing else can compare or compete with it.

What we do on Sunday mornings in this gathered place is significant and carries with it weight. This is unlike anything else anywhere else. This is the assembly of the living God. We have come to hear from heaven and to worship God Almighty.

IV. Ministry done through Him is a demonstration of Him (v. 4b, 5).

Paul endeavored to keep the main thing, the main thing. When he came to the Corinthian audience he "Decided to know nothing among [them] except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (v. 2)." This is not to say Paul did not know anything else, but it is to say that everything else known, bowed before this centerpiece of truth.

The American Church has become a slave to the American culture. We have become religious consumers who shop around for the best financial deal that delivers the best returns on money invested, the most palatable tasting worship, and the most convenient self-serving ministry.

In all our areas of study, as important as they are, they are only spokes radiating from a primary hub and the hub is Jesus Christ. We can study Finances, Old Testament history, Leadership, The Pentateuch, Hosea, James, Last Things, The Usage of the Old Testament in the New, and a host of other topics, but in the midst of the study let us not lose sight of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." All studies are but streams flowing from His Spring. He is the reason why these other studies exist. So as you pursue Him through the systematic study of the Scripture, remember to keep the main thing, the main thing. Determine to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.