

RE-VIEW

Weekly Devotionals

"KEEP THE CROSS AS THE CENTER"

1 Corinthians 2:1-9

Situation

The Corinthian church was living in a city known for wealth, success, idolatry, and sexual sin. Paul had planted the church there several years earlier, but after he left, the values of the culture began to seep into the congregation. Instead of standing apart as God's people, they were struggling with division, pride, immorality, lawsuits, conflict, and a growing fascination with personalities and human wisdom.

Paul wrote to remind them of who they were. They were no longer simply people shaped by Corinth; **through faith in Jesus, they had become children of God.** The church was not called to mirror the world while adding religious language around it. Believers were called to live differently—to pursue holiness and to let the gospel reshape their priorities, relationships, and confidence.

In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul brings them back to the beginning. He reminds them how he first came to Corinth. He did not arrive trying to impress anyone with polished speeches, clever arguments, or personal charisma. He came with a simple, clear message: Jesus Christ crucified. Paul wanted their faith to rest on the power of God, not on the ability of a messenger.

That remains an important word for us. We live in a culture that is constantly asking for something newer, louder, more exciting, and more impressive. Sometimes that same pressure finds its way into the church. We can be tempted to believe that the gospel needs to be dressed up, softened, or made more entertaining in order to be effective.

But Paul reminds us that the power is not in the personality of the preacher, the polish of the presentation, or the cleverness of the words. The power is in the message of the cross and in the Holy Spirit who opens hearts to receive it. Jesus Christ crucified is not an outdated message. It is God's wisdom, God's power, and God's plan to rescue sinners and transform lives.

Scripture

ReVisit - **1 Corinthians 2:1-9 (NLT):**

When I first came to you, dear brothers and sisters, I didn't use lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you God's secret plan. **2** For I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified. **3** I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling. **4** And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. **5** I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God.

6 Yet when I am among mature believers, I do speak with words of wisdom, but not the kind of wisdom that belongs to this world or to the rulers of this world, who are soon forgotten. **7** No, the wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God—his plan that was previously hidden, even though he made it for our ultimate glory before the world began. **8** But the rulers of this world have not understood it; if they had, they would not have crucified our glorious Lord. **9** That is what the Scriptures mean when they say,

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him."

Additional Scriptures to Look Up This Week:

- **1 Corinthians 1:18–25**
- **Romans 1:16–17**
- **John 3:30**
- **1 Peter 3:15**
- **Galatians 2:20**

Truth

The cross is the wisdom and power of God, so we must keep Jesus—not ourselves, not culture, and not human cleverness—at the center of our faith and witness.

Paul's message in Corinth was remarkably simple: "Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified." He did not mean that he ignored every other truth of Scripture. He meant that the cross was the center from which every other truth flowed. The cross tells us who God is—holy, loving, just, merciful, and faithful. It tells us who we are—sinners who cannot save ourselves. And it tells us what Jesus has done—He took our place, bore our sin, and made forgiveness and new life possible.

The world often sees the cross as weakness. A crucified Savior does not fit human ideas of power, success, or wisdom. People expect strength to look impressive, influential, wealthy, popular, or unstoppable. Yet God displayed His greatest power through the apparent weakness of Jesus laying down His life. **What looked like defeat at Calvary was actually God's victory over sin, death, and Satan.** Scripture says, "But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God."

This is why the gospel does not need our improvements. It does not need to be made more exciting through manipulation, more acceptable through compromise, or more believable through human brilliance. We should prepare carefully, speak clearly, and give Jesus our best. But our confidence cannot rest in presentation, personality, or persuasion. Paul preached faithfully, but he depended on the Holy Spirit to do what only the Spirit can do: open blind eyes, convict hearts, bring repentance, and create genuine faith.

Paul's example also gives us freedom. We do not have to have all the answers, a flawless personality, or a perfectly rehearsed testimony before we tell someone about Jesus. Paul himself came "in weakness—timid and trembling." He was not self-confident; he was God-dependent. The Lord is not looking for

polished salespeople to market Christianity. He calls ordinary believers to faithfully point others to Christ.

The same truth speaks to those of us who already know Jesus. It is possible to become so familiar with the cross that we stop being amazed by it. We may sing about it, display it, and affirm it with our lips while quietly returning to self-reliance, pride, unforgiveness, or comfortable sin. But **the cross always brings us back to the same place: surrender.** It reminds us that we are not the center, that sin is serious, that grace is costly, and that Jesus is enough.

God's wisdom is not merely information to admire; it is a truth to receive and live. The wisdom of the cross teaches us to reject the world's false promises and to trust God's plan, even when it does not make sense by the world's standards. What the world calls foolish, God uses to save. What the world calls weak, God uses to display His strength.

Keep the cross at the center. When you are tempted to trust your own ability, look to the cross. When you are burdened by guilt, look to the cross. When you wonder whether God loves you, look to the cross. When culture pressures you to redefine truth, look to the cross. Jesus Christ crucified remains the wisdom of God, the power of God, and the hope of every person who believes.

Application

Keeping the cross at the center is not merely something we say; it shapes the way we live. Paul's words call us to evaluate where our confidence rests. Are we trusting in our experience, personality, knowledge, resources, reputation, or ability to manage life? Or are we depending on the power of God revealed through Jesus Christ?

Begin by returning personally to the cross. Take an honest look at your heart. Is there pride that needs to be confessed? Is there sin that you have tried to excuse, minimize, or hide? Is there a place where you have chosen self-rule over surrender to Jesus? The cross is not meant to shame us into hiding from God. It invites us

to come honestly, repent deeply, and receive the grace Jesus purchased for us.

The cross also changes how we treat other people. If Jesus forgave us at such great cost, we cannot hold tightly to bitterness, resentment, or the need to prove ourselves right. Ask the Lord this week: "Who do I need to forgive? Where do I need to apologize? Is there a relationship in which pride is keeping me from taking the first step?" We do not forgive because sin does not matter; we forgive because Christ has shown us how much mercy matters.

Do not allow the world to define what faithfulness looks like. **Success in God's Kingdom is not always measured by numbers, applause, comfort, influence, or visible results.** Paul came to Corinth weak, timid, and trembling, yet God used his simple proclamation of Christ to establish a church. Faithfulness is obeying God with what He has placed in your hands and trusting Him with the outcome. Paul's aim was that people would trust "not in human wisdom but in the power of God."

Be ready to share the hope you have in Jesus. You do not need a platform, a title, or a perfect explanation to point someone to Christ. God has already placed people in your everyday life—family members, coworkers, neighbors, friends, and even strangers—who may need to hear the simple good news of Jesus. Scripture calls believers to worship Christ as Lord and be ready to explain the hope we have.

The gospel is not complicated, even though it is profound. God's Word tells us that we are made right with Him by placing our faith in Jesus Christ, not by trying to earn His approval. You may not have every answer to every question, but you can share what Jesus has done in your life and invite someone to know Him.

This week, choose one practical way to keep the cross in the center:

- Begin each day by thanking Jesus specifically for His sacrifice and grace.

- Confess one area where you have been relying on yourself rather than on God.
- Forgive someone who has hurt you, or take a first step toward reconciliation.
- Read 1 Peter 3:15 and prepare a short version of your testimony.
- Pray by name for one person who needs to know Jesus, then look for an opportunity to love them and share the hope of the gospel.

The cross calls us away from a comfortable, self-centered Christianity and into a life of surrender. It reminds us that we have died to the old way of living and have been given new life in Christ. We are no longer slaves to sin; we belong to God, and He calls us to use every part of our lives for His glory.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Jesus and for the power of the cross. Forgive me for trusting in my own wisdom and strength. Keep the cross at the center of my heart, my choices, and my witness. Help me walk humbly, repent quickly, and share the hope of Jesus with courage and love. Let my faith rest not in human wisdom, but in Your power.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.