

Mount Zion, January, 2012  
Good Shepherd, February, 2020  
**1 Corinthians 2:1-5**

What did you expect when you came to church today? You expected – lights, heat, greeters, bulletins, an organist, sing hymns and pray prayers, and a pastor to be present for worship. You came with expectations, didn't you?

You expected a sermon that would keep you interested. You also expected to hear a sermon that was short and inspiring; a sermon that would make you quit your job and become a missionary to speak to the heathen anywhere in this world.

What kind of sermon will you hear today? Will it be interesting? Will it be short or long? What do you expect of the preacher this morning?

Because you came to Good Shepherd today expecting something, let our theme for this sermon be

**GREAT EXPECTATIONS.**

1. Expect to find a sinner standing in the pulpit;
2. Expect to hear Christ crucified being preached.

Paul wrote these words to the members of the congregation in the Greek city of Corinth. This city was a seaport and the 4<sup>th</sup> largest city in the Roman Empire. It was a prosperous city and with prosperity came a love for the pleasures of life.

Paul stayed about 18 months in Corinth before moving on to Ephesus. But after Paul left, the congregation began to have problems: some of the members believed that they could commit any sin and still be Christian while others denied the resurrection of Jesus. Paul wrote two letters to this congregation; words of encouragement and admonishment.

We don't know what kind of preacher Paul was. However, he wrote, When I came to you...I did not come with superior speech or wisdom in order to proclaim to you the testimony of God. It seems that Paul did not think that he was very wise, nor that he was a gifted speaker.

Paul had come to Corinth in fear and trembling. Paul had not come to Corinth flexing his apostolic muscles; he had come in humility. Paul would probably have been a failure had he depended on his personality, his speaking ability, or his wisdom.

It's the same way with pastors today. I am one of your pastors and I don't deserve to stand here in this pulpit. I have sinned in thought and word and I am not too happy with some of the things I have done in my life. I have gifts that God has given me, but I am not sure what they are!

The reason I am standing in this pulpit today is because God has helped me every step of the way. If I had to make a living using my speaking ability to wow and woo people, I would be broke. If you put me into a crowded room, I will disappear from sight, like a chameleon in the jungle. I don't stand tall in the eyes of the world, so when you look at me in the pulpit, expect to be disappointed.

If you should not expect much from the man in this pulpit, what should you expect when you come to this House of God? Well, you should expect to hear about Christ crucified for us.

When Paul walked through the city gates of Corinth, he saw many of the problems confronting the people there: social, political, and economic problems. He saw the poor begging for money; he saw unemployed people trying to find ways to feed their families, and he saw slaves serving their masters. What problem did Paul deal with first?

Paul wrote, I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. The citizens of Corinth needed to know who Jesus was and what He had done for them. They needed the gospel of Jesus Christ!

And the Holy Spirit worked through that gospel message. The Holy Spirit caused the people to listen to and believe in God's Word. It is the Holy Spirit that causes the Church to grow and to thrive. The Holy Spirit didn't need good speakers and wise men and women to build the Church; all the Spirit needed was willing Christians to speak of Christ crucified.

It is still the same way today. The Holy Spirit still works through the gospel message found in Word and Sacraments. The Holy Spirit prepares the hearts of sinful people so that the gospel will have effect. The gospel message is the power that makes spiritually dead people come to life in Christ. Paul said, I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

The message of Christ crucified for us leads a person to faith and keeps him in that faith. No wonder Paul encouraged the people of Corinth to keep listening to the gospel.

Our faith does not rest upon the philosophies of human beings, nor on the IQ of the preacher, nor on the pastor's personality or preaching ability. Our faith rests only on the gospel message that leads us to see that God's promise of a Savior was fulfilled in Jesus who was crucified for us.

No matter where you might hear this message; no matter who the preacher might be; the message must be the same: Jesus Christ was crucified to pay for our sins!

This is the basic message God expects pastors to preach. Nothing more, nothing less!

This pulpit is an important part of this church. You should not find a man standing in it who is blown about like dust in the wind by false doctrine, but rather a man who stands on Bible truth: Christ was crucified for us.

Don't measure a pastor by the number of people who come to hear him. Don't measure a pastor by the offerings people give when they hear him preach. Rather measure the pastor by his faithfulness to the Word of God – faithfulness to the message of Christ crucified for us.