

## Sermon: What if it's all a Hoax? 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5, 2:14-16

Last Sunday we had a "Celebration of Life" service for Carol Rounds, here at BRC, and it was filled with words of hope, life, and eternity!

The gospel was clearly & boldly proclaimed! **It is right, & good, turning to God's Word in the midst of being face to face with the realities of death!**

**But what if it's all a hoax?** Wishful thinking? A crutch, void of truth?

The Round's family was the recipient of such a response from a person who attended that service! **How do we, as Christians, respond to such an inquiry?**

How many of us, if we are being honest, have asked similar questions, and wrestled with similar doubts? What is the answer(s), to such questions?

The response that was given by one of the family members was two-fold:

- 1) ***We believe it by faith! "Now faith is the substance/assurance of things hoped for, and the evidence/conviction of things not seen"- Heb. 11:1-2.***
- 2) ***"If when we die, we find out that what we believed wasn't true, then we still got to live this life with hope! And if in death, we discover that our beliefs were true, then we will not only see our loved one again, but we will also receive the joy of heaven, with our Savior, for all of eternity!"***

Both these responses are true & helpful in addressing such doubts, but **why does it seem that for some people faith comes so naturally, & for others it is a real struggle?** Is it about intelligence, persuasiveness, willingness?

Why do you (I) have faith, but our neighbor, co-worker, family member doesn't? **Why are we filled with hope, even amidst death, when others are not?**

**1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5, 2:14-16** – But first a quick recap of the past 2 weeks!

- ***Vs. 1 - "Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus..."***

Paul is saying, listen to my words, not because of who I am in myself, but because of who God has called me to be, & what God has **done in me!**

God called Paul to be His spokesman, especially to the gentiles! God enabled him to speak, with authority, the true message of God!

In a similar way, but also different, **God has called pastors, as well as all Christians, to speak with authority the Word of truth from God!**

But this authority rests in the **One who calls, not in the abilities of the**

**called!** My words, your words, Paul's words, all have authority when they faithfully declare the truth of God's Words!

I also shared in week 1, that **Paul had the evidence of a changed life to back up His message!** And as Christian's today, so do/should we!

When people hear us talk about the things of faith, do they hear God's truth, from His Word... And do they see a life that has been changed?

- Last week Pastor Jay talked about divisions in the church! ***"I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas"...*** The Church divides, & the truth of God gets obscured, when we follow **man** rather than **God!**

**1 Corinthians 11:1** – Paul says, ***"Follow me, as I follow Christ!"***

The testimony of the gospel is not well served when those who claim to have been transformed by it, remain unchanged, & when the Church does nothing but fight amongst themselves over the teachings of man!

Paul knew that if others were going to listen and respond to His words, it would only be because **God was speaking truth through Him**, & because God had substantially changed his life & given evidence to the power of such a message, and because the Church was following Christ, not man!

But even then... when all these things are working right, **why does it still seem like it's not enough to pierce the heart of unbelievers with the gospel?**

**1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5, 2:14-16**

***Vs. 18 – "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God!"***

***Vs. 21 – "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe!"***

***Vs. 23-24 – "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews & Greeks, Christ the power of God & the wisdom of God."***

***Vs. 30 – "because of him, you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness, & sanctification, & redemption."***

***Ch. 2:5 – "... so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."***

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

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