

1 Corinthians 2:9-13 ⁹But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"- ¹⁰these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

24-Sep-2008 Session Devotional, 'Spiritual Truth Is the Best Truth'

"What the heart of man couldn't have imagined"

John Murray (and I after him) sees a direct tie between this passage and the one we had Lord's Day morning out of Romans 5. The Spirit who searches the depths of God (1Co 2:10) can therefore pour the very love of God out in human hearts (Ro 5:5). Furthermore, this thing that God prepared that we couldn't imagine (1Co 2:9) is the unimaginable fact that Christ would die for the ungodly (Ro 5:6-7). And the freeness of the giving is what seals it as a demonstration of love, something understood only by the ministry of the Spirit (1Co 2:12).

One thing that comes out of the verses before us this evening, that I did not bring out of Rom 5:5-8 on the Lord's Day, is that this has significant ministerial applications for us as elders. There are many truths we can proclaim that make sense to unconverted people. But the *best* truth, the one that is beyond scientific observation (seeing, hearing) or even philosophical speculation (human imagining), is Christ dying for the ungodly.

What words to use

So, how do we start telling people about Christ dying for the ungodly? Well, really, we don't. The Spirit does. The Spirit is the one who pours out the love of God in hearts, who shows God's love in Christ dying for them while they are sinners. We noted that, therefore, the Spirit uses words as means, because we cannot see or hear Jesus die now; it has already happened!

But which words? The answer is in v13 of our text. Can we be clever in manipulating people either emotionally or intellectually into some form of assent to the Gospel? Sure. It's been done for a very long time, especially after the revivalistic methods of Charles Finney took over at the (bringing the?) end of the Second Great Awakening. But our clever words aren't the words that the Spirit uses. The Spirit uses words that He Himself has taught.

So, if we are hoping to see lives transformed by the truth, we are hoping to see the Spirit show people God's love in Christ's death for them, and we must start with *the Bible*. 2 Peter 1:21, "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

This is done by the combination of the ministry being "through Spiritual [words]" and "to Spiritual [people]"; the net result is absolute dependence upon the Spirit. Which has the following implications:

- The ministry at Harvest should be saturated with Bible, Bible, Bible, and more Bible
- As a session, and as a congregation, not just for the other "needs" but especially for the ministry here, we should pray, pray, pray, pray, and pray.
- Whatever happens as a result of the ministry must never become an occasion for pride—how could utterly dependent ones become proud of themselves for something the Spirit did from start to finish?!—this is where party 's'pirit comes from.