



book of faith

Open Scripture. Join the Conversation.

## Book of Faith Bible Study 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

*When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.*

We don't know whether Paul was a very good preacher or not. Some of his opponents apparently thought he wasn't as impressive as other public speakers of the day (see 2 Cor. 10:10). Either way, Paul says that when he brought the gospel to the Corinthians, he did not try to impress them with his own eloquence or intellect. He knew that he was just a weak and fearful man with but one thing to offer anyone: Jesus Christ, who had been crucified. But why would anybody put their faith in a crucified messiah? They wouldn't . . . unless the Holy Spirit got involved! So, Paul took the risk: preach Christ crucified and if anyone responds, their faith will rest "not on human wisdom but on the power of God."

Would you tell them that he was "born of a virgin"? That he "ate with tax-collectors and sinners?" That he taught "the Golden Rule"? Over time, Paul must have told the Corinthians many things about Jesus (see, for example, 1 Cor. 11:23-25; 15:3-8), but he indicates here that he always kept the message of the cross "front and center." The message of the cross not only conveys God's gift of salvation to poor sinners but also serves as a reminder of how believers are to live in this world. It is the sign of unselfish love, a love that gives and serves and dies for those who are unworthy and, often, unappreciative. Our world regards this message

As you consider opening Scripture individually or with others, you may wish to consider these general questions:

*How does the Bible feed your daily life?*

*How does the Bible feed the life of this community?*

*How are we renewed, empowered, and enlivened by the Word?*

*What stands in the way of our opening the Bible and joining the conversation?*



as foolishness; it tells us to look out for our own interests, not the interests of others. But through the cross, Jesus Christ has shown us another way (see Phil. 2:4-8).

ELCA Christians are marked with the cross of Christ. We are among those being saved, whose faith rests on the power of God. We are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world, but what do we have to offer? Are we strong? Are we brave? Are we powerful? Are we wise? We know that we have nothing to offer this world but the unselfish love of a crucified messiah. We trust in the cross for our salvation and we offer Christ's unselfish love to everyone – family members, neighbors, strangers, and enemies.

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In addition to questions found in the studies, here are general questions that can be used for each of the texts:

*What is God saying to us through this passage?*

*What does this passage tell us about God?*

*How does this passage speak to us as individuals and to us as a community?*

*What does this passage teach us about our neighbors and our world?*

### Questions on 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

- *Why would anybody put their faith in a crucified messiah?*
- *If you could tell people one thing about Jesus, what would it be?*
- *What does the cross of Christ mean to you? To your community? To the world?*