

The Vision of the Gospel

1 Corinthians 1:10-2:5

The coming year will throw plenty of things at us. When that's the case, how can we live seeing things the way God does?

As an example, the church at Corinth was split by factions, their worship services were chaotic, and there was serious immorality. Yet when Paul writes to them he isn't distracted by these things, instead he concentrates on the gospel and the cross of Christ.

Paul's main thing: the gospel

Paul was confronted by two groups of people, Jews and Greeks, who wanted to pull his ministry in certain directions. The Jews wanted signs and the Greeks wisdom. But Paul didn't take either of those paths. Instead, his vision was the Gospel.

The Gospel's main thing: Christ crucified

If Paul's main thing was the gospel, the gospel's main thing is Christ crucified. The coming year is bound to throw up a thousand and one things to distract us but the pre-eminent thing, what the gospel is all about, is Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection. And the vision for life that the Bible calls us to is one where Christ is our greatest satisfaction, security and the treasure and the pleasure of our lives.

But why does Paul put the cross at the very centre of the Gospel? Why is this the answer to everything Corinth, and you and I face in life?

Christ crucified: the power and the wisdom of God

Paul tells in v23-24, that Christ crucified is both the power of God and the wisdom of God. It's at the cross that we can find forgiveness and freedom from guilt; where we can know the full extent of God's love for us; where we can find love for those we find hard to love; where we find God's power to love our spouses when they let us down; where we find both the example and the power to live lives of self-sacrificing generosity. The cross is the ground on which we can find God's power for physical healing; where Satan is defeated and his hold on lives is broken; where the power of sin in our lives is broken. Which is why Paul said he would boast in nothing other than the cross of Christ.

Rooted in the gospel, radical transformation

A tree gets both stability and nourishment from its roots. Jesus said we were to root ourselves in his words – in the gospel. That won't make us immune to the storms of life that 2012 will throw at us, but it will mean we will be able to stand through them. But also, as we feed our selves on the gospel, on what Christ has done for us, we will thrive and bear fruit, whatever befalls us.