



WOW: Word Of the Week

Honeyed

March 22, 2023

1 Corinthians 2:4-5. *And in my preaching there were no honeyed words of wisdom, but I was dependent on the power of the Spirit to make it clear to you: so that your faith might be based not on man's wisdom but on the power of God.* (BBE, Bible in Basic English)

Honeyed words! An interesting translation! Other options: persuasive words, enticing words, clever words. The great temptation of the church today is to substitute something else for God's gospel power. You have perhaps heard the claim. "It doesn't work to simply present the gospel – you have to draw them in them, build trust, get their attention." Oswald Chambers wrote: "If in preaching the Gospel you substitute [anything] for confidence in the power of the Gospel, you hinder people...." Are we inadvertently, unintentionally hindering people on their faith journey?

I recently visited with an eldership whose preacher had led an apartment evangelism project (before he left that church!). I asked about the results of the attempted "evangelism." One of the elders quickly remarked, "A lot of free hamburgers!"

Could it really be that Paul's inspired words are true? That the simple presentation of the gospel goes forth as demonstration of the Spirit and of power? Is it enough to rely on the certainty of God's saving power in Christ? Is it not God's work to bring spiritual life to human beings? When we begin to rely on something other than the gospel to establish spiritual relationships, we quit relying on God's Holy Spirit power. We have selfish-ized the Holy Spirit. We have denied his role and power in convicting people about sin, righteousness, and judgment. We have expected his work to serve us, help us, comfort us, intercede for us, confirm us. We have forgotten (or perhaps ignored) his convicting power.

If people begin their faith journey based on their experiences, anything negative that happens upsets that faith seedling. They thought the church would help them, and then a need arose and help was absent. We must not not build faith on what we do—build faith on what God has done! I remember an accurate commentary, "What you get them with is what you will have to keep them with!"

Faith is being convinced of God's promises and being convicted of what you cannot see. That description from Heb. 11:1 is true for everyone. Faith depends on God—drawing near to God, believing God, seeing the invisible God, believing his promises. That faith story – those faith truths – build relationship and security with God.

Christianity is not validated through human experience or human feelings. God is faithful when I cannot see him or feel him. Holy Spirit power is at work when the results of sharing the gospel of Jesus are not immediate. Can we be satisfied to simply obey? "Go into all the world and preach the gospel!" Jesus did not say, "go and help, go and serve, go and build relationships, go and make people like you, go and attract, go and 'fill in the blank.'" Go and preach the good news! All humanly devised endeavors, regardless of how well-intentioned, will always be a distraction from doing what our Lord sent us forth to do!