

# 1 Corinthians 2:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

## Analysis

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**And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.** Paul contrasts *peithois sophias logois* (πειθοῖς σοφίας λόγοις, "persuasive words of wisdom")—the studied rhetorical techniques of Sophists—with *apodeixei pneumatos kai dynameōs* (ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως, "demonstration of Spirit and power"). The term *apodeixis* (ἀπόδειξις) means "proof" or "showing forth," suggesting observable evidence rather than logical argumentation.

This "demonstration" likely included both miracle signs (Acts 18:8, 19:11-12; 2 Corinthians 12:12) and transformed lives—the convicting work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8). Paul employs a legal metaphor: while human advocates use rhetoric to sway juries, the Spirit provides irrefutable evidence that convinces hearts. Romans 15:18-19 confirms Paul's ministry pattern: "what Christ has accomplished... by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit."

## Historical Context

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Greek rhetoric schools (especially Second Sophistic movement) trained students in *peithō* (persuasion) through elaborate speech techniques. Corinthian culture highly valued such oratorical skill. Mystery religions also promised "wisdom" to initiates through secret teachings. Paul deliberately eschews both approaches, instead pointing to the Spirit's objective work as validation. His letters reveal

sophisticated argumentation, but his oral preaching apparently prioritized simplicity that allowed divine power to be unmistakable.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How can contemporary preaching ensure dependence on Spirit-power rather than communication technique, without excusing poor preparation?
2. What constitutes "demonstration of the Spirit and power" in contexts where miraculous signs may be less frequent?
3. Where might your faith rest more on a teacher's persuasiveness than on the Spirit's conviction?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ	ὁ	λόγοις	μου	καὶ	τὸ	κήρυγμά	μου	οὐκ	ἐν
And	G3588	speech	my	And	G3588	preaching	my	was not	in
G2532		G3056	G3450	G2532		G2782	G3450	G3756	G1722
πειθοῖς	ἀνθρωπίνης	σοφίας	λόγοις	ἀλλ'	ἐν	ἀποδείξει			
enticing	of man's	wisdom	speech	but	in	demonstration			
G3981	G442	G4678	G3056	G235	G1722	G585			
πνεύματος	καὶ	δυνάμεως							
of the Spirit	And	of power							
G4151	G2532	G1411							

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Corinthians 4:20** (Word): For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

**1 Thessalonians 1:5** (Spirit): For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

**1 Corinthians 1:17** (Word): For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

**1 Corinthians 2:1** (Parallel theme): And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

**Romans 15:19** (Spirit): Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

**2 Peter 1:16** (Parallel theme): For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

**1 Corinthians 2:13** (Spirit): Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

**Colossians 2:4** (Word): And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

**2 Peter 2:18** (Word): For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

**Galatians 1:10** (Parallel theme): For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.