

1 Corinthians 2:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Analysis

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Paul reveals his methodological purpose: *pistis* (πίστις, "faith") must rest (ē, ἐ, "might be/stand") on divine rather than human foundation. The term *sophia anthrōpōn* (σοφία ἀνθρώπων, "wisdom of men") encompasses all human intellectual systems, philosophical traditions, and rhetorical persuasion. Against this stands *dynamis theou* (δύναμις θεοῦ, "power of God")—the resurrection power that conquered death (Romans 1:4).

Faith grounded in human wisdom is fragile: philosophical fashions change, arguments get refuted, teachers fall. But faith resting on God's demonstrated power—supremely in Christ's resurrection—stands unshakable. This explains why apostolic preaching focused on eyewitness resurrection testimony (Acts 2:32, 3:15, 4:20). Paul's concern anticipates later Corinthian problems: when Christians trust impressive teachers rather than God's revealed truth, they become vulnerable to doctrinal error (see the "super-apostles" of 2 Corinthians 11:5).

Historical Context

The Corinthian church's later problems—divisions over teachers (1:12), denial of resurrection (15:12), tolerance of immorality (5:1-2)—all stemmed from trusting human reasoning over divine revelation. Corinth's philosophical culture encouraged evaluating messages by speaker eloquence rather than content. Paul's insistence on divine power as faith's foundation addressed this root issue. The

contrast between wisdom and power reflects Hebrew thought: God's ways transcend human calculation (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How can you audit whether your faith rests on God's power or on persuasive arguments you've heard?
2. What happens to faith when it's based on a teacher's charisma and that teacher falls into scandal?
3. Why must Christianity ultimately appeal to God's demonstrated power (especially resurrection) rather than philosophical coherence alone?

Interlinear Text

ἴνα	ἢ	πίστις	ὑμῶν	μὴ	ἢ	ἐν	σοφίᾳ	ἀνθρώπων
That	G3588	faith	G4102	your	G5216	not	should	in
G2443				G3361		G5600		G1722
							the wisdom	
							G4678	G444
ἀλλ'	ἐν	δυνάμει	θεοῦ					
but	in	the power	of God					
G235	G1722	G1411	G2316					

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 4:7 (References God): But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

2 Corinthians 6:7 (References God): By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

2 Corinthians 12:9 (Parallel theme): And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

1 Corinthians 1:17 (Parallel theme): 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.

Acts 16:14 (References God): And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

1 Corinthians 3:6 (References God): I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.