## LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS for the Week of May 21, 2017

## LIFE TOGETHER IN A DIVIDED WORLD "Proclaiming Christ Crucified" 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

1. What pictures or images come to mind when you think about powerful, successful people? How do those images sometimes conflict with following Christ?

2. **Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.** Our passage this week is quite short, but profoundly significant. There was no shortage of spiritual gifts in the Corinthian church. They were very impressed by charismatic speakers and outward manifestations of the Spirit's power. But here Paul makes it clear that the cross provides the criterion not only for *what* we say about Christ, but also for *how* we say it. How and when does our preaching, teaching, or witness draw more attention to the speaker than to Christ? Why is it so easy to fall into this trap?

3. Paul declares: "When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (2:1-2). Is Paul making a case here for anti-intellectual Christianity? Is he justifying sloppy preparation for preaching ("I never study beforehand; I just let the Spirit lead me spontaneously!")? Is he saying he only preaches about the cross and never about the resurrection (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-8)? What is the "main point" Paul is making here? How would you paraphrase these two verses?

4. *"I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling"* (2:3). Why should anyone present the gospel with "fear and trembling"? Is this fear of what others might think? What is Paul talking about here? How do you relate to this verse?

We live in an age where pride and arrogance are treated like virtues rather than vices. How does this verse speak to such an attitude, and why is it so central to an authentic proclamation of the crucified Christ?

5. Do you tend to be a "*people pleaser*"? How so? When can this become dangerous or destructive? What does this passage (2:1-5) have to say about such a tendency? (Cf. Jesus' testimony in John 5:41-44.)

6. How have your own experiences of personal "weakness" become occasions for experiencing God's resurrection power? (See 2 Cor. 1:8-9; 11:30; 12:8-10.)

7. What does Paul mean when he says that his preaching was "not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power" (2:5)? What kind of "demonstrations" is he alluding to here? What's the difference between a "demonstration of the Spirit's power" and a "performance"?

8. What situations or examples can you think of where God used the weak, lowly, and despised to build his kingdom in our day?