

1 Corinthians 2:11-16 Spiritual Persons Falls Ch. AM 1/28/2024

Every seeker of wisdom or every sage in the history of the world wanted to discover what God gave us in our passage this morning. Here we find the answers to the biggest questions of religion! Spiritual mysteries are made known to us, divine revelation is opened up for us, God's wisdom and knowledge shared with us, the true meaning of life is given, and the future of our lives in eternal glories of heaven is shown to us! We can reduce it to one word: wisdom.

In 1 Corinthians chapters 1-3, Paul used the term 'wisdom' sixteen times! Why? Because it was an important word that had been misused in the city of Corinth. In these 3 chapters, Paul was rescuing the word 'wisdom' from wrong use, and Paul was restoring the correct definition of true wisdom.

Here in this passage, Paul gave us a contrast between US and THEM.

US – have God's true wisdom THEM – have only human wisdom

We, have FUTURE glory!(v.7) they,rulers of THIS age, (PRESENT) (v.6,8)

We, ones who love God (v.9) they, crucified the Lord of glory (v.8)

We, have God's Spirit. (v.12) they, have the spirit of the world (v.12)

We, spiritual persons (v.15) they, unspiritual persons (natural)(v.14)

**Christ has given us His Spirit so that we know and understand His thoughts, His wisdom and His mind!**

CROSS - Christ's death and resurrection has made us spiritual persons.

### **1. Our access to the thoughts of God. (v.11-12)**

*(verses 11-12), "For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God."*

SI - if you were walking through the Wisconsin State Fair, would you stop and listen to a man who said that he could read your mind? Maybe for entertainment, but you wouldn't take him seriously. Why? Because no one knows your thoughts except for you. That is the basic truth that starts verse 11.

Next in verse 11, Paul used a common way of comparing 2 things during Paul's generation. Paul used the ancient Greek and Roman philosophical principle of comparing which they used as a persuasive strategy in ancient writing and speaking. We do similarly today, and we call it comparing apples to apples, not comparing apples to oranges. The ancient Greeks/Romans called it 'like by like' or 'same by same.' It meant one individual, who is a certain sort of person is known by another individual who is the same sort of person. A quilter is known by another quilter. Why do you tie a knot there – oh, ask any quilter, so the thread won't slip through before we are finished. A gardener understands another gardener. Why do you have tarps over your flowerbeds? Oh, ask any gardener – it is because of the overnight frost we expect. A sports fan talks with another sports

fan. A hunter is known by another hunter. Paul's basic point here was that a human knows a human, and we know all sorts of things on our human plane of existence, because we are, ourselves, humans. That is exactly Paul's crucial starting point. See, in religious pursuits, we are not seeking human wisdom. Rather, we are seeking God's wisdom. So that leads to the next logical question - who can gain God's wisdom or what human can go beyond the plane of human existence and get to know God?

To follow the ancient philosophical comparing principle, God alone knows God. So, for explaining the things of God to us humans, there must be a bridge from divine-to-human, or some connection point. Without that bridge or connection, we humans cannot reach up to God's wisdom. So, what is the bridge or connection point? Answer: The Spirit of God! The Spirit provides that link, that divine interface with a human. The Spirit already knows the things of God the Father and God the Son. As Paul wrote at the end of verse 10, "*The Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.*" The Spirit knows God the Father, because the Spirit is also God. The One God exists in 3 persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit was given to us so that the Spirit can reveal to us humans the otherwise unreachable, imperceptible wisdom of God, namely, Christ crucified.

Verse 12, '*the spirit of the world*' refers those humans living in this age who are not in congruity with God, and foundationally, they do not even understand God.

The gift of the Spirit is what enables this understanding for us as believers.

Verse 12, the phrase "*things freely given us by God*" has the verb to give or to freely give, and that verb conveys the idea of giving without regard to earning or merit. Whatever God gives us, we don't deserve to receive. Whatever God give us, we have not earned. Whatever gifts God gives us are never because we are of a caliber or good enough that we ought to receive God's gifts. It is one of the purposes of God giving us His Spirit, is so that the Spirit may help us to understand that everything we have is a bonus, or given by God's grace. As sinners, we have no business having access to the thoughts of God, but we have it anyway! We have access to the thoughts of God! That is by God's grace, and by God's Spirit. We really scored when we were given access to the very thoughts of God Himself!

## **2. Our ability to know spiritual wisdom. (v.13-15)**

Verses 13-15, "*And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.*"

In verse 13, when Paul used the word Spiritual to describe the word truth, Paul was referring to the Holy Spirit. Spiritual truth is Spiritual in the sense that the

Holy Spirit was involved in imparting those truths to us. So, in verse 13, Paul was telling us that the Spirit teaches us truth. What sort of true things does the Spirit teach? Sinner-rescuing truths, known only to The Holy Spirit. To whom does the Spirit teach these truths? Only to those persons who are Spiritual, or to those persons who are being constantly and directly influenced by the Spirit of God, who is living inside of us. Only Spirit-indwelt Christians receive spiritual truth about salvation.

Paul's point is well taken. To say the same point from the opposite direction, it means that the natural human mind, the unassisted human mind, no matter the level of IQ and mental ability, remains unable to grasp and fathom the depths of truth regarding Spiritual topics of rescue, salvation and redemption – how sinners can go to heaven. Paul was urging his readers to remember the important and essential role of the Spirit. The human mind, without the Spirit's help, cannot understand the things of God. Sure, the natural mind could read the words of the Bible and even study the Bible very carefully in a university or at home. Sure, the natural mind could hear the gospel, and even understand how the gospel works, but that same natural mind cannot embrace the gospel, cannot adopt, cannot take on the disposition of a believer. That status is granted to human minds in only one way – by the Spirit granting it savingly. Only The Spirit converts. Only The Spirit brings a person from darkness to light.

We get that this applies for conversion, but here Paul is going beyond the topic of conversion. Do we realize that this applies to us for finding Spiritual wisdom, finding other deep Biblical truths? Hear the challenge of the sharp question from one of the friends of Job. Job 11:7, "*Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?*" Like a dog whistle that we cannot hear, we do not have the ability to hear or access these Spiritual things, unless the Spirit opens our ears. Revelation 2:7, "*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*" Have we been given an ear to hear the Spirit's voice speaking to us in the church of Jesus Christ?

The prideful modern person thinks that he or she sits in judgment on God, when it is actually the other way around. The Spirit searches everything, which means that nothing escapes the Spirit's attention. Hebrews 4:13, "*...no creature is hidden from [God's] sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*" Other people think that they are sneaky enough and elusive enough that the Spirit could not find out or become aware of what they are doing, but again we read in Proverbs 15:3, "*The eyes of The LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.*" And this truth about God is not just true from the negative angle of the Spirit noticing our sins. This truth is also true from the positive angle of the Spirit noticing our good actions of loving service to Him and His people. Hebrews 6:10, "*God is not unjust so as to overlook your*

*work and the love that you have shown for His name in serving the saints, as you still do.”*

Having written all of this, Paul is now ready to build a contrast in verses 14-15. The **natural person** of verse 14 is contrasted to the **spiritual person** of verse 15.

Verse 14 shows what happens when the Spirit is missing from the life of a human person. We are asked to take a look at a person who resists the revelation of the Spirit, and reject as foolish the 'things of the Spirit' for those are spiritually discerned.

In contrast, verse 15 shows what happens when persons receive the benefits of the reception of the Spirit.

First a statement....the spiritual person is able to make judgments about all things. This is the opposite or the reverse of the previous statement back in verse 14, that the **unspiritual** person was **not able** to make such judgments about spiritual things. The opposites are both true – the unspiritual person is not able to make discerning observations about spiritual truths, but the spiritual person is able to differentiate.

Moving on now within verse 15 to a second statement, and here Paul wrote that this person, this spiritual person, is himself not subject to any man's judgment. Possessing the power or ability of spiritual discernment equals freedom from human scrutiny. Who can tell such a person that he is wrong? Liberal persons might turn to the Christian and accuse the Christian of being old-fashioned and holding to an ethic from the dark ages, but the spiritual person is not indicted by such a false charge. Why? Because the Christian has his ethic on good authority - the authority of the third person of the Godhead, even the Holy Spirit of God! On the authority of the Spirit, the spiritual person evaluates all things. That way of living is above the criticisms of liberals and natural persons.

### **3. Our incredible gift - the mind of Christ! (v.16)**

Verse 16, *“For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.”*

The Spirit of Christ gives us the knowledge of the inner workings of God with us as sinners, the working of God with the world. The Spirit gives us eyes to see and ears to hear and minds that can imagine what God has prepared for us who love Him. To say we have the mind of Christ is to say we understand the good news of the grace of God to us – we understand and believe the gospel! We know God. We have gained a new understanding that the world does not have.

Consider this, Romans 8:32, *“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”* One of the things God graciously gives us is knowing how God thinks about us, knowing the mind of Christ regarding our sins and our relationship with God. We

don't tell God what we think He should do with our sins, rather we come to know what God says Christ has done with our sins. We don't instruct God, and give him a piece of our mind, rather, God instructs us and gives us the mind of Christ!

Because the Spirit indwells us, we interpret spiritual truths, such as the complete forgiveness of all of our sins because Jesus died for our sins and rose again. We know the one place for sinners to be cleansed, as far as Christ looks at it, and we can share this spiritual truth with others. We know Christ Jesus personally! We know how Jesus thinks about sinners, stuck in their sins!

How does this work? Let's say your co-worker, neighbor or relative comes to you because you are a Christian, and asks you – do you think that I could pray for God's forgiveness for how I messed up, and for God's guidance in what to do in my messed up situation? We answer yes. God forgives, and yes God guides us through our messed up situations. How do we know that? Because God the Father did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all. What would God the Father withhold from us? Forgiveness? No. Spiritual knowledge? No.

In Matthew 22:37-39, when Jesus summarized the law, He said that we love God with all our heart, soul, strength and MIND. We train our minds to think merciful and gracious thoughts like Christ Jesus. God is holy, yet mercy is granted.

Romans 11:33-12:2. *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to Him that he might be repaid?" For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen. I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."*

We already possess the thoughts of Christ and the mind of Christ, and yet we are called to renew our minds in the teachings of Christ. We are already in line with the thoughts of God, and we are called to stay in line with the thoughts of God. The thoughts of God are all about forgiving us, and guiding us to fully accept and embrace that forgiveness, and as a result, also joyfully receive God's sanctifying grace for us to go out and live more and more like Christ. We desire to fulfill God's law, to do God's will, to reflect God's glory with our lives. That means continuing to think the thoughts of Christ, and continuing to speak like Christ speaks, and continuing to love like Christ loves, and continuing to live like Christ would have us to live. We have the Spirit of Christ to help us with all of that, every day. Christ's death and resurrection has made us spiritual persons.

**Conclusion:** Realize the value of our access to Christ's Spirit, Word, and Wisdom.

Human words entertain and motivate and can be exciting. Worldly wisdom. For example, would you listen to a person speak about reading your mind?

Spiritual words reveal God's wisdom, and knowledge of the things of God.

The preaching of the cross might not be as entertaining, as motivational, as exciting as other speakers in this world on other topics. But by God's Word and Spirit, the preaching of the cross reveals the most important thing – how the Holy God can receive and welcome sinners.

Romans 3:23-24, "*...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*"

Sometimes people ask us – do you think God is mad at me for what I did? Rather than just saying we don't know, we are actually able to answer those spiritual questions about God because of the Word of God and the Spirit of God, we know the mind of God, for we have the mind of Christ. How do we have the mind of Christ? The wisdom of Christ and the mind of Christ was given to us by the Word of Christ and the Spirit of Christ. Christ's death and resurrection has made us spiritual persons.

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