

“The Wisdom of God”

1 Corinthians 2:9-16

INTRO:

Wisdom fascinated the Corinthians. However, God’s wisdom is something entirely different from the wisdom that they loved. They loved the wisdom of men that differentiated between people. Some were nobler than others, thus these elite ones should be followed. Others were not of the noble class and were not worthy of imitating or following. The Apostle Paul’s task was to make the Corinthians delineate between their philosophy, which had its source in the world, and the wisdom which came from God. To do this Paul first appealed to their own conversion. He pointed out that God did not save many of those that the philosophy of the day called “wise,” or ‘noble”, or “mighty.” Instead, God called the “foolish,” the “weak,” and the “ordinary.” God saved the people that the philosophers cast aside.

The second piece of evidence that God’s wisdom was different from the world’s wisdom was How Paul came to the Corinthians. He approached them in weakness, fear, and simplicity. His desire was *“to know only Christ among them and Him crucified.”* Then he outlined the nature of the wisdom of God. **(1)** It is for those in whom God worked, *“the perfect.”* **(2)** It was not for the Philosophers and Rulers of this age. **(3)** It was eternal and not temporary.

In our text today we will discover how we receive this wisdom from God. He tells us first we receive God’s Wisdom by Revelation and second, he tells us that there are hindrances to receiving this wisdom.

I. We Receive God’s Wisdom through Revelation (v. 9-13)

II. Some Cannot Receive God’s Wisdom (v., 14-16)

I. We Receive God’s Wisdom through Revelation (v. 9-13)

A. We begin with a free quote from Isaiah 64:4. Paul wrote in vs. 9.

“But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’”

1. Paul is highlighting how we do not receive God’s wisdom. The philosophers got their wisdom through the empirical (observable) data. Their systems found their origins in what they heard, saw, or felt with their hands. Reality is what we sense. To this they may have added a lot of what they thought in the mind and heart. Inner light and inner thoughts formed a core source for there thinking.

2. In contrast to this approach to understanding reality, Paul quotes **Isaiah 64:4** in free translation to prove that this is not how we receive the knowledge of the realities of life. ***“Eye has not seen this reality. Ear has not heard it. It did not enter into the heart or mind of any person what God has planned. God’s plan is mostly for those who love Him.”***

This reality is ultimately heaven, but those things that God has planned are also those of this present life – it is what God is doing right now in our lives as He works out His plan.

B. If we do not receive the knowledge of God’s plan, we do not understand the reality, the wisdom from God, by how we perceive the world around us, how do we receive it?

Vs. 10 tells us,

“But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”

In short, it has to come to us through revelation. But it is more than just the written revelation in the Word of God. It is through the ministry of the Spirit of God.

1. This ministry of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, transmits the understanding of this reality through the Word of God. The Spirit of God actually tells us what God was and is thinking.

2. Paul uses an illustration to help us understand the ministry of the Spirit of God. He said in **vs. 11-13**:

“For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things 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 know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

As a person is known and understands himself through his spirit (His real self) so also we can only understand God through what the Spirit of God reveals to us.

3. The Bible is clear that the real person is the real source of who we are and what we do. Remember the statement in **James 3:8-12**:

“But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.”

The source is the spirit inside of us that is expressed through our tongues. We also know God by the Word of God and the work of the Spirit of God in the Word.

4. **Vs. 13** describes how Paul operated because of this reality.

“These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

His method was to speak what God said in His Word through the Spirit of God comparing scripture to scripture.

II. Some Cannot Receive God’s Wisdom (v. 14-16)

A. Paul now turns to those who are the audience for the revelation of God’s wisdom. First, he tells us that some cannot receive the wisdom of God because they have not the Spirit of God in their lives. The Apostle wrote in **vs. 14**,

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

The reason that some got very angry when Paul preached was that they did not understand because they did not have the Spirit of God to help them.

1. This makes a real difference for us also when we witness to others. Some to whom we speak God is already working in and because of this, the Gospel makes all the sense in the world. To others, this is simply foolishness. It makes no sense at all.

2. We evangelize together with the Spirit of God. It is not our effort alone that produces conversions.

B. The second group is mentioned here in **vs. 15-16**.

“But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For ‘who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.”

This second group is often misidentified. They are **not** the ones with their heads in the clouds and a steeple in their throats. They are those who have the Holy Spirit in their hearts to understand God’s wisdom. Paul says three things about them and us.

1. They understand the truth. They are the only ones who really grasp the realities of life.

2. They cannot be understood by those who do not have this wisdom because they do not have the Spirit of God in them.

3. They have the mind of Christ. They have the ability to perceive and act according to the values of God because they learn this from the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

What does this teach us?

1. The only way we can have true wisdom is to have the wisdom of God. Through the Word of God we can understand some of God's timeless plan for His World.
2. We also understand that while we must strive to be as clear as we can be in our presentation of the Gospel, it is God the Spirit working through us and His Word that produces conversions. Conversions are not just decisions, ultimately they are transformations.