

The Wisdom That God Desires To Share With Us.

Text: 1 Cor 2:6-16

Suggested Hymns:

499, 379, 175, 134, 163

1) To Men This Wisdom Is a Mystery

2) The Holy Spirit Brings God's Wisdom to Us

3) God Wants His Wisdom To Become Our Possession

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, ⁶ *However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.* ⁷ *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,* ⁸ *which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

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."* ¹⁰ *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*

¹¹ *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.* ¹² *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.* ¹³ *These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

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.* ¹⁵ *But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.* ¹⁶ *For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

A politician had attended a conference in which the critical state of the nation had been the chief issue. As he left, he muttered to himself, “*I wish I were dead.*” At this all-important conference his wisdom had failed him. He was filled with despair. He had not been wise enough to see the way that would bring his nation safely through its problems.

In our own land many politicians have been called together to conferences to direct the affairs of the nation. There have been many issues such as water and the economy. And still we hear the criticism that the Government is acting in a foolish manner. The fault does not lie in a certain political party, as many would like to believe, but in the imperfection of human wisdom. Human wisdom does not suffice for every time and occasion.

In the words of the Apostle Paul, human wisdom permits its followers to ***[come] to nothing***. Only God possesses a wisdom that will not fail us in any situation or emergency. Let us consider the wisdom that God desires to share with us. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. To Men This Wisdom Is A Mystery

Paul preached the Wisdom of God in a simple fashion. Our text refers to the preaching of St. Paul in the city of Corinth in Greece. When the Apostle had come to this city, he had made no attempt to display his learning or to parade his own wisdom before the people.

He could say, ¹ *When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom ...* ³ *I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling.* ⁴ *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom.*¹ Those are his words.

In our time, a man coming to a city for such a preaching mission as St. Paul was to fulfil in Corinth would certainly prepare for his coming with a great deal of publicity. Certainly his picture would appear on the front page of the local paper. There would be posters all over town advertising the place and time of his appearance. People on TV and Radio would be telling of the illustrious Apostle who is about to arrive in the city.

But St. Paul’s appearance in Corinth had been almost the very opposite. He came unannounced. His heart was filled with fear, his mind with misgivings. To his hearers it seemed that his preaching lacked forcefulness and persuasion. He

had appeared as a humble person in a very simple manner. And therefore unbelievers had considered his preaching foolishness.

In neighbouring Athens they called him a babbler.² They had no better opinion of him in Corinth. But what they regarded as foolishness was the wisdom of God. Therefore Paul insists, *But we speak the wisdom of God.*

God's Wisdom is a mystery to people. The people of Corinth found no wisdom in Paul's preaching. That was not because his words lacked wisdom, but because the wisdom he preached was the wisdom of God. And that wisdom is a mystery to people. Paul says, *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom.*

We do not need to search in the field of religion or spiritual things to find that God's wisdom is a mystery to men. We see it even in nature, in the things that we use and handle every day.

What could be more common than a stone that we find on the ground? Pick it up! It seems to be a cold and lifeless thing. Look at it! It seems to have neither design nor beauty. We are inclined to think that, if this stone is a product of the creation of God, there is little evidence here of His wisdom. But what is that stone really?

The geologist will look at that stone, and he will say, perhaps, that it is a mixture of quartz, an iron compound, and lime. And he may permit us to look at the stone through his microscope and point out to us the beauty of the crystals in that rock, their colour, and their design.

And then we may take the stone to a chemist. He will analyse a bit of it and tell us what elements it contains and in what proportion they are present. Perhaps he will point out to us the wonder of the natural laws according to which certain chemicals combine with others to make a new substance and how these combinations always take place according to a definite proportion.

Now we begin to realise something of the wisdom that has gone into the creation of this stone. But we have not yet discovered what the stone actually is. We show it next to a student of physics. He works over the stone with his light-producing machines, his microscopes and camera, and he tells us that our stone consists of a large number of tiny particles, called molecules and atoms. Then there are even smaller creations of God, protons and electrons, moving about one

another in such intricate patterns and at such tremendous speed that it has not been possible to discover by what law they move.

People have not been able to penetrate into the mystery of such an ordinary thing as a stone. Ultimately even the wisest man must say, *I do not know what it is. It is the product of the infinite wisdom of God.*

Even the study of the wonders of nature must move us to confess that the wisdom of God is a mystery. But when St. Paul says in our text, ***But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory***, he means something else than the mysteries of nature. He refers to that particular wisdom of God that is revealed to us in the Gospel of Jesus.

The very heart of that Gospel is the startling announcement, *“The Son of God is crucified to atone for the sins of the world!”* What human mind can grasp all that is involved in this tremendous revelation! The Son of God so holy, so pure! The world so depraved by sin! Yet the Holy One becomes a sacrifice for the unholy! What abounding grace is shown here for the undeserving world! What love for those who merited only to be cast away! Here is a mystery that could come only from heaven and which ***“Even angels long to look into these things,”*** as St. Peter says.³

Furthermore St. Paul says, it is ***“the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory.”*** Out of this act of wisdom, God caused to flow forth to men of the world blessings beyond human perception. ***“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.”*** All this belongs to that Gospel wisdom to which St. Paul refers and by which God planned even in the times before the existence of the world to bring to man a glorious salvation. This wisdom is indeed a mystery to men.

It is good for us that the wisdom of God is a mystery. Suppose that the wisdom of God was no greater than the wisdom of men, how uncertain our life would be. Only too often the wisdom of men fails. We have witnessed the fall of many dictatorships. Man’s wisdom in becoming great, filling their country with skilful propaganda, establishing complex organisations controlled by the military always fails in the end.

Suppose that God's wisdom was like that, planning great and glorious things for men, only to come to naught in the end. But Paul says, *we speak wisdom ... yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.* ⁷ *But we speak the wisdom of God.* And then Paul points out that this wisdom comes to us as a mystery. That should fill us with hope. God's wisdom will not fail as the wisdom of men fails. No, our salvation cannot fail. The mysterious wisdom of God has planned it from eternity.

2. The Holy Spirit Brings God's Wisdom To Us

Just as the wisdom of God that brings salvation to us is a mystery, even so it is impossible for us to receive it by ourselves. It comes to us through the activity of the Holy Spirit.

In this regard St. Paul writes, *we speak the wisdom ... which none of the rulers of this age knew. ...* ¹² *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.* ¹³ *These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches.*

The Holy Spirit searches the deep things of God. The wisest men might plan and scheme their life-time through, and yet not hit on such a plan of salvation as God has prepared for men. The plan of our salvation was conceived in the secret depths of the God-head. Not even the angels could know of these things until the wisdom of God was revealed to men.

We need someone who is able to enter into the most secret depth of the God-head to bring to us the wisdom of God that saves us. It is the Holy Spirit who does that for us.

Of Him our text tells us, *the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.* ¹¹ *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.* ¹² *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.*

When a field commander desires information regarding the enemy that he is to face and overcome on the battlefield, he will call in a man from the intelligence

department, who will be able to make his way into the very heart of the enemy forces to discover the secrets that will enable him to gain the victory.

There we have a rough example of the service which God's Holy Spirit is constantly rendering to us. We have no way of learning the wisdom of God. But the Holy Spirit enters into the very heart of God to bring to us a revelation of the wisdom of God. The spy gets his information without the consent of the enemy, but God is pleased to have the Holy Spirit reveal to us His wisdom. He Himself sends the Holy Spirit to us in the Word that is preached to us, so that the deep things of God may be made known to us. Paul says, *things that have been freely given to us by God.*

But just as man is the only one able to tell us what is hidden in his heart, so there is only One who can inform us of the wisdom of God. That is the Holy Spirit. He must reveal it to us, or we shall never know it. Only the Holy Spirit has free access to the source of that wisdom, *For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*

The Holy Spirit prepares man to receive God's wisdom. We also need the Holy Spirit's help to get the wisdom of God, because our minds are not ready to receive it. St. Paul directs our attention to this truth when he writes, *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 mind and heart of man have been so incapacitated by sin that they can no longer serve to receive the wisdom of God. The Holy Spirit must again make them receptive for that revelation. And He does just that, for we have the assurance, *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.*

The Holy Spirit renders an immeasurable service. We find at times that people are negligent in their praise of the Holy Spirit and His work. The entire doctrine of the Holy Spirit is rather hazy to them. Perhaps it is because we do not speak often enough of Him and His work. Perhaps it is also because they do not realise how very great that service is which the Holy Spirit renders to them.

If we did not have the Holy Spirit, we would be like the man who has a fine deep well of pure and refreshing water, but no pump with which to bring it up. He is oppressed by the heat of the day, and he longs for a drink to quench his thirst. The water is there, but it will not flow out by itself, and he cannot reach it with his hands. He needs the pump that will reach down into the earth and bring up the water for him to drink.

So do we, troubled by the sin that is within our own nature and oppressed by the evil that is around us in the world, need to be refreshed by the wisdom of God. But we cannot get it by ourselves. Oh, thank God that the Holy Spirit is there to bring us that wisdom and to enable us to receive it.

3. God Wants His Wisdom To Become Our Possession

By the work of the Holy Spirit God's wisdom comes to us. Now it is not the will of God that this should happen only for a moment or only on certain occasions. God wants His wisdom to control our life so that by it a new nature is created within us.

It should become our constant possession, a new way of life. Paul says of all those who have received the wisdom of God, *we have the mind of Christ*. Our very nature has been changed by the wisdom of God, and our instruction in it, so that we no longer live as people of the world, but as Christians, thinking and speaking and doing the things that are pleasing to our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Of such a person the Apostle says, *But he who is spiritual judges all things*. Once we were without the influence of the Holy Spirit. Now that the wisdom of God has become our own, the Holy Spirit is the ruling influence in our entire life. Working, playing, in the home, out of the home, we judge all things according to that wisdom which the Holy Spirit has brought to us.

This difference between those who have received the wisdom of God and those who are yet without it is so real that even the people around us take notice of it. And at times we shall have to expect to endure ill will and ridicule because of it. Then for our comfort we should remember that Paul says, *he who is spiritual ... is rightly judged by no one*. We are accountable to God, not to men, who misjudge us. God knows that we are living to Him, and He will reward the patience we show in bearing the abuse by the unconverted people of the world.

Only Christians have the Wisdom of God. For our comfort against the evil people around us let us also remember this, that it is the privilege of the Christian people of the world to have the wisdom of God. The others do not have it. St. Paul says, *we speak wisdom among those who are mature*. The mature ones are they who have reached a certain goal in their life, faith in Jesus Christ. We have reached that goal. We have received Jesus Christ into our heart.

We have been entrusted with the wisdom of God. It is God's assurance to the humble and the lowly of the earth, to the burdened consciences, the sin-wearied hearts. You are His chosen children. You have received His wisdom.

O Christian people, treasure this precious gift! Be bold to exercise those spiritual powers it has created in you. Comfort yourselves with its sweet assurances. Live in it on every occasion. It will bring you, in the end, to the promised glory of heaven. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ 1 Corinthians 2:1,3-4

² Acts 17:18

³ 1 Pet. 1:12