

“Christ Crucified, The Wisdom Of God”

1 Corinthians 2:1-16

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Teaching Aim: To realize we don't have to be specially trained or have great oratory skills to be used by God, we simply need to be sensitive to the leading of His Holy Spirit and then obey Him. To understand two great mysteries are revealed to us in the New Testament. The first is the Good News of the Gospel, and the second is the truth that believing Jews and believing Gentiles now form one body; we call this body the Church. To encourage every Christian to diligently seek *“the mind of Christ”* in every situation of life!

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD'S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Paul's ministry, a demonstration of the power of God through the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:1-5)

1. Young Saul of Tarsus was educated in Jerusalem under the teaching of the famous Jewish rabbi Gamaliel. During his journey on the road to Damascus intending to persecute Christians, Saul was knocked to the ground by the resurrected Jesus and radically converted to Him. Saul (whose name was later changed to “Paul,” meaning “small”) was called by Jesus to be his Apostle to the Gentiles; Paul would additionally become the world's greatest evangelist as well as writing 13 of the 27 books found in the New Testament. Even though Paul had all these credentials, how did he feel about himself (**vs. 1**)? How did some of Paul's critics feel towards him? (See **2 Cor. 10:10**) Have you ever doubted your own ability to speak publicly? Why? What other famous people in the Bible struggled with the idea of speaking publicly? (See **Exod. 4:10; Jer. 1:5-6**) Did God use them despite their fears? Can God use you despite your fears?
2. According to **verse 2**, what was the heart of the message Paul always brought when preaching? Why do you think Paul always focused on the topic of Christ crucified? (See **1 Cor. 15:3-4; John 3:16; Rom. 5:8-10; Acts 4:12**) Why is it important for us to focus on Scripture when preaching or teaching today instead of tickling the ears of those listening? (See **Isa. 55:11; Rom 1:16**)
3. In **verse 3** we learn that Paul experienced weakness, fear, and much trembling during his ministry. What caused this? Have you ever been forced to suffer because of your faith in Jesus Christ? According to **2 Cor. 11:22-28**, how severely did Paul have to suffer for his faith in Jesus? Why do you think Paul pressed on despite this horrible suffering? Do you carry a burden for the lost like Paul did? What are you doing to reach others for Christ?

4. The Corinthians as Greeks were impressed by rhetorical eloquence, intellectualism, and philosophy. Paul was not. What can we learn about Paul's preaching style from **verse 4**? (**See 1 Cor. 1:17-18, 23-24**) Paul was not concerned about the accolades of man, he cared more about demonstrating the power of God to spiritually lost people who desperately needed Christ. What are some ways that you've seen God's power at work in your own life?

5. What are some of the dangers of a having a charismatic leader overseeing a church (**vs. 5**)? Have you ever made the mistake of putting your focus on a man rather than on God? What happened as a result? What principle do we learn from John the Baptist in **John 3:30**? How can we apply this principle to our own lives today?

Part II: The wisdom of God and the mystery hidden throughout the ages now revealed (1 Cor. 2:6-13)

1. As Paul wrote he was speaking "*wisdom among those who are mature.*" In this case, Paul was speaking spiritual things to born-again believers (**vs. 6**). Have you ever had a person you were trying to witness to tell you that the cross of Christ makes absolutely no sense to them? What was your response to them? Why is the crucifixion of Jesus Christ everything to those who believe, but foolishness to the unbeliever? (**See 2 Cor. 4:3-4**)

2. How would you define the word "*mystery*" (**vs. 7**). (See Dictionary) What is a "*mystery*" in the New Testament sense? What Old Testament mysteries are revealed in the New? (**See Rom. 16:25-27; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; Eph. 3:4-6; 5:31-32; Col. 1:26-27; 1 Tim. 3:16**) According to **vs. 7**, when did God ordain the hidden wisdom revealed for our glory? (**See Eph. 1:4; Rom. 8:29-30**)

3. **Verse 8** may have meant either "*human rulers*" or "*rulers in the spiritual realm.*" Which of the two do you think Paul was referring to in **verse 8**? Do you think Herod and Pontius Pilate would have allowed Jesus to be crucified had they known who He really was?

4. What Satan thought was his greatest victory (the cross) turned into his greatest defeat (**vs. 8**). Do you think Satan would have changed his mind had he known what would result from Christ's death on the cross? What can we learn about Satan from this miscalculation? What incredible truth does **verse 8** reveal to us about the Lord Jesus Christ? (**See Psa. 24:7-10**)

5. Paul makes reference to **Isa. 64:4** in **verse 9**. In the context, Paul is relating the gospel message to Israel's deliverance from the 70-year Babylonian captivity. For 70-years the Israelites from Judea were in captivity because of their sin and rebellion against God. What kind of bondage are unbelievers in today, even if they don't realize it? (**See Rom. 3:23; 5:8-10; 6:23**)

6. **Verse 9** is often quoted at memorial services to describe the beauty of heaven; the verse does not. **Verse 9** describes the beauty of the Jesus Christ and God's grace in freeing us from sin. When did you first realize that you were a sinner in need of a Savior? How has coming to faith in Jesus Christ changed your life? If you haven't come to faith, why haven't you?

7. What are some ways that we can better understand the deep truths of Scripture today (**vs. 10**)? Who does understand and illuminates "*the deep things of God*" for us (**vs. 11**)? What does the word "*theology*" mean? (See Dictionary) Why do you think so many people look upon "*theology*" and "*Bible doctrine*" in a negative light today? Should they?

8. According to **verses 12 & 13**, how does the Holy Spirit assist us today? What can we learn about the Holy Spirit from the Shoreline Community Church "*Statement of Faith*?" "We believe the Holy Spirit is one in essence with the Father and Son (**Deut. 6:4**), yet different in role. We believe the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son (**John 14:26; 16:7**) to convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment (**John 16:8-11**). He is called the Spirit of Christ (**Rom. 8:9; 1 Pet. 1:11**) and also the Spirit of truth (**John 16:13**). The Holy Spirit has been active in creation (**Gen. 1:2**), revelation (**Is. 61:1-3**) empowerment (**Ex. 31:2-6**), and inward renewal (**Ps. 51:10-12**). The Spirit regenerates (**John 3:5-8**), baptizes (**1 Cor. 12:13**), enlightens (**Eph. 1:17,18**), teaches (**John 14:26**), sanctifies (**Gal. 5:16-18**), seals (**Eph. 1:13,14**), counsels (**John 16:7**), and transforms the lives of believers into Christ-likeness (**Gal. 5:22,23**). The work

of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus by showing His disciples who He is (**John 16:7-15**). We believe the Holy Spirit empowers each believer for ministry (**Acts 1:7,8**) and is the giver of spiritual gifts (**Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-11; 1 Pet. 4:10,11**). The Holy Spirit is the Comforter (**John 14:16 KJV**) who helps us in our weaknesses by interceding for us when we are too weak and discouraged to pray (**Rom. 8:26,27**).” Do any of the roles of the Holy Spirit surprise you? If so, why?

Part III: The natural (or unregenerate) man does not receive the things of God, only the regenerate man has the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:14-16)

1. According to **verse 14**, will “*the natural man*” (meaning the unregenerate man) receive the things of the Spirit of God? Why or why not? (**See John 3:3; Rom 8:6-8**) What prerequisite must happen before a person “*can*” come to faith in Christ? (**See John 1:12-13; 3:3; 6:44, 65; Acts 13:47-48; 16:31**)

2. The Bible is our manual for life and teaches us the difference between right and wrong. Why is it critical for us to spend quality time in God’s Word every day (**vs. 15**)? Do you find that the Bible has become your guidebook for life? What are some practices that have helped you grow spiritually? Should it bother us when unbelievers look down on us because we are followers of Jesus Christ? Why or why not?

3. What are some ways that you’ve seen Christians use their past experiences to minister to unbelievers today (**vs. 14**)? What past experiences have you turned around in your own life and used for God’s glory?

4. **Verse 16** begins with a quote from **Isa. 40:13** taken from the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament). What is the obvious answer to the question presented both by Isaiah and Paul? What do we mean when we say that someone has “*the mind of Christ*?” Every Christian should be growing spiritually, are you? What steps are you taking to grow spiritually?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- It does not require great intellectual or rhetorical skills to be used by God, just a willing heart and a trusting spirit.
- The power to change lives is not found in the oratory skills of the preacher, but rather the Word of God and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit within us.
- Although we are to respect our spiritual leaders, we should never idolize them.
- Salvation is a gift from God; all glory belongs to Him.
- The mystery hidden throughout the ages, but now revealed by Paul was that, "*in Christ,*" believing Jews and believing Gentiles form one body, today we call this body the Church.
- As Christians, we should strive toward growing spiritually and having "*the mind of Christ*" in every situation.