

1 Corinthians 2:6-10 For Mature Persons Falls Ch. PM 1/21/2024

In 1 Cor. chapters 1-3, Paul uses the term wisdom sixteen times! Why? Because the word “wisdom” was an important word that had been mis-used in the city of Corinth. Paul was recovering the word ‘wisdom,’ and restoring its definition. The first thing Paul needed to do was to say what that wisdom was not, and that began with acknowledging how the rulers of this age were using the term and presenting the concept. Here is the good news...

As Christ completes us into true maturity in which we lack nothing, He grants us the essential gift of wisdom.

1. Not the wisdom of human ingenuity, which is not wisdom at all. (v.6)

Verse 6, “*Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away.*”

mature = complete, totality as opposed to partiality or limitedness, full grown.

Verse 6, Paul starts by acknowledging that there is another kind of wisdom is not true wisdom. This world’s brand of wisdom is only human ingenuity, with a limit of how far human creativity can take us. Human figuring. Paul labels this in verse 6 as a batch of wisdom “*of this age*” or, a wisdom “*of the rulers of this age.*” What about those rulers? They were doomed to pass away. They are continuously doomed to be passing away = to be diminishing, to be becoming powerless, to be wasting away. The rulers were in the process of being reduced to nothing. It was a continuous and unstoppable process.

Who gets to say what wisdom is, definitively? What is real wisdom?

God gets to define the word wisdom, through with His apostle Paul.

God gets to define maturity. Maturity means completeness.

If the people in the city of Corinth were able to define who is mature, then they would define it in the world’s terms – better education, high status, or most giftedness. Who was acting appropriately in all situations? God defines that for us.

This touches the questions of all of the world’s religions – questions of God and humanity, questions of pure knowledge, sources of that knowledge, application of that knowledge, mysteries, wisdom, revelation, and future glory.

The core issue is the contrast in Paul’s writing between a childish way of thinking, and an adult way of thinking. The phrase that may be the most familiar to us is coming up later in 1 Cor 13:11, eleven chapters beyond where we are now, where Paul would go on to write, “*when I was a child, ... I reasoned like a child...when I became a man, I gave up childish ways.*” What is less familiar to us is what Paul also wrote in chapter 14, verse 20, “*Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.*” So, an essential dynamic of wisdom for Paul in writing this letter was a contrast at the level of the

very definition of wisdom itself, and the contrast was between those who are not and those who are *spiritually mature*.

2. Rather, we receive the true wisdom of God, that was formerly secret. (v.7-8)

Verse 7, “*But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.*”

The secret dynamic was the idea that sinful human capacities of understanding cannot penetrate God’s truth and God’s wisdom without the event of Christ crucified and the work of the Holy Spirit. So, the word secret or the word as it is sometimes translated into English “mystery” is that which is too profound for human ingenuity. No human mind, no collection of minds coming together for discussion or study or conferring would be able to arrive at the wisdom of God. God must disclose it. God must impart wisdom, for wisdom to be gained. God can harden man’s heart (see Romans 11:25), God can announce things to happen later, when Christ comes and transforms whole persons (see 1 Cor 15:51), and God can open minds to grasp spiritual knowledge. Colossians 2:2, “*..that their hearts may be encouraged....to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ.*”

The spiritually mature are those upon whom God imparted His wisdom. The spiritual adults are those who have come under the word of the cross, or under the Spirit of God. Consider the only two categories of people in chapter 1:18, “*The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*” The Spiritually mature are those who are being saved, and how do we identify them – because they hear the word of the cross as the power of God. The spiritually immature only hear the word of the cross as folly. Why? Because they are perishing. Why are they perishing? Because they lack spiritual wisdom.

Again, this wisdom was important for Paul in this unit of three chapters. From where we are in our study today in chapter two, then going forward into the very next chapter, chapter 3, verse 1, Paul lamented the condition of the Corinthians was not yet at the desirable level. That diagnosis has had an impact on how Paul has set about writing this letter. Right after Paul wrote that we all have the mind of Christ as a part of our blessings from God in chapter 2:16, then in the next verse, which is 1 Cor 3:1, Paul wrote, “*But I brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ.*” The contrast is between spiritually mature and infants in Christ. The same contrast exists in Hebrews 5:13-14, where we read, “*for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. Therefore, let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity...*”

The contrast was not between the struggling and the perfect. No. No one can achieve perfection in this world. Rather, the contrast was between infants and adults, between the immature and the mature. What did that mean? It meant that possessing this wisdom was the key. The mature were those who already possess such a stance, such a perception of spiritual matters that they are ready to receive wisdom as the wisdom of God when they hear it. They were ready to perceive and reject foolishness as foolishness, when they heard that instead. The mature understand that wisdom began with Christ and all wisdom was contained in Christ. As wise King Solomon wrote in Proverbs 1:7, “*the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.*” and as wise Apostle Paul wrote in Colossians 2:3, “*in [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*”

We cannot tell an adult something silly, and make them believe it. We can fool a child, and lead them astray. But not an adult.

This condition of being a recipient of the true wisdom of God was a gift. 1 Cor. 1:30, “*...Christ Jesus, ...became to us wisdom from God.*” Christ Jesus became to us righteousness. Christ Jesus became to us sanctification. Christ Jesus became to us redemption. If we have spiritual maturity, it is a gift from Christ.

The phrase “*for our glory*” in verse 7 means we get salvation, we get wisdom, we get power, we get redemption. This all arises from one place, the crucified Christ. The cross was the fountainhead of all of these blessings, and all of this coming glory for us.

So, when Paul moved to verse 8, Paul reflected that it was the centrality of the cross that was the missing element in the mindset of unbelievers. Verse 8, “*None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*”

The “If” in Paul's sentence in verse 8 is interesting and uncommon.

If they had known that crucifying Jesus would only appear to wreck God's purposes, while in reality their crucifying of Jesus would fulfill God's purposes, they would not have participated in that hateful murderous act of crucifying Jesus. If they had any inkling that Jesus, in being crucified, would definitively win, they would not have crucified Him! How could they have known that glory belongs to the crucified one? They did not understand this. They could not have understood this. They were deficient in their knowledge and understanding. They were children in their spiritual outlook.

Jesus provides us with a view of true glory. True glory is to serve another, to help another, to give up self in order to benefit another. To do so at such an extreme level that the Lord Himself would be crucified, simply uncovers the core character of the Lord - glory. Love. Care. Giving. Providing.

The world is the opposite. The world is selfish, taking, uncaring, subtracting, and declining.

WE

Our future glorification (v.7)

Those who love God (v.9)

Jesus is glory.

Jesus is wisdom.

Jesus is self-giving.

Jesus produces in us this kind of glory and fullness to our humanity, and the world is always missing some piece of their humanity.

THEY

rulers of THIS age (v.6,v.8)

those who crucified the Lord of glory (v.8)

“They” are the influential, the powerful...

The world is shame.

The world is foolish.

The world is greedy.

The cross is the triumph which shows us the Lord of glory. The Son was glorified on Resurrection Sunday, yes, but the Son was also glorified on Good Friday itself. He is the Lord of glory in a beautiful way when he is being crucified for us. That moment was the world's watershed moment. It was the most glorious moment in human history. This was the only time the phrase "Lord of glory" was used in the Bible. It is connected to the verb "crucified."

Of course the cross was not the end of the Lord of glory.

Of course His resurrection and ascension would follow.

But the cross was that essential moment, without which none of the rest of it could follow!

It was upon that cross that Jesus removed the stinger from the sting of death. Paul will celebrate in such terms in this letter, in chapter 15, verse 55, "*O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?*" We were given the victory over death, and sin and the law's judgment through our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other method to receive victory and salvation and forgiveness. We see the cross, and we cry "Glory!"

Galatians 6:14, "*But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*"

Revelation 5:9, "*And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,...*"

3. The Spirit reveals this wisdom to us. (v.9-10)

Verse 9, "*But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”^{—10} these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.*"

Verse 9 – a quotation from Isaiah 64:3-4 with allusions from Isaiah 65:17 and Jeremiah 3:16. The point of verse 9 was that our knowledge is mature or

complete - we have no deficiency of knowledge like the rulers of the age did back in verse 8. Paul was showing here in verse 9 that while there was something that the rulers of this age did not understand when they crucified Jesus, and while there are those things that are not seen by any eye, and while there are those things not heard by any ear, and while there are those things not imagined by any heart, namely, the things that God has prepared for those who love God, all of those things are REVEALED TO US!

How are those things revealed to us? Paul goes on to say in verse 10 that those things are revealed to us by the Spirit. This means 3 things logically. 1) The Spirit is privy to the information. 2) The Spirit has the authority and the privilege to reveal to us that information. 3) There is no other source for this information! Isn't it in the Word of God? Yes, but people could read the Word and still not believe that Jesus was crucified, and so not gain redemption! The Spirit's work was required, to work with the Word of God. The Spirit of God reveals to us in these sacred pages that God loves us so much that God has prepared a heaven for us that no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no heart has imagined, and that heaven will be granted to us because of the cross. The Spirit reveals this to us. All of it. Humans cannot search through spiritual things and arrive at this knowledge on their own. Our own human wisdom and efforts are not sufficient to gain us this high wisdom and deep knowledge.

Next in verse 10 is the sentence, "*For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.*" It is not a searching to discover. Rather, it is a searching to explore, to gather, and to bring forward for delivery. We would say searches out. We would say explores. The Spirit digs into the depths of God the Father, everything that God is up to in the things that only God has seen, only God has heard, only God has imagined, and the Spirit of God is granted authority to explain to us what no other humans have seen. The Spirit of God paints a picture for our imaginations of something that we would otherwise be blocked from even imagining! The Spirit officially acts as the spokesperson for heaven, and says that there are deep purposes of God at work here, and the deep character of God is being shown in these events. The Spirit shows us God the Father! The heart of God! We come to get to know the depths of God's own self. Understand that this is only for those who love God (verse 9), and this is only through God's Spirit (verse 10). The Spirit reveals to us our Heavenly Father's innermost heart. Here in verse 10, we have the depths of God, and just six verses later, we will be told that we have the mind of Christ. Wow. What are we missing? Nothing! We are mature Christians, complete Christians, lacking no good thing.

Conclusion:

Receive and celebrate the gift of wisdom from God that He gives us through the preaching of Christ crucified.

1 Corinthians 1:23-25, “...*Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ [is] the power of God and the wisdom of God.*”

Why do we come to church? Contrary to the false beliefs of the health and wealth gospel – coming to church is not going to make us rich and healthy. Instead, we come to church because the Spirit of God in another way in the spiritual realm makes us rich in wisdom and wealthy in knowledge. We come to church, because in the Word and *through the Spirit*, and in the presence of God's people gathered here, we come to know and understand the good things, the best things. Best of all things that we get to know is we come to know God Himself!

One set of people never come to church, and another set of people never miss an opportunity to come to church. Why is that? Because we know that the Spirit hands out things right here and only right here, and the Spirit hands them out only to people who know God and love God. That is amazing. Listen to this inspired expression of how we feel about why would wouldn't miss this. Psalm 84:10-12, "*For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.*¹¹ *For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.*¹² *O Lord of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in You!*”