

Series on First Corinthians

I would like to share a sermon from Douglas Hamilton, Junction City coC, KS

Chapter 2: The Strong Gospel

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[Doug Hamilton Video link](#)

Douglas Hamilton entitled his lesson on the 2nd chapter of 1st Corinthians: *The Strong Gospel*.

Chapter 2:6-16 The Strong Gospel

Verses 6-9, God's Wisdom in a Mystery, Hidden

1 Corinthians 2:6-9 (NASB),

Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; ⁷ but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; ⁸ the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; ⁹ but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

SR: From verse 6 through the end of the chapter is one of my favorite passages in the Bible. It answers two very important questions. The first is, "Why did God hide His wisdom and speak in mystery and not plain language?" and the second, "How can we know what God's thinking is on things, what is on God's mind."

Verse 6,

we... speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom... not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;

- God's wisdom is for the mature (in Christ), not for outsiders. It's not even for "baby" (i.e. newly converted) Christians as Paul will tell us in chapter three of 1 Corinthians. And as we saw in our study of the book of Hebrews, chapter 5:11-14 & chapter 6:1-3, there are elementary teachings described as the "milk" of the scriptures and deeper things described as "solid food." And solid food is for the mature (in Christ). So this wisdom that Paul is now presenting is SOLID FOOD.
- God's wisdom is not the wisdom of the world. In fact, in many areas the world's wisdom is EXACTLY the opposite.
- Nor (of the wisdom) of the rulers (elite) of this world.
 - They will end up on the ash heap of history. They are all destined to die and are passing away.

Verse 7,

But, we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory;

- Paul is continuing with the contrast between God's wisdom & man's wisdom that he began in chapter 1:18ff. God's wisdom is foolishness to those who are perishing...
- We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, Paul says. What is a mystery? Paul says, It's hidden... the hidden wisdom of God.
 - What does that mean? God intentionally hid some of His wisdom!
 - **Why** would He do that? Verse 8 tells us, as we will see in a moment.
- But, how do we know this was intentional? Because this hidden wisdom was predestined before the ages... i.e. designed (and in existence) before the creation and the intended result (of this hidden wisdom) was...
- **"to our glory."** *the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory;*

Whatever reason God had to hide His wisdom, the end result was to our glory! We benefitted from this hidden wisdom! This reminds me of the passage from...

Proverbs 25:2 (ESV)

It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out.

Verse 8,

*the wisdom which **none** of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it **they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;***

- The rulers of this age (and you can include Satan in that list)
 - Did not understand the mystery wisdom.
 - How do we know that? *because if they had **they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.***
 - So, part of the mysterious hidden wisdom must have something to do with crucifying the Lord of glory, that is, Jesus.
 - If the wisdom wasn't a mystery, wasn't hidden they would not have killed Jesus.
- And So, WHY did God HIDE His wisdom? So that Jesus **would be crucified!**
THAT WAS THE POINT OF HIDING THE WISDOM!

Vss 6-8 answers:

- Why God did NOT kill Adam and Eve "on the day that they sinned." The solution was hidden until Jesus was crucified (i.e. the solution)

Let me suggest that when God did not carry out the physical death of Adam & Eve, on the day that they sinned, the celestial host witnessing this event must have been perplexed. How can God, who speaks and the thing happens (Psalm 33:9), say that Adam & Eve will die on the day that they eat of the forbidden fruit and then after they do, after they've sinned,... they don't die on that very same day. How can this happen?! That is, God spoke, BUT it didn't happen!

If there was ever a time that the accuser, Satan, could claim, "Unfair, unfair", this was it. Though we know Satan searched the scriptures as evidenced by his use of them in tempting Jesus, God's wisdom was hidden from him and from man.

Imagine his surprise, during the three days following the crucifixion, when Satan learns **that his manipulation** of man, his deliberate action, to kill Jesus, is **the very thing** that empowers God to raise Jesus from the dead! **What MUST that scene have been like?** And thus Satan is vanquished and his works destroyed, (Hebrews 2:14,15).

Hebrews 2:14,15 (ESV)

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, [He became flesh], that through [His] death he might destroy the one who ha[d] the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

- **God's hidden wisdom revealed, also answers:** Why Noah was saved through the flood. The action necessary to begin a new life, free from the old world of sin & death that perished. The hidden knowledge of the reality that is baptism, 1 Peter 3:18-21, that now saves us.
- **It answers:** Why God told Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. Imagine! Here we have in the very 1st book of the Bible, the salvation solution precisely revealed in the language of mystery. God offering His only Son! the Reality revealed.
- **It answers:** Why the Mosaical law was given, the law of Christ hidden in the language of mystery. A physical representation of THE spiritual realm, copies of the realities. (See the whole book of Hebrews)
- All scripture written BEFORE Jesus' death, burial, & resurrection are written in this hidden language of mystery to bring about the sacrifice that saves. Things afterwards are written in the language of revelation. The mystery revealed.

Verse 9, *but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND which HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."*

Paul quotes from... Isaiah 64:4 (ESV)

*From of old no one has heard
or perceived by the ear,
no eye has seen a God besides you,
who acts for those who wait for him.*

- Isaiah's point is that no one has seen **any other god**, besides or **except You God**. The *Tree of Life*, translation drops the phrase "a god" there and says "no eye **has seen God**, except You..." Making this perhaps a messianic verse in essence saying that only the messiah has ever seen God. Which is exactly what Jesus says in:

John 6:46 (NASB)

Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; **He has seen the Father**.

- Paul is applying the perception of our eyes & ears, or lack of perception, to what God HAS prepared for those who love Him. i.e. No one can perceive what God has prepared for us.

1 Corinthians 2:9,

"THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND which HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN. The ESV says here: NOR THE HEART OF MAN IMAGINED

What things haven't...? God? NO! Paul says,... "What things haven't been seen, heard, or imagined?"

ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

We cannot EVEN IMAGINE what God has prepared for those who love him as a result of His use of the language of mystery, of writing in mysteries in bringing about the death of His son to our glory. 2:7,8.

- Paul will then go on to make the point that no can perceive the things about God unless God reveals it to us, beginning in the next verse.

Verses 10-16, God's Wisdom Revealed

How can we KNOW what God is thinking? What is His will for us?

1 Corinthians 2:10-16,

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³ which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. ¹⁴ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised [discerned]. ¹⁵ But he who is spiritual appraises [judges] all things, yet he himself is appraised [judged] by no one. ¹⁶ For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.

Verse 10, *For to us God revealed them [the things of God] through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths [or the deep things] of God.*

- To us, after THE event (after Christ's death, burial, & resurrection), that the mysterious would bring about, God revealed the mysteries.
- How did He do that? *through the Spirit*. That's what the Spirit does,
- He searches ALL things, even the depths (or deep things) of God.

Verse 11, *For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.*

Paul's reasoning is based on what we know from the revealed wisdom of God, that we are a three part being, consisting of body, soul, & spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

- No one knows another's thoughts only the spirit of that person that's in them.
- Likewise, no one knows God's thoughts except His Spirit.
- And God's Spirit knows God deeply. *So, how does that help us?*

Verse 12, *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,*

- Now God has given us His Spirit, not the spirit of the world

The wisdom of God contrasted with the wisdom of the world again. God's wisdom is foolishness to the natural, worldly person.

- So that we MAY KNOW the THINGS freely given to us by God

God has given us His Spirit FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE that we MAY KNOW the things God has freely given us.

How did He do that? We received Holy Spirit at baptism (Acts 2:38). But how does the Holy Spirit instruct us on the things that God has given us? Vs 13...

Verse 13, *which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.*

These things we speak

- Not in words from human wisdom. God is NOT a figment of man's imagination!
- But those taught by the Spirit, the Spirit uses words to instruct us.
- Combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. Where are these words found? The Spirit would use God's words would He not? They are found in God's word, the Bible, His word.

God's mind (what He thinks about things) is taught us by the Spirit in spiritual words.

Verse 14, *But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he **cannot** understand them, because they are spiritually appraised/discerned.*

- *The natural worldly man rejects spiritual things, being foolishness to him.*
- *And he CANNOT understand them, (that word "CANNOT" pops out at me. It means they LACK the ABILITY, in this case, to understand. Why?) Because "the things of the Spirit of God" are spiritually discerned.*

Compare this with Romans 1:18ff and let me suggest that it is God's design (ie He has made it so) that if people reject Him they CANNOT understand Him (He let's them believe the lie) until they have a desire for the truth.

Verse 15, *But he who is spiritual appraises/judges all things, yet he himself is appraised/judged by no one.*

- *The spiritual person appraises, judges, all things.* How do you determine what you think about something? How do you decide what is moral or immoral, right or wrong, good or bad? The spiritual person judges all things. It's something you sit down and think about! What standard does the spiritual person use? Their own discernment?

Do you know the Bible has something to say about EVERY aspect of human life? Veritology - what is truth, Philosophy & Ethics, Anthropology - who is man, Theology - who is God, Science, History, Sociology - human relationships, the State & Law, Labor, & Benevolence. Every aspect of human life, God has something to say about it. Have we looked into the spiritual words to see what God thinks about these things?

Verse 15, *Continued*

- *Yet he himself (the spiritual person) is appraised/judged by no one (NASB). The NIV says it this way: but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments,*

The natural person is incapable of giving an accurate assessment of the spiritual person, his judgement will NOT be correct.

Verse 16 *For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.*

- This comes from Isaiah 40:13, *Who has measured or can fathom the Spirit of the Lord...*, the question God asked long ago. God is certainly NOT going to ask me for my advice, my counsel! Only the Holy Spirit knows the mind of the Lord.
- **But**, look at what we are given! **WE HAVE the mind of Christ**. How? God gave us His Spirit to live in us. 1 Corinthians 6:19 ... *your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God...*
- So, be transformed by renewing of your mind Paul says in:

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. **Then** you will be able to test and approve what God's will is —his good, pleasing and perfect will.

In Summary:

And so, in closing, how do you determine things? What do you think about the news of what's going on in our world today? In our country, our state, our neighborhood? Do you have spiritual words from **His Book** that expresses your judgement? If not, then how can you know what God thinks about these things? How can we know what **IS** God's good, pleasing and perfect will, without the spiritual words? We can't. And if we can't express our judgments using His spiritual words... then are we truly spiritual? Or are we really... natural and still conformed to this world?

One last thing. I'd like to finish with a reading of scripture. Part of it was read at John Knoblock's memorial. I looked it up and thought that it very well describes our lesson, the Strong Gospel...

1 Peter 1:3-12 (ESV)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully,¹¹ inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Invitation

We are extending the invitation, now, to anyone who is subject to it. If you need to, **Come**,... while we stand and sing.