

No Spirit, No Nothing – 1 Cor 2:10-16

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(Intro) **The over-riding** thought Paul is getting across, is that without the HS in our lives, we got nothing – at least nothing of any *eternal* value
No Spirit, **no nothing** – that's his point

And he makes it for two reasons I think

The first is to point out our complete inability to “get it”

It's kind of like the guy who blocked my shot one time in a high school basketball game
His name was Odell Tidwell – coolest basketball name I've ever heard
But he blocked my shot, and while running down the court he said – you got nothin'
IOW you don't have what it takes to get by me

And without the pride and bravado, that's kind of what Paul is saying here

“Without the HS, you don't have what it takes to get it – to see and experience the wisdom and power of God”

That's the first reason he makes this point of no Spirit, no nothing – to point out our complete inability to get it

- The second is to explain *why* some people don't get the things of God – like his holiness and justice and mercy
And why they don't get some of the things *believers* do – like worshipping, or tithing, or repaying evil for good, or blessing those who curse you

Some people don't get the *truths* of God, b/c they don't have the *Spirit* of God
And they don't have the Spirit of God b/c they don't believe in God
They don't believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of eternal life, thereby receiving the HS into their heart

If that's you, you got nothin'; No **Spirit, no nothing**; That's his point

And to get it across, he cites 3 different areas, or 3 different ways in which it's true
The first of which is the area of spiritual knowledge

No Spirit, no knowledge (v10-11)

The last part of v9, and the first part of v10 says that God has revealed to us the things he has prepared for us, through the Spirit
It's the Spirit who reveals the things of God to those who love him

And he's able to do so b/c *the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.* (10b)
IOW the HS, the 3rd person of the trinity, is able to reveal to us the things of God, including the things we never could have imagined from the depths of God . . .
B/c he knows them
He *searches* everything, continually, and therefore *knows* everything
Making him more than capable of revealing them to us

- And to support that – Paul draws an analogy in v11 between our spirit and the HS
Saying, just as we know *our* thoughts – that is, just as our spirit, the essence of who we are, knows what *we* think . . .
So the Spirit of God knows the Father's thoughts

Just as there's no thought or decision or inclination that's hidden from *ourselves* . . .
So there's no thought, or decision, or inclination that's hidden from *God* himself

That's the support Paul gives for the Spirit's ability to reveal spiritual truths

B/c he searches everything, and knows everything, *including* the thoughts of God from the **depths of God**

- And he's the only who does

11b – No one comprehends the thoughts of God *except* the Spirit of God; He's the key

Which means that without him in our lives and hearts – there's zero knowledge, zero awareness, and zero familiarity with the things of God
With the things he has *prepared for those who love him* (9b)

Yes, we have an awareness of his presence, power, and divine nature like Romans 1 says
Leaving us without excuse to seek him, and honor him, and thank him
But beyond that, beyond a general awareness, we're clueless as to the things God has for us – we have no knowledge of them; Including . . .

1. No knowledge of his purpose

Apart from the HS, we have no knowledge of his purpose to see us worship and glorify and love him with white hot passion, all our days, with all our heart – **it's lost on us**

2. No knowledge of his plans

His plans to use us and conform us into the likeness of his Son
“Become like Jesus? What's that?”

Apart from the Spirit, we don't even have the thought, let alone the desire

3. No knowledge of his promises

His promises to bless us and keep us and shine on us
To be our light in the midst of darkness

4. No knowledge of his provision

His faithfulness to provide for all our needs from his infinite supply of riches
And his faithfulness to give us the bread of life forever and ever
Without the HS we have no knowledge of that

5. No knowledge of his people

Which in some cases means people don't even know we exist
And for those who do, they still have no appreciation for our love for one another, or our love for God, or our passion to do his will
A knowledge of God's people is a HS revealed thing

6. No knowledge of his place

His place in heaven; Or his throne; Or the place he has prepared for us (**Summary**)

Without the HS in our lives we have no awareness, no familiarity, and certainly no appreciation for all the things that God has prepared for those who love him . . .
For those who *do* have the HS
Which means we got nothin; No **Spirit, no knowledge**

No Spirit, no understanding (v12,14,16)

This is the second area that's lacking as a result of the HS's absence

We have no ability to grasp/comprehend the meaning of spiritual things – we don't have it

And Paul hits this 3 times in as many verses here, starting in v12 where he says . . .

Now we have received not the spirit of the world . . .

Not the system of secular thinking; Not the mindset of man – *but the Spirit who is for God*

Why, so we can feel smug? No

We've been given God's Spirit, the HS, that *we might understand the things freely given us by God* (12b)

Things like forgiveness, and eternal life, and assurance, and faith

The implication being, that *without* the HS in our lives, we *have* no understanding

We have no grasp of the meaning or significance of these things for our lives

They're a great **big question mark**

- And then, in v14 he reiterates that thought, and expands on it by saying, **the natural person** . . .

Meaning the one who *hasn't* received the HS, the one who hasn't **been saved** . . . (14)

That's the *second* time he mentions understanding re the things of God

But this time, he adds 2 thoughts to the mix:

1. That **the natural** person is *unable* to understand the things of God (14b)

Unable b/c they're spiritually discerned – they're on a different plane; they're part of a different reality

It's kind of like saying that the average Joe is unable to understand quantum physics b/c it's a completely different realm . . .

And requires a completely different kind of thinking, with a heightened ability to discern what's going on

So too the things of God

- I was talking to a guy in our church this week

And he told me that before he surrendered his life to Christ about 3 years ago, he had tried to read the Bible, but felt like he was reading German; it didn't make any sense

But when he finally surrendered his life to Christ, it all changed

He began to see things he never saw, and understand like never before

And most importantly, he began to listen for what *God* wanted him to know, instead of just looking for what *he* wanted to know

What happened?

Well, he went from being a natural person, to a spiritual person

Someone *without* the HS, to someone *with* him

Someone *unable* to understand, to **someone able**

That's the first thing Paul adds to the mix here in v14 – **the natural** person *can't*

understand the things of God b/c they're **spiritually discerned**

2. They don't accept them in the *first* place b/c they think they're foolish

They think the Bible is crazy talk; *folly* as Paul says it; laughable

And therefore they *reject* what it has to say

Which means that without the Spirit – they *can't* understand, they *won't* understand (they refuse), and therefore *don't* understand

That's v14, and Paul's second reference to understanding

- His 3rd comes **in v16 where** he says . . .

This is a bit cryptic, but it's Paul's final proof that only spiritual people (i.e. Spirit-filled, Spirit-indwelt people) can understand **spiritual things**

But in order to see it, you have to understand his flow of thought

He's *not* intending to support what he just said in v15 – that's best viewed as a sort of parenthetical thought, an aside

Rather, he's picking up where he left off at the end of v14, to say – yep, it's true; nobody can understand the mind of the Lord; *except* those who have the mind of Christ (14,16)

That's the flow of thought, and that's the idea behind his rhetorical question that he quotes from Is 40:13

Who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? Nobody

Certainly not those who question God's wisdom and power and method like the

Corinthians were doing, and like so many continue to do today

They don't understand, and once again, *can't*

But *we* do Paul says – those of us who *do* believe; B/c we have the mind of *Christ*

We have *his* understanding and *his* perspective, as revealed to us and given to us, by his Spirit

IOW b/c of the HS within us who searches and knows the depths of God, including the mind of Christ . . .

B/c of that, we can understand spiritual truths and spiritual things in a way similar to that of Jesus

We have his mind, his way of thinking, his perspective, as revealed to **us by his Spirit**

No Spirit, no knowledge; No Spirit, no understanding; And last . . .

No Spirit, no insight (v13,15)

No ability to see clearly and intuitively into the nature of things

That's the third way Paul conveys his point that without the HS, we got nothin'

We have no insight to influence or teach others – **that's v13**

And we have no insight to discern the spiritual nature of life, and people – that's v15

- Let's look at those in turn; **v13**

This – this truth about *the things freely given us by God* (12b)

Interpreting – explaining or giving insight into the nature of spiritual truths

Paul is basically saying that we have the ability as Spirit-filled followers of Jesus Christ, to explain and give insight to others, b/c of the Spirit's help

He teaches us the things to say, in order to explain them to others

The implication being, that apart from the Spirit, we lack the insight necessary to give *others* insight

We lack the ability to interpret or explain spiritual truths

I experience this every single week, and I hope you do too

As the Spirit gives me insight and the words to explain God's Word . . .

I trust he's giving you the insight to absorb it and understand

Both are necessary for internal transformation, and both **are Spirit-dependent**

- **That's the first** area in which we lack insight apart from the HS – teaching and influencing others

The second area is discerning the spiritual nature of people and life in general

Apart fr the Spirit, we have no insight to discern the spiritual nature of life and people

To discern what's good and what's not; What's better and what's worse

Where a person's heart is, and where it isn't; That's v15

As opposed to the natural person of v14, who can't understand *anything* of a spiritual nature . . .

The spiritual person judges or discerns *all* things; He has insight into *all* things spiritual

That doesn't mean we have complete or *perfect* insight, but we certainly have far more than those **without the Spirit**

That's the first part of v15

- And then he adds that the spiritual person *is himself to be judged by no one*
No one that is, who is natural, or without the Spirit
The spiritual person is not to be judged by those who are unspiritual

I think that's the case for two reasons:

1. That's the context here in v14-15 where Paul's going back and forth to contrast spiritual people with natural people . . .
2. A little later in 1 Cor 5:9-12 – he tells us explicitly, that as believers, as spiritual people, we *are* to judge other believers
At least those inside the church who profess Jesus as Lord
We *are* to make a judgment call as to their obvious sin, and our association w/ them

For those 2 reasons then, I think Paul has *unbelievers* in mind at the end of v15 . . .

Saying that believers shouldn't be judged by those who have no insight into spiritual things

Those who can't understand the very thing that most defines a follower of Christ

That most compels us toward love and good deeds

Believers are not to be judged by unbelievers – b/c they lack the Spirit, and therefore lack insight; **No Spirit**, no insight (**Summary**)

- We can't *know* anything of any eternal value or consequence
We can't *understand* anything of any eternal value
We can't *perceive* anything of any eternal value
We are HS dependent people through and through

Which means we'd be wise to dial in to his leading and **prompting and guidance**

Otherwise, in the words of Odell Tidwell – we got nothin'