

Our Faith Is Not Blind – 1 Cor 2:4-10a

3 numbers – 3200; 505; 65; Amazing time of worship

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you get baptized

That's one of the next steps in your newfound life in Christ

To declare your allegiance to, and relationship with Jesus, in the waters of baptism

It's God's way in the Bible of showing outwardly, what happened inwardly

So be sure to pick up a baptism packet, work through it, and then get it back to us so you can be baptized next month

Review

That said, we've taken a break from our study of 1 Cor for several weeks now . . .

So before we launch back in, I want to take a few minutes to review some of the ground we've covered (1 Cor1)

- We started in January with some background, and found that the Apostle Paul was writing to the church in Corinth, a church he had started . . .
B/c they had some hang-ups, some issues – hence the name of the series

And given the striking similarities between them and us, we'd be wise to learn the lessons of their day, in order to *avoid* the issues in ours
In order to live as the church in the world without the world in the church

To that end, I asked you to make 3 New Year's Resolutions

1. Review your message notes each week
2. Consider how the message applies to you
3. Pick one action point – a thought to dwell on, a thing to do, or a behavior to avoid

That was basically the first two messages from v1-3

- From there, we soaked up some loving reminders to assure us in our walk . . .
Addressed the issue of church fights . . .
And then the foolishness and stumbling block Christ crucified is to some people . . .
Followed by the solution to our doubts in v26-31

And finally, from 2:1-5, I told you that your faith is on shaky ground if it depends on my *eloquence*, or opinion, or personality, or presentation
Rather, it should rest in the power of God

Which brings us to today's passage from v4-10

Plausible – nice sounding generalities; politically correct nuances

- **I think one of the** main reasons Paul says what he says here, is to bolster our faith
To assure us, that though our trust in God is a *step* of faith, it's not a *blind* step
Our faith is not blind

Which is the exact opposite of what you hear from atheists and scoffers and opponents of Christianity these days
They say that the whole thing is a house of cards b/c it's based on *blind* faith
IOW there's nothing of any substance or significance, on which to base your decision to trust in an unseen God; It's hollow

And nothing could be further from the truth

Yes, we see as in a mirror dimly, like 1 Cor 13:12 says – thinking of 1st century mirrors made of shiny metal, where the reflection was dim and fuzzy, but definitely there
We see dimly, but we see; **Our faith is not blind**

The first reason for which, is that . . .

It rests on the demonstration of God's power (v4-5)

That's what Paul is saying in v4-5

Far from being blind, far from trusting in God with little to no evidence of his existence or work or influence in our world . . .

Our faith rests on the *demonstration* of God's power – sometimes visible, and always noticeable

Like his power to draw unlikely people unto himself – including sinners/skeptics of the worst degree

And his power to transform us from the inside out – including our focus, and outlook, and attitude

Or change the direction of our life – sometimes by opening doors, and sometimes by closing them, despite our best efforts otherwise

Far from being blind, our faith rests on the demonstration of God's power

And don't forget his power to enable us to do things we never thought possible – like taking a stand for truth when it's not real popular

Or starting a church when it **doesn't seem possible** – like HBC–St. Vincent these days
One of the churches in our fellowship with whom we have a close partnership

Despite our concerns, we got word from them this week, that God is opening a door there to meet in a facility that they *never* thought possible

A place of high visibility that's already outfitted with lights, sound, seating, and parking
Just another demonstration of God's power that gives sight to our faith

- As does his power to heal people

Like Caleb Hensely, a young adult in our church, who a few years back had a large tumor in his shoulder – a tumor that was physically biopsied and found cancerous
But when they removed it, it was found to be benign

And not only that, but he has more range of motion than the doctor thought possible
A demonstration of God's power

At the other end of life, there's Leslie Kight, who struggled with stage 4 lung cancer for over a *year*, and just last month saw it go into “remission” . . .
With her lungs now completely clear

- Chance? I don't think so; In either case

The probabilities against it are too big; And the correlation with our prayers, too strong
I believe, as do Caleb/Leslie, that it was a demonstration of God's power in their lives

And that's just a few of the examples, not even touching the powerful ways in which he works in us spiritually and emotionally to heal broken *hearts*

We may see dimly, but our faith is not blind

It rests on the demonstration of God's power, and gives confidence to our walk

I hope you see it

It's based on God's wisdom (v6-7)

After Paul says in v5 that he doesn't want our faith to rest in the wisdom of men – he says in v6 (v6a) . . .

Mature meaning saved – those who have embraced the gospel; not advanced, grown up

If you say that, then you're also saying that Paul is advocating a 2-class Christianity

Where, in light of the following verses, only the mature have the HS . . .

Only the mature are spiritual; And only the mature have the mind of Christ

None of which is true, and all of which is contrary to the rest of the NT

Which says that upon conversion the HS dwells within us, and our eyes are opened to spiritual things, and we are one with Christ

So mature means saved here, as opposed to those who are *unsaved* and *immature* (v6-7)

- IOW it's not God's power alone on which our faith rests, but his *wisdom* as well
That is, his perfect knowledge and forethought, to form and carry out a perfect plan, to save us from our sins
That's the wisdom of God on which our faith rests

The centerpiece of which is, the cross

Christ crucified is the epitome of God's wisdom and plan, on which our faith is based

That's why Paul says in 1:24 – *Christ [is the] power of God and the wisdom of God*

- But that's not it – that's not the extent of God's wisdom
It also includes God's plan for our *lives*
His plan for wholeness, a future, a hope – just like the Israelites of old (Jer 29:11)
And his plan to sanctify us, purify us, mold us, shape us, spur us on, keep us, complete us, and glorify us at the resurrection of the saints

Far from being blind, our faith is based on all that God accomplished in Christ, *and* all that he *continues* to accomplish in us

The more of which we experience, the greater our faith

The more we *see* the wisdom of God carried out in our lives, the more faith we have to follow it; Faith **builds upon faith**

And to help us w/ that, Paul gives us 6 characteristics of God's wisdom in these 2 vs alone
Starting with the fact that it's learned

1. God's wisdom is learned

Paul says in v6a – *we do impart wisdom*; that is, we teach it, he and the other apostles

Implying that it's learned – we don't just come by it naturally

That's why it's so important to read your Bible, and sit under someone who teaches it, and take advantage of classes like the one for new believers starting next week

B/c the wisdom on which we base our faith is *learned*

2. God's wisdom is permanent

We impart or teach wisdom Paul says . . .

But *it's not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age who are doomed to pass away* (6b)

It's not going to come and go like the so-called wisdom of men – **it lasts; forever**

3. God's wisdom is unique

No one else has access to it, and no one else can duplicate it – it's *secret and hidden* Paul says (7a)

It's his own, and comes only from him

All of which, referring to his *secret and hidden* verbiage, is a huge play on the desire of the Corinthians to know things others didn't; to get the inside scoop

Much like today, they were *enamored* with all things secret

So Paul capitalizes on that fascination, to convey a pertinent truth about God's wisdom

That having been held close to his heart, it's unique – there's nothing else that even comes close to it

4. God's wisdom is certain

Like v7b says – God *decreed* it; Which carries the sense of determining it

Meaning, it's going to happen; It's going to come to fruition

That's why we can say w/ Paul in **Phil 1:6** – *I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you [having decreed it, he] will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

Our faith rests on the certainty of God's **wisdom and plan**

5. God's wisdom is timeless

It was declared *before the ages* (7b) – before time even began; before the clock started ticking at creation

Which means it's not just for your Grandma, It's for now and always

Not just for some cultures, but for all cultures; Not just for some times, but all times

It's timeless

6. God's wisdom is beneficial

God decreed it *before the ages for our glory* (7b)

For our good – for our salvation, and exaltation, and glorification in eternity

6 characteristics of God's wisdom, God's plan for our lives – on which we base our faith

And the more we experience it, the more *see* we it; Which means our **faith is not blind**

But it is misunderstood

It's often misunderstood (v8)

V8a – understood what?

That in his wisdom, God used the *death* of Christ to bring about *life* in us

That in his wisdom, Christ crucified was a part of God's plan to save the world (8b)

They wouldn't have done the unthinkable – they wouldn't have killed the Son of God

But they did, b/c they didn't understand that life and faith depends on the wisdom of God to sacrifice his own Son for our sin

And while they may have been among the *first* to misunderstand, they certainly weren't the last

The wisdom of God in Christ crucified, is *often* misunderstood, even today

- Confirmed by some recent **statistics on Easter**, published by The Barna Group
They reported that among all Americans, only 42% said that the meaning of Easter was the resurrection of Jesus
And only 5% of them said they would describe Easter as the most important holiday of their faith
Which means that faith in Jesus is definitely misunderstood
B/c Easter, the resurrection of Jesus, is hands down, *the* most important day of our faith

But here's the real shocker, and what concerns *me* the most
They reported that among Evangelicals . . .
Meaning those who are Bible believing, Bible reading, Christ-sharing, born-again followers of Jesus . . .
Among people like that, only 73% identified Easter as a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead
Forget about the importance, only 7 out of 10 got the *meaning* right

That means almost 3 out of every 10 of you, misunderstand it
B/c we are definitely an evangelical church
Heaven help me when I stand before God, if that's really true of you

- Our faith is not** blind, but it is often misunderstood – even by believers
And if that's you, I hope you do something about it
I hope you come faithfully; And join a SG or a Bible study
So that you're not on the wrong side of those statistics
And worse yet – on the wrong **side of eternity**

Our faith is not blind b/c it rests on the demonstration of God's power, and it's based on God's wisdom, but it's often misunderstood, and . . .

It's always Spirit enabled (v9-10a)

V8-10a

Just as a side note – you won't find v9 in the OT, at least not in its entirety
But you will find parts of it in Is 64:4 and 65:17
Which means Paul combined similar thoughts from several passages, to make one main point

The gist of which is, **those who crucified** Jesus, didn't understand God's wisdom in it all, but *we* do Paul says – those of us who love God *do* understand it
Why? B/c it's been revealed to us by the HS
God's wisdom in Christ, and God's wisdom in his word, has been revealed to us by the HS within

Apart from him, we can't see it, we can't hear it, we can't understand it, and we certainly can't receive the benefits of it
It's only by the enabling of the HS that we're able to experience all that God has prepared for those who love him

He, is the *key*; And without him, we're lost – blind as a bat
But with him, *with* his enablement – we can see both the power **and wisdom of God**
Which means that our faith is far from being blind

Pray

Worship – My Redeemer Lives

Close – Baptism packets; New Believers class; Next Week is 1 Cor 2:10-16