

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-10 HIDDEN WISDOM

The source of my authority in this pulpit is not—as we shall soon see—my wisdom; nor is it a private revelation granted to me beyond the revelation of Scripture. My words have authority only insofar as they are the repetition, unfolding and proper application of the words of Scripture. I have authority only when I stand under authority. And our corporate symbol of that truth is the sound of *your* Bibles opening to the text. My deep conviction about preaching is that a pastor must show the people that what he is saying was already said or implied in the Bible. If it cannot be shown it has no special authority.

The Corinthian church had sin problems, as churches all throughout church history have had. The first problem Paul addressed was disunity among the members, under girded by the strong ties to philosophy. The world's wisdom is something these Corinthian Christians still held on to tightly as they tried to blend in the Greek's wisdom and the truths of Christianity. As they had their favorite leaders of philosophy, they had their favorite leaders of Christianity and followed them. This caused factions in the church like there were factions among all the philosophies. The church has to be unified in its thinking, so Christians should be like-minded. Christ cannot be divided and neither should His followers.

John Piper

“What Paul wants to show in this chapter is that the reason there is so much pride and boasting at Corinth is that they are not letting the cross have its crucifying effect in the present. They think they have advanced beyond the cross. The cross may have been necessary to get them over the problem of sin; but now they are filled and rich and wise and strong! They are kings! In their own eyes. The weakness of the cross, the foolishness of the cross, the humiliation of the cross—these are long gone! “

Look at Paul's agonizing use of irony in 1 Corinthians 4:8–11.

They weren't taking up their cross daily. They were taking up their scepter daily. They were sitting on their throne daily. They were leaving in the past what belongs in the present, namely, the cross. And the result was that the cross was being emptied of its power to humble, and the inheritance was being contaminated with pride.”

The wisdom of the world falls so short of the wisdom of God, so Paul writes this superb section on the wisdom of God and how it is given to His people. Why would anybody want what the world has to offer for the answers of life, compared to God's wisdom? In fact, human wisdom is a great hindrance to the gospel, which is true, divine wisdom. Believers see Christ as the power of God and the wisdom of God. and we obtain His wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, which cannot be obtained through human wisdom.

The Corinthians needed to be reminded of what message Paul presented to them and what manner he presented it. They needed to remember the power of the cross and that only believers could understand this. Divine wisdom cannot be understood by human wisdom but is only revealed by God to His elect.

In the age we live in today, we too need to remember the great benefits of the wisdom of God that have been given to us and not to be taken in by the vain philosophies of our time.

1. PRESENTATION OF GOD'S WISDOM VV 1-5

Paul did not come to Corinth and present the Gospel through human wisdom. He did not come there to impress the Corinthians with his great oratory skills and knowledge.

A. PROCLAMATION

1-2

1. Negative---Not a philosopher

Not with excellency of speech

He did not come with human opinions on politics and psychology and economics, or even religion, trying to persuade them with smooth speech.

Directly from Athens (Acts 17) He had come from Athens where he delivered his famous message at the Areopagus about the unknown God, contesting the philosophers. He did not try to imitate the philosophers when he came to Corinth and he didn't use their verbage.

2 Cor 10:10, Some false teachers made fun of him and his speech.

Acts 14:12—Some recognized he was something special as he spoke.

Paul did use attractive speech all throughout the epistles and no doubt he had a way with words but it wasn't about him or putting himself on display.

2. Positive---Witness

Paul came as a witness instead of a philosopher. This means he testified of what he saw, heard, and experienced. A witness does not speculate or guess. He tells the facts. Paul witnessed to God's revelation, not of his own reasoning. He communicated to them a treasure of the truest and highest wisdom.

Testimony of God (Marturion)—testimony or witness

2 Cor 4:2, Paul manifested the truth of God. 1 Tim 4:13, 2 Tim 4:1-2

The Word of God is to be preached.

Jesus Christ crucified

He proclaimed nothing but Jesus Christ the crucified, risen and redeeming Jesus Christ. Jesus is the divine Savior is the very foundation of Paul's preaching. Philosophy could extol the life of Christ, but preaching must proclaim Christ crucified.

This doesn't mean he just preached an evangelistic message and that is all he did. He taught the full counsel of God, all the Word of God.

1 Cor 1:23

Reveals what man is---Man is by nature spiritually dead.

Reveals what God is—God is holy and God is love—Father forgive them..

Reveals what sin is—Jesus drank the bitterest dregs of the cup.

Reveals what salvation is---The cross defeated sin and death and showed

God's power.

The cross is not merely a past place of substitution; it is also a present place of daily execution—the execution of pride, and the execution of boasting in men, and the execution of self-reliance, and the execution of the love of money and status and the praise of men. John Piper

This is why Paul walked into Corinth with a cross and a Christ to preach instead of poetry or economics or philosophy.

B. DEMONSTRATION 3-5

1. Negative

Weakness—The weakness is the gospel which is really the power of God
1 Cor 1:25,27, 9:16,27

2Corinthians 12 has this same language of weakness. He says in verse 9 that he will all the more gladly exult in his weaknesses because then the power of Christ rests on him. Jesus says to him, "My power is made perfect in your weakness."

What good can Christ do for the world through unworthy me?" It was not, "How much power can I muster for Jesus?" but, "How much power can Jesus show through my weakness?"

Fear and trembling --- He wasn't shaking in his sandals or timid. He preached boldly. It means his deep concern over an important and urgent issue.

Instead there was meekness and a real trembling because his inadequacy was so great and the stakes were so high and the dangers were so real.

Paul, therefore, was not without a sense of anxiety, but he controlled it, so that he nonetheless continued to be undaunted in the midst of crises. (

2 Cor 7:15, Eph 6:5, Phil 2:12

He had been in Philippi and put in jail there. He then went to Thessalonica and Berea and ran out of there. Then he went to Athens and was scoffed at there. From there he went to pagan Corinth which was a degenerate city. He could have been discouraged and fearful of his own life but he wasn't. He had one message to proclaim and he didn't change it.

Not with persuasive words 2 Cor 10:10

2. Positive

Paul did not use any theatrics or techniques or emotional appeal. He had great oratory skills but he did not rely on them. He did not want them to be drawn to him and his own wisdom.

Demonstration of the Spirit

Authority of the Word

Charles Spurgeon—"The power that is in the Gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher, otherwise men would be converts of souls, nor does it lie in the preacher's learning, otherwise it would consist in the wisdom of men. We might preach until our tongues rotted, till we would exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless the Holy Spirit be with the Word of God to give the power to convert the soul."

Demonstration of the power of God

3. For their faith

They had changed spiritually as they had been dead. The message has the power of God.

2. GOD'S WISDOM NOT HUMANLY UNDERSTOOD

VV 6-10

A. THE TRUEST AND HIGHEST WISDOM

1. Positive

To the mature (Teleios) complete or perfect or fully initiated
Heb 6:1, 10:14 Those who are redeemed and fully trusting
in Christ. It's not some who are advanced in the faith. It's
about salvation.

it is clear that Paul is not making that distinction here; a distinction between Christians. The mature are the Christians in contrast to the people of the world. As the argument proceeds you will see that his entire distinction is between Christians and non-Christians. Every Christian has the wisdom of God. Eph 1:8-9

These are the ones who are foolish, weak, and despised.

1 Cor 1:27-28 Col 1:26, Mt 11:25, Mt 13:10-13,16

2. Negative

Age is a period of time, historic age

Not of this age or rulers --Paul was thinking all periods of history.

Robert Rayburn By "rulers of this age" Paul is referring to the leaders of the culture, the opinion shapers, the great teachers and political officers, the very people these Corinthian Christians were so enamored of. These influential may think of themselves as wise, but, in actual fact, they don't get it. They have embraced the lie not the truth. And, of course, the same is true today.

All human wisdom is passing away and is empty. The rulers can't claim it Pilate and the Jewish leaders had they known what all this about would not have crucified Christ.

1 Tim 1:12-13 Paul demonstrated his ignorance

B. THE ORIGIN OF WISDOM

This was in the eternal counsel of God and has been given to us.

Predestined, Mystery, Hidden wisdom before the ages

Before time began God determined to give us His wisdom that would lead to our glorification.

C. IGNORANCE OF GREAT MEN OF THE WORLD

The natural man doesn't know or understand it. In their ignorance, they crucified the Son of God.

The world was saturated with philosophy but was ignorant of God.

D. DIVINELY REVEALED

Paul is not talking about the wonders of heaven, but to the wisdom of God prepared for believers. It is about present life.

The point is that the natural eyes, ears and hearts of men cannot know or understand God's wisdom. It is prepared for those who love Him.

God's truth is not observable by the eye or the ear. It can't reason out God's secrets. It cannot be discovered unless God chooses to let one be revealed to.

God has prepared

God has revealed---Made known to us.

Through the Spirit---There is the key to unlocking this treasury.

The Lord honors us with a special illumination of the Spirit.

God elevates our minds by His Spirit into the deep things of God.

