

# (1 Corinthians) Overview to Chapter 2

by Brian Brodersen

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*Paul emphasizes the simplicity of the gospel and the importance of faith in God, rather than human wisdom and intellectualism.*

**Duration:** 59:14

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 1:17

**Topics:** "Simple Gospel", "Humility In Ministry"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about Billy Graham's experience in preaching the gospel. Billy initially approached his preaching from an intellectual standpoint, seeking to impress his audience. However, after realizing the fruitlessness of his efforts, he repented and embraced the simplicity of the gospel. The speaker highlights how many in the church today fall into the same trap of trying to impress others with their intelligence. God, however, is not concerned with human intellect but desires a simple and clear presentation of the gospel that can be understood by all.

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## Transcript

I'm going to pick up back in chapter 1, reading from verse 17, but let me give you just again a bit of the background here. As we pointed out as we began our study here, this epistle is primarily corrective. There were problems that had developed in this church.

Paul had spent over a year and a half ministering there with them in Corinth. He had then gone on to minister in other areas. A few years had passed and the Corinthians had begun to drift away from some of those important principles that the apostle had taught them.

And one of the things that we pointed out is that they had become enamored with the world, and in their enamoration with the world, they were seeking to impress society around them, not wanting to be seen as being different or distinct. They wanted to blend in and be as much like the world as possible. One of the ways that they did that was to take the gospel message and begin to consider it in more philosophical terms.

Of course, the city of Corinth is located in Greece, a great center of philosophy at the time of the apostles. So they had begun to look at the gospel as just another philosophy, one, of course, that was superior to the others. But looking at it as a philosophy, they begin to think of the apostles as philosophers.

They began to divide themselves up into categories and made themselves as adherents of the various philosophical schools. So these first four chapters of this epistle are a lengthy rebuke from the apostle Paul, really chastising them for this love that they've developed for the world and this great desire to be seen by the world as being intellectual or wise in the world's eyes. And Paul is going out of his way to show that the gospel of Jesus Christ is not a philosophy.

It is a revelation from God about what God has done to save men. It's a simple message. And Paul is warning them about complicating the thing, confusing the thing.

And so we pick up in verse 17, the latter part of the verse of chapter one, and that'll take us into chapter two. Paul said, for Christ sent me to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing.

But to us who are being saved, it is the power of God, for it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign and Greeks seek after wisdom.

But we preach Christ crucified to the Jews, a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness. But to those who are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, because the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see, you're calling brethren that not many wise, according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise. God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty and the base things of the world and the things which are despised. God has chosen and the things which are not to bring to nothing the things that are that no flesh should glory in his presence.

But of him, you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption that as it is written, he who glories let him glory in the Lord. And I, brethren, when I came to you did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. So now, as we enter into the second chapter, Paul is he's really reminding them of their encounter with Christ.

You see, what's happened is they've become prideful as time has gone on, they've become puffed up and they've become arrogant and they've begun to think more highly of themselves than they ought to. And apparently they're experiencing God's work in their life, they're experiencing the gifts of the spirit, the wisdom of God, the knowledge, prophecy and those types of things. And as they're experiencing the work of God in their lives, they're beginning to think that it has something to do with them.

They're beginning to think that they are actually really wise, they are actually really knowledgeable, they're becoming puffed up one against another, they're beginning to compete with one another. They're failing to see that all of this new wisdom and understanding and all of these things are really God's gift to them. And so in becoming arrogant, they're forgetting all of these things.

That's why Paul is taking them back. He says, remember, you see your calling, not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty. He's he's wanting to take them back to their roots, so to speak.

He's wanting to get them back to that place of realizing that whatever they have become, it's been by the grace of God. And now he reminds them of his own presence among them initially, how he did not come among them as a philosopher. He did not come among them as one who was very polished in his speaking ability.

He didn't come presenting some form of human wisdom. He says, I did not come to you with excellence of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined.

Not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. This is so significant when you think of the people that the apostle is addressing here and especially that culture, a culture that is steeped in human wisdom and intellectualism. And look at the strategy the apostle adopts here, just the opposite of what we would think he ought to do.

Now, let's say, for example, one of us, we're going to go address, you know, a number of students and professors maybe at Oxford or Cambridge. Now, what would be our first thought? Oh, we're going to address these these highly intelligent people. We need to really sit down and prepare.

We need to address them on their level. We need to to meet them and show them that the gospel is something that is intellectually acceptable. And, you know, that would be no doubt what we would immediately feel if we were called upon to do something like that.

Well, Paul did not think in those kinds of terms, he went to Corinth, a city of intellectualism, city of learning, and he determines on his way to Corinth, I am not going to know anything among them except Jesus Christ and him crucified. This reminds me of an incident in the life of Billy Graham several years ago, Billy Graham was invited to speak at Cambridge. And.

He being the man that he is and being human. He began to feel that intimidation, knowing that he was not an intellectual giant. But yet feeling that God had opened the door for him to speak, he began to prepare himself.

But yet with with great timidity as he approached these series of meetings, he actually had written to a friend here in this country, a vicar that he'd become friends with. And he expressed to him the struggle that he was having and and his fear of addressing this group at Cambridge. And and the man wrote back to him with such great wisdom.

He said, do not address them as intellectuals, address them as sinners. He said, preach the gospel to them, just like you would to anybody else. And and that encouraged me, said, oh, yes, I can do that.

OK, you know, but as as the time approached, he still sensed that intimidation. And when he finally arrived in Cambridge to give a series of lectures, he tells a story in his autobiography how he went out and for three nights he he preached his heart out, but coming at it from an intellectual point of view, really seeking to impress them on that that kind of a level. And he talks about after three nights of preaching, just the absolute fruitlessness of his efforts.

And feeling so frustrated and and not really knowing what to do at this point, he talks about how he went back to his room one evening, he fell on his knees and he said, God, help me, Lord, what am I to do? I can't break through to these people. And he tells a story of how the Lord spoke to him and said, Billy, I haven't called you to an intellectual thing. I've called you to preach my gospel simply and clearly.

He said, go do what I've called you to do. And right there in his room, he repented before the Lord. He said, God, forgive me.

He went out the next night and preached a simple, clear presentation of the gospel. And 400 students responded to an invitation to receive Christ. You see, we so often fall into the same kind of trap that the Corinthians had fallen into.

And I think many in the church today have fallen into this trap. I know occasionally I have myself. Oh, I've got to impress them with my intelligence.

I've got to show them that the gospel is sophisticated and, you know, that we're really intelligent people. It's interesting to me that God is not. Worried about that at all.

God has all the intelligence in the universe. And the most brilliant human being is an absolute imbecile in comparison to God. She's he got is not impressed with human intellect.

He created it. God gave us a message that is profoundly simple. Now, think about this for a moment.

If you wanted. To communicate something to everyone in the world, and you knew that in the world there would be great diversity of intellectual ability and things of that nature. If you wanted to communicate something to everyone, what would you do? I think you would do exactly what God did.

If you wanted to communicate a message to everyone, you would make that message as simple as possible so that everyone could understand it. And that's exactly what God did with the gospel. Why did he make it so simple? Because he wants everyone to be able to hear it, understand it, believe it and benefit from it.

So this message of the gospel can be understood by a child. But it can also, of course, be understood by a highly intellectual individual. It's a simple message, it's a straightforward message, it's a clear message, and that's the very approach that the apostle took when he went to this center of intellectualism.

He said, I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified as we go out into our daily lives, as we go out and encounter people. We need to remember, as Paul stated back in Romans chapter one, that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The gospel is the power of God, there's power within the message itself, we do not have to dress it up in intellectual clothing.

We just need to get the message out. And realize that as the message goes out in clarity, that's where the power is. And so the apostle determined to know nothing except Jesus Christ.

Let me say this also, Jesus Christ is the message. So many times today we as Christians are we're addressing everything but Jesus Christ. We're addressing all the issues.

And we're contending with people over a number of what are really side issues. The real issue is the person of Christ. That was Paul's message.

I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. We are presenting to people not a dogma. We're not presenting to them a creed.

We're not presenting to them another alternative religion. We're presenting to people a person. And God, help us to remember that it's a person.

We want to introduce people to a person. And that person is Jesus Christ. The church in many ways has become so disconnected from the person, and even good, sincere Christian people can get more hung up on doctrinal types of things and forget the essential matter of this person, Jesus.

Now, there are so many issues today that we as Christians might have concern over, but we have to make sure that we do not get caught up in battling over issues to the neglect of presenting the person. You think of some of the issues that we would be concerned about as Christians, we would be concerned about maybe the issue of abortion. And that's a valid concern.

But if we spend all of our time contending with people over the issue of abortion and miss out on giving them an introduction to the person of Jesus Christ, we haven't really done anything, have we? We haven't really done what we are supposed to do. Remember this, if a person comes to Christ, the abortion issue will be answered. See, that's why the apostles, when they went out preaching, they did not go out and address the various social concerns because they knew that the social concerns would be resolved if the person came to Christ.

God would resolve all of those things. I thank God that when I became a Christian, I didn't have to, first of all, decide that, well, that isn't right. And this is right.

And you know that I didn't have to go through all of those things to get to Jesus. I just came to him and where my thinking was wrong in other areas in the process of time, he straightened it out. This whole issue of creation and evolution, I think that's an important issue.

And I like to be up on the arguments and so forth. But yet at the same time. You do not have to be a creationist to become a Christian, but once you become a Christian, I think you will inevitably become a creationist.

But it's not mandatory that you are convinced against evolutionary theory before becoming a Christian. And this is where I think sometimes as Christians we get hung up. I'm as guilty as the next person.

And I've had times where I'll, you know, I'll spend an hour arguing with people over various philosophies and all of these things. And finally, you know, I'm exhausted. And we're getting nowhere.

And I think, you know, this person, you know, whatever argument I present, they've got their counter argument and all of that. And finally, you know, what can you say unless you introduce the person of Jesus? You really can't say anything because it's just one opinion versus another opinion to some degree. We have to bring Jesus into the picture.

He's the one. And although there could have been a variety of issues that the apostle might have been tempted to deal with when he was there among the Corinthians, he said, no, I determined to know only one thing among you. And that is Jesus Christ and him crucified.

That's the gospel right there. God became a man and died on a cross so we would not perish, but have eternal life. And God calls all people to respond to what he's done, that's the gospel in its simplest form right there, and everything else is to a large degree secondary.

Let's let's remember that as God's people, we can hold opinions about these other things, we can educate ourselves, we should be able to give an answer to everyone who asks us a reason for the hope that is in us. But our greatest apologetic has to do with Jesus himself and who he is. As I was speaking with a man

some time ago, he after an hour of philosophizing together, he simply told me there was no truth.

And that brought me around to realizing how futile it was to argue with him about the things that we've been arguing about. And yet when he said there was no truth, I said, OK, here's the moment right now. Jesus Christ said he is the truth presenting Jesus, bringing him into the focus, the simplicity of the gospel.

Now, he says in verse three, I was with you in weakness, in fear and in much trembling. I thought about the apostle Paul and his own description of himself here, and I thought Paul would have been turned down by many a church committee today. If he was applying for the pastorate, he would have been rejected for having a lack of confidence.

Oh, we don't want somebody that's afraid and trembling, somebody who's weak. Oh, no. Give us someone who's confident.

Give us someone who's assertive. Give us someone who can go in and really speak boldly on the subject. I know of so many men who, verse three, has no application to whatsoever, and they are in pulpits all over the world today.

There's not an ounce of fear and trembling. They're not afraid of anything. They're absolutely confident in their ability to convince people that they're right and everyone else is wrong.

But you see, they're trusting in themselves. Paul said in my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and power. Now, Paul isn't arguing against persuasive preaching.

Anyone who's convinced that their message is true is going to hopefully be persuasive in what they say. But the issue that Paul is dealing with here is a very subtle issue of self-reliance. Self-confidence, and that's the very thing that the Corinthians were getting preoccupied with.

They were getting preoccupied with the self and with their own abilities and their own intellect and things like that. So Paul is dealing with these subtle things. My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom.

And as I pointed out in the past, if we understood the culture and we understood that there were these itinerant philosophers that would go about who were very capable with words, they could dazzle a crowd of people just by getting up and speaking. They had such tremendous oratory ability. People would just be caught up in their ability to communicate.

It didn't even really matter what they were saying. It was just the way they said it. And in the Corinthians, we're beginning to think in those terms, they were no longer really concerned so much about the content.

It was just as long as it was coming off beautifully. So when he says, I did not speak with persuasive words of human wisdom, he's contrasting himself with those itinerant philosophers at the time, he said. But rather, my speech and my preaching were in demonstration of the spirit and of power.

In order that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. That's. Where our faith needs to be not in the wisdom of men, if my faith is based on a man's ability to skillfully communicate what's going to happen to my faith when someone.

Is able to communicate more skillfully. Than the one that convinced me. If that's what I'm putting my confidence in.

Paul didn't want to risk that he wanted them to have their faith not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Now, I want to say this from personal experience, and I think, again, many of you can identify with it. There are times when I think all of us feel the pressure of wanting to be accepted by other people.

And when we want to be accepted by other people, when we want to be thought of. In a good light, this is when we're tempted. To try to impress people with human things.

And I myself, I have struggled with these things. I remember some time ago. So time of personal confession, by the way.

I remember some time ago struggling with some of some of these issues and really struggling with just my inability to be articulate. And. I made the mistake one day of listening to one of my own tapes.

And I just thought, how pathetic is this? I don't even know the English language. And, you know, I'm stammering and stuttering through this and that. And whenever whenever you're at a loss for what to say, at least this is the case of me and I know others as well.

When you're at a loss for what to say, a lot of times you say, you know, if you ever hear me teach and I say, you know, like 50 times, you'll know I'm really struggling. I'm at a loss for words, but there's times you do that. So I listen to this one tape and, you know, seem like every other word was, you know, some some guy actually called the church office one day and talked to Ken and said, Brian said, you know, a hundred times today is driving me mad.

If he only knew that that drove me mad as well. But so here I am, I'm struggling with this. And I remember thinking to myself, I had to just give this up.

And the very words that came out of my mouth were were so hilarious because I said to the Lord in my cry of desperation, I said, Lord, I'm just not eloquent. And the minute I said that, I thought of another person who said that a few thousand years ago. And that was the very argument that Moses used to try to get out of the job of going to Pharaoh.

He said, Lord, I'm just not eloquent. And as I said it, I caught myself and I thought, oh, great, because I know what the Lord said to Moses. He said, I made your mouth.

Don't you think I'm capable of helping you to speak? And, you know, as I went further in thinking about this, it suddenly dawned on me what the real problem was. The problem wasn't merely the fact that I wasn't eloquent. The problem was that I. This is where pride comes in.

That I was feeling that. People wouldn't. Think of me as highly as I hoped that they would, and and suddenly it dawned on me what I was doing, and it was as though the Lord even posed this question to me.

Why are you preaching? Are you doing it? For people to think something about you, if that's the case, then indeed, you probably ought to stop because that's not the goal of teaching or preaching. The goal is to communicate the reality of Jesus to people, and God is able, if he so desires. To take the most feeble of men and do that, God is able to go beyond that, perhaps you remember the story in the book of Numbers

where God spoke through a donkey.

You see, these are things that I know those who are called to teach and preach definitely could identify with these kinds of struggles. But I think that all of us, to some degree, as Christians struggle with these kinds of things. And it's really a very subtle manifestation of just the pride that is there resident within the human heart.

But I want people to think a certain way about me, even though I know that's wrong, I don't want to I don't want to feel that way. Yet I know that there's an element in me that that's that's just the way I am as a human being. So when it comes to to preach in the gospel or sharing our faith, this is where the temptation comes in to have to impress people with who we are.

And then when we try to impress people with who we are, inevitably we we damage the gospel message itself and it therefore does not go forth in power as it ought to. There are people who are brilliant communicators and they can stand up and give a brilliant presentation of. The issues concerning the faith, but for the trained ear, you can sense when there's power and when there's no power, I know men who are brilliant pulpit tears, if I can use that term, they're very eloquent men.

They're very articulate and all they they just use the right word every time. And it all flows together so beautifully, but at the end of the message, I know for myself what I'm impressed with is them. There are many people that stimulate me intellectually.

And move me mentally to envy, I want to be like that, but at the same time, they do nothing for my heart. They never moved me in a greater sense because there is a lack of true spiritual power. You see, whenever a person is relying on self, it's almost inevitable that we will eliminate the influence of the spirit in our lives.

And that is true with a preacher. It's also true with an individual Christian who is seeking to share their faith. If you want to be effective in talking to people about Jesus Christ, make sure that whenever you do it, you're relying entirely upon the Lord.

You might be brilliant and that's fine, and God might be able to use that if you don't think that that is the basis for you being able to speak to someone else. But in every case, falling back on the Lord and acknowledging, Lord, apart from you, I can do nothing. I need the power of God.

The Apostle Paul was an extremely capable man intellectually. There's no doubt about that. But he realized that in this particular arena, intelligence wasn't the issue.

The power of God, reliance upon the spirit of God. So he says that he came in the demonstration of the spirit and of power. And let me show you what happens when the gospel is presented in the demonstration and in the power of the spirit versus when it's given simply in the wisdom of men.

When it's given in the wisdom of men, the result is that the people are impressed with the messenger. They're impressed with the delivery. They're impressed with all the things that are really nonessential.

But when the gospel is given in the power of the spirit, we have. An example of what happens found in First Thessalonians, chapter one, verses five through 10, let me just give you a quick outline of it. The apostle says, for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit.

Now, listen to the results. And you became followers of us and the Lord. You became examples to all who were in Macedonia from you.

The word of the Lord sounded forth. You turn to God from idols to serve the living and the true God. You see, when the message of God goes forth in power, what it results in is a transformed life.

That's the end result of the gospel going forth in power, lives are being transformed. That is the the criteria of judgment as to whether a ministry is truly effective are people's lives being transformed. That's what it's all about.

Not are people impressed with the oratory skills or the brilliance of the speaker. That's not the issue. The issue is a transformed life.

And that's what Paul was saying to them. He said, I don't want your faith to be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, the sense of God actually working in your life, changing your life, transforming you, making you into a new creation in Christ. Verse six, however, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age.

Now, let me clarify this, and I'm sure it's clear to you, but let me just, you know, state this. Of course, we're not putting a premium on stupidity. We're not encouraging, you know, that we all check our brain at the door and we all just hope that we'll feel good.

And that's the end of it. These are the extremes that you have in the church. You have the two extremes so often.

And the goal is to strike the balance in the center. You have the stream of intellectual, the extreme of intellectualism, but you have the other extreme of a really stupidity among Christians. And of course, the balance lies between these two things.

We don't want to overemphasize the mind, but yet at the same time, God has given us a brain and he does expect us to use it. And therefore, there's nothing the matter whatsoever with using our brain to the full capacity, but always remembering that the brain, the mental powers are to be subject to the authority of the word of God, never to exalt themselves above the authority of the word of God. Paul says we speak wisdom.

He's not against wisdom. He's against the wisdom of the world, which is in rebellion and contrary to the wisdom of God. That's the whole problem.

So, again, he's not putting a premium on stupidity. He's showing that the problem is man's wisdom versus God's wisdom. We have access to God's wisdom.

Therefore, he says to them, in essence, why are you impressed with human wisdom, which is coming to nothing when you have been given access to the mind of God and the wisdom of God? The problem with them was that they had everything out of place. They were thinking more highly of human wisdom than they ought to do. This is so relevant to the modern church.

The modern church has put such a premium on human wisdom, and so the modern church has decided against the wisdom of God based on human wisdom. That's what we find happening so often today. The Bible says one thing, but some scholar has come forth and said something else contradictory to the Bible.

And we say, oh, well, of course, this man is a Ph.D. So, you know, he must be right. Well, there have been a multitude of Ph.D.'s that have been wrong about everything and will continue to be wrong about everything whenever their purported wisdom is contradictory to the revealed word of God. We can know from the very beginning that this person, no matter how brilliant they might appear to be, this person is not brilliant at all in the truest sense because they're putting up their puny human understanding against the mind of God.

Recently, a man wrote a book on the subject of Darwinism. The book is entitled Darwin's Black Box. And this man, although not a Christian, he has proven from his studies in biochemistry that Darwinism is an absolute impossibility.

And when you start looking at the cells and, you know, these types of things, when you start breaking it all down and understanding the complexity of the cell, it becomes clear that there is no way that this evolved. There has to be a designer behind this. Now, as as we just begin to understand the complexity of these things, we have to keep in mind these are not complex to God at all.

God is one who made them. Biochemist can't even begin to understand how these things actually function. They just marvel at their existence.

They are not even capable of understanding how they function. God made them, as Paul the Apostle reminded us, God alone is wise. So wisdom, true wisdom.

Is the wisdom of God, and that's what Paul says, we speak mystery or we speak wisdom, excuse me, among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this world. Nor of the rulers of this age who are coming to nothing. This is what we we know will inevitably happen, but we can see it historically.

The wisdom of man, it seems to to cycle through and always come to nothing. The great understanding that people had 100 years ago is now set aside and the realization has come that, oh, we were all wrong. The great understanding 50 years ago has been set aside, oh, we were all wrong, even 10 years ago, we were all wrong, the wisdom of man continually is coming to nothing.

Man proves over and over and over again to not know what he's talking about. So why do we put so much stock in what people say? Oh, the scientists have said this. Well, just wait a while and they'll reverse it.

This is the consistent pattern in the scientific community. But the interesting thing is the Bible says the same thing that it said for thousands of years, it has never been altered. There's never been a point where God said, oh, I was wrong on that one point, we need to edit that right there, change that.

No, it says what it says. It's always said the same thing. There's never been any need for a new edition.

To come out to update it with current information, but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew, for had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. So we speak the wisdom of God. This is the greatest wisdom, the greatest wisdom in all the world is the simple gospel of Jesus Christ and the wisest person on the planet, the wisest people on the planet are those who have submitted to the wisdom of God.

They have a wisdom that will endure the ages. They have a wisdom that is not coming to nothing, but is actually going to be manifest as the true wisdom throughout all eternity. We possess that none of the

rulers of this age knew it.

But as it is written, I has not seen or heard nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him. Isn't this the case? We see it all around us, but we know from our own experience, no doubt that this is. Accurate, because this is the way it was for me.

And this is the way it was for you. I did not have any idea. I was completely in the dark as to the greatness of God, the goodness of God and the plan of God for those who love him and the most intelligent people that have ever lived through their own intellectual pursuits have ended just where I was and just where you were not knowing, not having any idea.

Not having any conception whatsoever of the great love of God, because this is man in his natural state. I is not seen. Ear is not heard, nor has it entered into the heart of a man, the things which God has prepared for those who love him.

The only way we know that is by the revelation that God has given left to ourselves because of our fallen, sinful nature. We would never come to these kinds of conclusions. The gospel itself is so tremendous when you think about it for a moment.

It is so opposite of what man would ever conceive of. To me, that's evidence of its validity. No man ever would have thought of anything like this.

You can confirm that by just studying the various religions of the world. There is not a single religion on the face of the earth that presents a loving God who loved the human race with such intensity that he took upon himself a human body and died for their offenses and rose from the dead to justify them and is willing to freely forgive the offender if they will simply ask for it. Absolutely unheard of, nothing like it, and those who glibly compare world religions and talk about the similarities in all religions have not done a thorough enough study, because when you look at what the Bible teaches, you find that this is not only incompatible with the rest of the religions of the world, but this is something that no one would have ever thought of.

That God would freely save people. That he would freely forgive that he, the creator of the universe, would actually in order to save his creation, that he would become one of them and that he would die in their place. This is that great mystery.

This is that great wisdom. This is the thing that never entered into the heart of a man would never believe that God would do such a thing. But this is the very thing that God has done, and this is the thing that we know.

Verse 10. How do we know it? But God has revealed them to us through the spirit. I didn't know any of this prior to the work of the spirit of my life.

None of us knew this. We might have even grown up hearing about this. But yet, as far as having any real personal application, it had no personal application to me.

I had heard all my life that Jesus was a son of God, that he died on the cross for the sin of the world, but that meant nothing to me personally. I had no idea of the the actual love that God had for me. That Jesus did that for me because he loves me and he has a plan and a purpose for my life, and he wants me to be with him forever so that in the ages to come, he might show his goodness and his kindness toward me in Christ Jesus.

I had no idea until that work of the spirit was wrought in my heart. And then, as the apostle Paul said in another epistle, the love of God was shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Suddenly the lights come on.

We realize that and we realize it by a work of the spirit for the spirit searches all things. Yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so, no one knows the things of God except the spirit of God.

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us. So we've received the spirit of God never feel as a Christian. Inferior to those who are wise in this world, of course, we should never be arrogant either.

Because whatever we have has been given to us as a gift from God. But we have received the spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. We have received the spirit of God.

The spirit knows all things. Of course, the spirit is the third person in the Trinity. We actually have the capacity to know virtually everything.

And we certainly have the capacity to know everything about spiritual matters. But we even have a capacity greater than that. We have a capacity to know everything because God knows everything.

And the very God who knows everything. Resides in us. By the Holy Spirit, he says, these things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

See, Paul is appealing to them. He says, look, we have a wisdom that's superior. Don't be impressed with that.

Don't try to impress them by changing the gospel into a philosophy. Don't look at me as an apostle, as another philosopher. Remember how I was among you.

I was there in weakness, fear and trembling. It wasn't me, it was God's spirit upon my life. You've received that same spirit and we speak these things, not in words which man's wisdom teaches.

We don't need to adapt. The language of the world when we're talking about spiritual things, we need to adapt the language of scripture, so many Christians today have bought into this. You know, adapting the gospel to a contemporary culture by, you know, let's use the world's terminology, what the Bible calls sin.

We'll call it dysfunctionality, the Bible calls idolatry, we'll call it codependency, what the Bible calls bondage to sin, we'll call a disease. And there are Christian people who who lay hold of these things, and this is this is epidemic in the US. You know, sometimes a person will come in and, you know, I've had people come in for counseling and oh boy, they start talking and describing.

It's just all nothing but psychobabble. And you have to stop them and say, wait, OK, let's go back to that term you use there. Let's clarify.

The Bible says that's sin. But you see, you start taking this modern terminology and tacking it on, and pretty soon you lose the power of the message, because not only are words being changed, but meaning is being changed also. If I'm dysfunctional, then that has something to do with somebody else rather than

be my responsibility.

If I'm a sinner, all of that has much more to do with me personally. See, if I'm codependent, well, you know, that is a result of my dysfunctionality, which is somebody else's fault. And so, you know, then I've got to work through this this codependency.

And, you know, all of this is, you know, pop psychology, which is just another facet of man's wisdom and human philosophy. And Christians are foolish for adapting these kinds of terms. We have the scriptures.

And we need to compare spiritual things with spiritual, not embracing words which man's wisdom teaches. Now, when we do this, of course, we're going to be seen as out of touch, old fashioned. Irrelevant.

There are going to be all kinds of things that will be said and pressure put on us to, you know, enter into, you know, the modern world and so forth. But we have to resist that temptation. We have to resist that temptation and just be willing to stand on what God's word says, knowing that God has the final word in the universe.

Take comfort in that God has the final word. Man does not have the final word. And when it's all said and done, we'll find that everything that's written in this book is a truth and everything that contradicts it is a lie.

And we don't need to be afraid of anything that man comes up with. If it's contrary to the word, we can stand firmly and say, I'm sorry, but this is not accurate. We don't have to adapt the world's thinking of the world, speaking verse 14, but the natural man does not receive the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, nor can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.

So the contrast here between the natural man and the Greek word for natural is the word. It's the word *Sukakos*, and it's the word that we get our word *psyche* from or it's the man of the man of the mind is actually what it would refer to. So the natural man, the one who who depends on his own brain.

The one who rejects the spirit, the one who's convinced that through his own natural processes, he's able to come to an understanding of reality. That's who he's talking about. He does not receive the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him.

And isn't that what we find so often he doesn't receive the things of the spirit of God, their foolishness to him, that the natural mind is set in hostility against spiritual things, and when a person hears about spiritual things to them, that that just seems so foolish, how ridiculous. And perhaps you know that because maybe that's how you were. Maybe you're like that today.

All of us were probably like that at one time, I remember meeting Jesus people and how these people are flipped. And they think God talks to them. They claim that the Lord leads their life.

What are they thinking? Well, you see, I was a natural man and the things of the spirit were foolishness to me. But you see, the problem with the natural man is he lacks the capacity to know these things. The mechanism to comprehend this doesn't exist in the natural man, that's why it's foolishness to him.

But the spiritual person. And this the Greek word is *pneumatic cost*, the person of the spirit, the spiritual person understands all things, understands all things pertaining to the spiritual realm. The spiritual person understands all things, yet he himself is rightly understood by no one.

Isn't that the truth? The natural man does not understand. The natural man cannot figure out for a moment why you're here today and not somewhere else gratifying your own human nature. And to them, the natural man, it seems that that this is all so much torture and drudgery.

Oh, you had to go to church. Oh, you poor, you poor person. Oh, be free, be liberated from that.

Come and join us. But you see, they have no capacity, they don't understand. And what Paul is saying also is that the natural man has no position to judge a spiritual man because he has no ability to comprehend.

But the spiritual man can judge the natural man because the spiritual man has also been a natural man. You see, the natural man cannot comprehend the things of the spirit, but the spiritual man can comprehend the things of the flesh because we were all there at one time. Oh, I know that thinking.

I used to think that way. I was there. I understand those feelings.

But the person who has not come to Christ, they look on at us and, you know, they're making these judgments and things, but they really don't have any right to do so because they don't have any real comprehension of what we're talking about. But of course. God loves the natural man.

All of us were by nature just like that, and he wants to touch and illuminate the natural man and bring him to that place of being a spiritual man, verse 16, for who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him that we have the mind of Christ. So Paul is, in a sense, wrapping up the first part of his argument here by telling them. Don't.

Compromise with the world, don't be impressed with human wisdom, you have the mind of Christ. Cultivate the mind of Christ, we have the mind of Christ right here in our Bibles. This is the revealed.

Will of God, it's the revelation of God, and the more familiar we become with the scriptures, the more our mind is transformed and the more we adapt the mind of Christ, the more capable we are of thinking in spiritual terms. And then, of course, we have the Holy Spirit who assist us in all of that also. So in closing, let me leave you with this word of encouragement.

No need to be intimidated by the world. Cultivate your life spiritually, develop your mind with the things of God, develop the mind of Christ that's resident in you because of the presence of the spirit in your life. Give more time to meditation on the scriptures.

And you will find that you'll be more and more like Christ and inevitably more and more capable and effectively sharing the truth of Christ with others. And let's keep in mind as we deal with people, their condition, the natural man does not receive the things of the spirit. So what does that mean? That means that we need to pray for people, that God will soften them up, that he will open their eyes, that he will deliver them from this blindness that they are under.

Oh, as we go about life, don't we see just multitudes of people absolutely clueless to even the existence of God. But yet, you know, in spite of the fact that they're standing outside the pub with their beer in their hand, smiling and all of that, you know, because you were there, you know, the futility of that, you know, the emptiness of that, you know, that that life doesn't really satisfy. But I believe that God is calling us as his people to pray that these would be illuminated themselves and that they might come to understand that there's more to life than what there appears to be.

From the natural perspective, there's a spiritual reality. God help them to be open to seeing that and to be receptive to his gospel. But for us, let's not adapt the wisdom of the world.

Let's hold fast to the word of God.

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