

(Through the Bible) 1 Corinthians 1-2

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith explores the themes of unity, sanctification, and the challenges of carnality in the Corinthian church as addressed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1-2.

Duration: 1:17:58

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:10, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, 1 Corinthians 2:14-15, 1 Corinthians 9:19-21, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 2 Peter 3:18

Topics: "Through The Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of not lording over one another but serving one another in love. He introduces the concept of the natural man, the spiritual man, and the upcoming topic of the carnal man. The natural man is at a disadvantage because he cannot understand or receive the things of the Spirit. However, the preacher emphasizes that God reveals these spiritual things to those who love Him through the Holy Spirit. The sermon encourages listeners to allow God to work in their lives and grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Let's turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 1. Paul introduces himself as the writer with Sosthenes in the first verse. Paul called an apostle. You notice the words to be are in italics, which means that they were added by the translators.

They're not there in the Greek. Just Paul called an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God. And Sosthenes, our brother.

Now there is a name, Sosthenes, that is related to Corinth. When Paul was in Corinth, he was brought by some of the Jews before the Corinthian magistrate, Galileo. And charges were brought against Paul by the Jews concerning their religion.

And Galileo said, look, if the guy were guilty of treason or something against the government, then I should stand in judgment of him. But because it's just religious matters, why do you take my time? And he ordered them out. And the men that were there beat up on Sosthenes, who was the chief ruler of the synagogue and thus probably the chief conspirator in bringing Paul before the Roman magistrate.

If this is the same Sosthenes, and it would indicate that perhaps it is, we don't know for sure. But if it is, it is very interesting that this man who was once an enemy of Paul is now a companion of Paul, joining him

as he is writing back to the church of Corinth. No doubt, Paul introduces his name because his name was a very familiar name to those in Corinth.

If this is the same Sosthenes, it is also interesting from the standpoint that here he was leading this uprising against Paul, and now the companion of Paul. And it is fascinating that often when a person is under heavy conviction of the Spirit, he gets very cantankerous against God or the people of God. Sometimes people are so antagonistic towards the Lord, we sort of write them off in our minds.

We think, oh, there's no way they would ever come. But what we don't realize is that it's all a big shell about ready to crack, and they realize it's about ready to crack, and that's why they're struggling so hard. And so Paul joins his name with Sosthenes in greeting the church of Corinth.

Corinth was the center of the world commerce. It was an extremely luxurious city. If you'll take a look at your map of Greece, you'll find that southern area of Greece is almost an island.

It is... Greece narrows down to this very narrow isthmus, and Corinth was there at this narrow isthmus of Greece, only four miles across the land. And thus, any commerce going from north to south, from Macedonia to Achaia, had to pass through Corinth. And it came that most of the commerce that was coming from east to west also passed through Corinth.

Because around the southern tip of Greece, the Cape of Methene was so treacherous that the early sailors really did not like to sail around southern Greece. And so they would usually sail to Corinth. If their ships were light enough, they would take them out of the water and put them on rollers and roll them across the four miles and then launch them again in the Aegean and sail on to Puteoli, the port of Rome.

Or the same thing coming back. If the ships were too big to transport across the land, then they would often unload the ships and just take the cargo across this four miles. Nero, seeing the advantage of the shipping coming through this area, attempted to build a canal, but he failed to do so.

But those men who built the Suez Canal, when they were completed with that project, built the Corinthian Canal. And today you'll find that there is a canal connecting the Aegean with the, what is it, the Adriatic Sea there. You've got your maps out.

What does it say? Adriatic. So yeah, across the Adriatic to Rome, the Aegean. So on the eastern side.

So this Corinthian Canal is operable today and the ships are able to save many miles of going around the southern end of Greece. Corinth was not just a commercial center. It was a center of philosophical thought in those days.

And there came a phrase, he speaks in the Corinthian style, which meant very articulate, precise, and colorful. And these men were more interested, not in what they said, but how they said it. Giving a lot of flair and color and all to their speeches.

And they loved oratory. Doesn't matter what the guy said, just so he's a good orator, you know, and they were attracted to oratory, but also interested in philosophical thought. But Corinth was also one of the most debased, wicked cities in the world.

With all of their philosophy, they could not keep that city from sinking into the lowest kind of debauchery. And thus, he lives like a Corinthian was a very common phrase that became a part of their vernacular to

describe a man who was always drunk and living in open debauchery. And in the Greek theater, whenever they would portray a drunk, they would always refer to him as the Corinthian.

Now, in the midst of this pagan city, one of the lowest, as far as morals goes, there was a church of God, the Ekklesia. Now, the word Ekklesia is a word that is common in Greek, but it usually referred to the city council. They were called the Ekklesia.

Those who have been called to rule in the city, they were known as the Ekklesia. So there was the Ekklesia of Corinth, the city council, those who ruled over the city affairs. But there was also the Ekklesia of God.

Those who are called to reign and to rule with God, the church and the word Ekklesia has been translated church, but it is really those who are called to rule unto the church of God. Now, notice he didn't say the church of Corinth. I think that we make a mistake today when we talk the church of England, the church of Scotland.

As though the church is divided, Paul speaks of the church of God, which is at Corinth. And so we are the church of God, which are at Santa Ana. But we are not the only church of God at Santa Ana.

There are many, but we are one and we need to recognize and realize that oneness of the church. And so he does not address the church of Corinth, but the church of God, which is at Corinth, a very important distinction. And God help us that we will make that distinction also in our minds and not think of ourselves exclusively as God's sole representative in an area.

Or to think that God is limited to one representation in an area. There's a very tragic mentality existing among the local church who have made the mistake of thinking that God has only one church in a given area. And of course, it's the local church they are in.

All of the rest of the churches they immediately exclude as Babylon. And they are the only true representatives of the unity of the body of Christ within a given area wherever they go to establish the local church. Now, nothing could be more bigoted than that and foolish as to think that we are God's exclusive representatives in this area because we have now affiliated with a local church.

Or we are a part of the local church, thus we have become. They did offer us that privilege years ago, which we promptly rejected as Romain was kicking them off the ground. The church of God is the Catholic church in the true sense of the word, the universal church of God, of which every true child of God is a member, is a part.

You see, there's only one person who can say my church and that's Jesus Christ. We are all members of his church, his body. And the thing is, you really can't join it.

You've got to be born into it, born again by the Spirit. And so, God help us and deliver us from that any kind of exclusivism. And that's, Paul is dealing now, as we get into Corinth, the Corinthian letter.

There's a division when we get to chapter 12, the beginning of chapter 12. He says, now concerning spirituals, brethren, I want to write to you a few things. In the first 11 chapters, he's dealing with carnal things.

Those from the household of Cloy had reported to Paul a lot of the mess that the Corinthian church was in. A lot of carnality, fighting, divisions, bickering. And so, Paul wrote to correct these carnal abuses that were existing in the Corinthian church.

But then when he finishes that, now he says, oh, now I want to talk to you about spiritual things. Enough of the carnal things. Now I want to talk to you about spiritual things.

And he begins to talk to them about the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, the supremacy of love, and the power of the resurrection in the latter part of the book, the spiritual things. But he had to get the carnal things out of the way first. And so he deals in this early part with some of the problems that existed.

And one of them was division within the body. So he addresses the church of God, which is that Corinth seeking to show them and bring them into the consciousness of the universal church of God, Jesus Christ. Under the church of God, which is that Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus.

The word sanctified comes from a root word, which is hegeos, which is also translated saint, the root word. It means one who is set apart for exclusive purposes. In the Old Testament, when they constructed the tabernacle and they made the vessels that were to be used in the service of the tabernacle.

Before they use these vessels, the plates, the cups and all, they sanctified them. That is, they set them apart for exclusive use and thus they were never to be used for anything other than the worship of God, service and worship of God. Now you remember when Belshazzar had made the feast for a thousand of his lords and all.

And while he was drunk, he ordered that they bring the golden cups that they had taken as booty from the temple in Jerusalem, that they might drink their wine out of these golden cups. And as he drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and of silver. But they were desecrating the vessels that had been set apart for the exclusive purpose of being used in the worship and service of God.

And as the result of the desecration of these, the handwriting came on the wall and the judgment of God fell that night upon Belshazzar and the Babylonian kingdom. You're lying. God has set it apart for His use, service to Him.

And so those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, set apart from the world, from the things of the world in Christ Jesus, God help us not to take the holy vessels that God has set aside for His use and use them for our own gain or pleasure. Called saints. Now notice again, to be is in italics that was added.

You aren't called to be a saint. You're called a saint. I like that.

St. Charles got a good ring, doesn't it? It's unfortunate that the church has designated certain special persons as saints. Because as far as the Bible is concerned, you're all saints. It isn't some special honor conferred upon you by a council of men.

After determining that so many miracles have been wrought and so forth, and thus you are elevated to sainthood. You are called by God a saint, and that's good enough for me. Called saints.

With all that in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. Again, wherever they call on Jesus Christ, He is their Lord, but He is also our Lord. There are those who like to feel that they have an exclusive claim on the Lord.

And this, the kind of division that was taking place in Corinth. Well, we're of Cephas, we're of Paul, we're of Jesus. We have exclusive little claims, but He is their Lord, but He is also our Lord.

And so, this endeavor to break down this party spirit that created the divisions within the church of Corinth. Grace unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace, the word means beauty.

The beauty of giving. The beauty of giving to those who are undeserving. Grace, one of Paul's favorite words.

He expounds on it throughout the New Testament. Peace. Now, grace was the common Greek greeting.

Instead of in the morning when you see someone say good morning or hello or whatever, they'd say grace. The Jews, when they greet you, rather than saying hello or good morning or whatever, they say shalom, peace. And so, Paul took these two familiar greetings, those of the Greeks and those of the Jews, and he combines them in so many of his New Testament epistles.

Grace be unto you and peace. They are always combined in this order, and it is the proper order, because a person cannot know real peace until they have experienced the grace of God. Now, for years, as a Christian, I did not really have the peace of God because I did not know the grace of God.

And it was not until I realized the grace of God that I then discovered the peace of God. Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, in the first ten verses of this epistle, Paul uses the name of Jesus Christ ten times.

So, he's really laying the foundation for our faith and all in the constant repetition of the name Jesus Christ. And here in verse two, it was the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. And here, from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord is not his name, it's his title, the kurios. Jesus is his Greek name, the Hebrew is Joshua, which means Jehovah is salvation. It was the name that the angel told Joseph to call him, for he said he will save his people from their sins.

So, he was named after his purpose, Jehovah Shua, Joshua. Christ is actually, again, his designation, for it is the Hebrew word Messiah. And so, again, it is not his name, but it is his mission.

So, the first Lord is title, the name is Joshua, and the mission is Christ or Mashiach, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, unfortunately, we think it's first, middle, and last name. Not so.

And thus, people talk about the Lord Jesus. Not really thinking of that as a title signifying relationship, which indeed it is. Jesus said, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and yet you don't do the things I command you.

God has given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, that's the name, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father. So, we probably would be better if they would put a comma after Lord to distinguish it from his name. And even a comma after Jesus to distinguish that from his mission as the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, the Messiah.

I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God, which is given you by Jesus Christ. And so, Christ is the one through which the grace of God is bestowed upon us. That in everything you are enriched

by him.

That word enriched in the Greek is an interesting word. Plutokitos, actually. And we get our word plutocrat from that Greek word.

You become a plutocrat because of Jesus Christ. You're enriched. And the word means luxuriously rich.

That in everything you are enriched luxuriously by him. Oh, the depth of the riches that are ours through Jesus Christ. You're enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge.

Now, this utterance was the thing that the Greek was especially interested in. It was the logos. That's the Greek word used.

But also in the knowledge. Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. Paul wrote to them again and said, you have no need that I send you letters of commendation because you are living epistles.

Your lives are my letters of commendation. So here they're being enriched in Christ in all utterance and knowledge. Their lives became the testimony of Christ and that witness of Christ confirmed by the lives that they were living, actually.

So that you come behind in no charisma waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, the interesting thing to me is that as Paul writes to the church of Corinth, he makes mention that they have all kinds of charisma. They do not come behind in any charisma.

Paul devotes three chapters to the charisma, the gifts of the Spirit, the operation of those gifts, the proper use of the gifts of the Spirit. Because they came behind in no charisma. They had them all.

But unfortunately, there was an abuse of the gifts of the Spirit in the church of Corinth that needed correcting. And Paul spends chapters 12 through 14 in correcting the abuses. But what is interesting to me is that this New Testament church of Corinth that came behind in no charisma, that had all of these gifts in operation, was also the church that Paul had to rebuke for its carnality.

Now, somehow in our minds there is a twisted wire that's crossed over and is shorting out so that we have a false concept that if a person is using the gifts of the Spirit, he must be especially righteous or holy. And those that do have the gifts of the Spirit in operation often have that attitude, well, I'm more spiritual than you. If you were only as spiritual as I, you too could have these gifts working in your life.

And there's just an awful lot of promotionalism, hucksterism, ballyhooing about the gifts of the Spirit. But I have observed that even as in the church of Corinth, so today, many of those people who are making the most motion and the most noise about the gifts of the Spirit are really some of the most carnal people I know. They really do not walk after the Spirit.

Their whole appearance is marked with carnality. Their whole lifestyle is carnal. Though they are constantly talking about the gifts of the Spirit and the power of the Spirit and the anointing of the Holy Spirit and so forth, yet when you observe their lifestyles, they are still extremely carnal, much like the church in Corinth.

They did not come behind in any charisma, and yet was the church that needed the most rebuke because of the carnality that was existing within the church. Unfortunately, there is a tendency many times to use the gifts of the Spirit more or less as a novelty, as a toy, as a parlor game, where we entertain ourselves

with the gifts of the Spirit and the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. Now, please, don't think that I am opposed to the gifts of the Spirit and their operation.

False. I believe in the validity of the gifts of the Spirit today, all of them. I only wish that I had more of the charisma, that working of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit within my life.

I, as Paul enjoined, covet earnestly the best gifts. I desire that God would use my life. But I also desire that the Lord use me in such a way that it doesn't draw attention to myself or that I do not get lifted up and begin to walk after the flesh instead of walking after the Spirit.

The Corinthian church, commended by Paul because they didn't fall behind in any of the gifts or the charisma as they were waiting for the coming. And the word coming there is the apocalypse, which is the same word used for the book of Revelation, the unveiling of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall also confirm you unto the end that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, he's talking about the future and Christ and in the future. The same idea is given to us in Jude, where he said, now unto him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. When my name is called there at the judgment bar and I step forward, God said, read the charges against this fellow and Jesus will step forth and say, no charges, father.

He's one of mine. You better believe I'll be praising God at that moment. Blameless without fault.

That's how Jesus is going to present me to the father. Confirming that work in me, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, for God is faithful by whom you were called into the fellowship of his son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Notice how Paul is putting it together.

Jesus Christ, our Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord Jesus Christ, just getting him in there every lick. Now, you've been called into the fellowship. That Greek word koinonia is a difficult word to translate because it has such a depth of meaning.

It means oneness. It means communion. It means fellowship.

It means common. It means sharing all of these things. We do not have an English equivalent.

And so we use different words at different times as it appears in the text, because all of them are words that define or help define koinonia. You've been brought into a sharing in all things in Jesus Christ. Now, that's exciting because everything that is his becomes mine.

I'm an heir of God, but I'm a joint heir with Jesus Christ as he shares with me. Come ye, blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom that was prepared for you from the foundations of the world. Hey, but don't think that that is a one way.

That also means that everything I have belongs to him. Oh, well, just a minute. Isn't it interesting how we can get so excited about everything that is his belongs to me? And yet I would hold out my pittance from him.

I would hold back my might while reaching for his wealth. But in reality, all that is mine is his. I need to take that view of things.

Lord, you've made me a steward. You've entrusted me with your goods as we've entered into this fellowship with each other. May I use wisely that which you have entrusted to me for your glory, because, Lord, it really belongs to you.

Because we have this koinonia, this communion, this sharing. Now I beseech you, I beg you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. So Paul now begins to deal with some of the issues that have been brought to his attention, these divisions that were existing in the church there of Corinth, and he is exhorting them now.

I beseech you, brethren, that you get together, speak the same things. Don't want these divisions. Be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

For it has been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Cloy, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? So they had divided off, and there were those that say, well, I'm of Paul.

Probably those who were wanting to live under the umbrella of grace, perhaps abusing the grace of God, as Peter said some were doing, using it as a cloak for licentiousness. And so when someone would rebuke them for their actions, they'd say, hey, I'm of Paul. You know, I'm under the cloak of grace.

Probably the intellectuals said, well, I'm of Apollos. And then there were always those that wanted to go back to the foundation and say, well, I'm of Peter. And then there are always that little segment that says, hey, we're the only ones, we're of Christ.

You know, and they have that holier than thou and we are the most and no one else is anything because we are the church of Christ and you don't have the right name and therefore you, you know, second-rate, you don't belong. We're of Christ. Is Christ divided? When men divide the body of Christ, who bleeds? What a shame that we bring up our petty differences in such ways that we divide the body.

Now, I believe that there is room for disagreement, different opinions. I can allow for that. I can accept if you don't understand the scripture the same way I understand it.

If you have a different idea on baptism than I have, I can accept it. If you want to be sprinkled, I'll sprinkle you. Sometimes when I'm baptizing people, they say, well, you put me down head first.

I said, sure, I'll dunk them. I can, I can make allowances for the different ideas that people have. But when we disagree, surely we ought to disagree agreeably that we not create the division.

Well, you know, he, you know, and we begin to divide over the issues. They shouldn't separate us. Christ is not divided.

Paul said, hey, I wasn't crucified for you and you weren't baptized in the name of Paul. I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius. Now these who say I am of Christ make a big divisive issue over baptism and they'll come and hassle you about water baptism.

And they declare that you aren't really saved until you're baptized. And therefore they keep the tank full in the church all the time so that at the minute a person is safe, they can take them right back to the tank and

baptize them. So they can be saved instantaneous baptisms.

And they feel that that is extremely important and better to do it here at the church, because if you're driving to the beach and you happen to get an accident before you get there, oh brother, you've had it. What a shame on his way to get baptized and he got snuffed. Now, if water baptism were so essential for salvation, then Paul here is speaking blasphemously really.

When he said, I thank God I didn't baptize any of you, but Crispus and Gaius. And if there are any others, I don't remember them. Lest anyone should say that I have baptized in my own name.

I also baptized, I think the house of Stephanus, but besides these, I don't know whether I baptized anybody else. I don't remember for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. A very fascinating statement by Paul that once and for all should put down the concept of baptismal regeneration.

Water baptism is an obedience to the faith of Jesus Christ that I have. It is an outward sign of an inward work of God's spirit within my life. It is renouncing my old life as being dead and now in water baptism buried.

Then I might live now the new life after the spirit. But if I am not living the new life after the spirit, then it means that the water baptism was not really valid. If I'm getting in all kinds of carnal arguments and fights, because a person doesn't baptize instantaneously, and I divide the body and get upset and want to argue the issue.

Hey, I don't care if you've been baptized a hundred times, you're not showing fruit of a true walk in the spirit, which of course, according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 13, is marked by love, which doesn't seek its own way, but believes all things and hopes all things and endures all things and never fails. So, man prone to these little party divisions when he is walking after the flesh, when he is living a carnal life. G. Campbell Morgan said, I have noted that the more spiritual a man becomes, the less denominational he becomes.

Have Paul been writing to the church today concerning the divisions among it? I'm sure he would say, but some of you say I'm a Baptist and some of you say I'm a Presbyterian and others say I'm an Episcopalian and others say, well, I'm a Nazarene. And there are those who say, well, we're the church of Christ. And again, he would say, hey, is Christ divided? And he would urge towards unity within the body to realize that we are all of Jesus Christ.

Paul was sent to preach the gospel, not with the wisdom of words, something that they were very familiar with there in Corinth, as these philosophers played with words, but God didn't send me to preach with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. Lest a person be drawn by the clever speeches rather than the conviction of the Spirit in his heart. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.

To the Greek, to the philosophers, the preaching of the cross was foolishness. When Paul was there in Athens addressing the Epicureans on Mars Hill, when he came to the place in his story where he referred to the resurrection of Jesus, they said, ah, come on, let's get out of here. What's this babbler talking about? Resurrection.

Foolishness. Ridiculous. And they rejected Paul's message when he came to the cross and the resurrection.

Foolishness. The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. What is your attitude towards the cross of Jesus Christ? Important that you examine it.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and I will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where then is the wise and where is the scribe? And where is the disputer of this world? Talking now about the Greek philosophers, those men who purported their love for wisdom, the scribe, the disputers of this world. Have not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Yes, he surely has.

When I look at the theory of evolution that they are religiously trying to promote and realize the incredible paucity of evidence of transitional forms in the geological column. I realize all of the hype, all of the deceit and all that has gone to promote the theory of evolution. And then I look at the very concepts themselves trying to be pawned off onto us as the wisdom of the world.

Men of science. Yes, God has made foolish the wisdom of this world. To think that I have the capacity to see, because one day a little amphibian kind of a creature finally emerged out of the water, lifting his frontal part above the water and allowed the sun to beat down upon it, forming a mutation, a freckle of sorts that continued in a mutation process until it became a nerve center and then developed the optical capacities.

And now thank God to a freckle I can see. Yes, God has made foolish the wisdom of this world. I don't read comic books anymore.

I read evolutionary books. Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Did you know that when bathtubs were first introduced that the scientists were warning about the use of bathtubs, how dangerous they were to the health? And the men of science actually had many cities in the United States form ordinances forbidding bathtubs in houses. Oh my, a person will have all kinds of chronic illnesses and all, they start taking baths, you know, and in the home and all.

And there were cities that actually outlawed the use of bathtubs because the scientists warned them about the dangers that could come to man because of their use. It's interesting to me how often science textbooks have to be revised. I'm amazed that facts can change so quickly.

For when I went to school, the world was only 2 billion years old and now it's 12 billion and I'm not that old. See, theoretically that should make me 10 billion years old. It's interesting to me that the Bible really has never needed to be revised.

We may get a new translation that updates the language structure for better understanding, but let a person mess with the original text and he's in big trouble. We don't have to keep revising the revised edition. New, modern, updated.

Didn't have to do that, did we? God has made foolish the wisdom of this world. For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God. God is the one who is the source of wisdom, true wisdom.

In Christ it says are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. But the world by its wisdom knew not God. That to me is very interesting.

For there is no true wisdom that eliminates God. You see, people today so often speak about being agnostics, the wisdom of this world, the sophisticated person. And so often around the universities you bring up the subject of God, the ultimate knowledge.

The person says, well I'm an agnostic, the wisdom of this world, knew not God. But yet a child can know him. Where are the whys? The word agnostic in Latin is ignoramus.

But that doesn't sound sophisticated, does it? Well, what about God? Oh, I'm an ignoramus, man. I think it was Eliphaz who said to Job, who by searching can find out God to perfection? The answer is no one. You can't start with an earth base and reach God.

That's the history of religion. Men starting with an earth base, reaching out for the infinite. And thus religions are doomed for failure by their very nature.

But we have in the Bible the revelation of God through Jesus Christ, which is not man reaching out for God, but God reaching down for man. The infinite, it starts with the infinite base reaching to the finite. And thus God is not found or discovered by man's pursuit in the wisdom of man, knew not God.

God is discovered by the revelation of himself to man. And that revelation is oftentimes made through preaching. And so the world by its wisdom knew not God, but it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

So that through the preaching, God has revealed to man that man might believe. Now notice it is the foolishness of preaching and preaching is really a foolish exercise in a sense, and especially the way some do it, but it is not the preaching of foolishness and be careful of that, but the foolishness of preaching. For the Jews require a sign.

You remember they said to Jesus, show us a sign that we might believe. The Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified. To the Jews, it's a stumbling block.

Even to the disciples, it was a stumbling block. The idea that the Messiah would be crucified was a stumbling block. When Jesus began to say to the disciples, after Peter acknowledged you are the Messiah, Jesus said, yes, and I'm going to be turned over to the hands of simple men and they're going to crucify me and slay me.

The third day I'll rise again. Peter said, Lord, be that far from the old stumbling block. Peter stumbled over it.

Their Messiah rejected crucified. Oh, no way. And the Jews to the present day, for the most part are still stumbling over the crucifixion.

In spite of the fact that they have Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 right before them, we preach Christ crucified. To the Jews, it's a stumbling block. To the Greeks, it's foolishness.

But unto them, which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ is 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 man. The foolishness of God, which is, of course, the preaching of the cross is wiser than men.

Weakness of God, stronger than men. For look around, you will see brethren that there are not many wise men after the flesh and not many mighty and not many noble call for God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. And God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.

And this is the best explanation I can give you for my being the pastor of Calvary Chapel. For God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. And Calvary Chapel confounds the wise.

They come from all over to study. Our methods, our techniques, our programs to discover the secret of how it is that so many people attend the church, the base things of the world and the things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, the things which are not to bring to not the things which are God uses simple things. And the purpose is that no flesh should glory in his sight.

Now God would use mighty men and noble men and all then, then, then these men would glory in his sight. People would glory in the men that God was using. God doesn't want any flesh to glory in his sight.

And so he uses the foolishness of preaching and he uses simple people, base people, not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble to do his work because he wants the glory for the work that he does. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. These are the things that we find in Jesus and in the preaching of the cross of Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God.

For God had to establish a just basis to forgive man their sins, that God might be righteous when he justified a problem. How can a just God forgive man his sins? When you really analyze it and dig into it, you find that God had a real problem and he solved the problem in the cross where he sent his son to take the guilt of our sins and to suffer the penalty of our sins. And he died that spiritual death and physical death, which is the result of sin.

The spiritual death first on the cross, he cried, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And they're separated from God because of our sins. Secondly, the physical death as he dismissed his spirit, suffering again the penalty of our sins. Now, because the penalty has been paid, if I will just believe in Jesus Christ, God now has a righteous basis to forgive me of my sins.

There's been a substitute, Christ, my substitute. Oh, the wisdom of God in the cross of Christ. Therein is the righteousness of God revealed.

A righteousness again, predicated not upon the law or my works or my obedience to a rule or code of ethics or a standard that I have set or others have set, but a righteousness that is secure and constant because it is based upon the work of Jesus Christ in my behalf, not on my work. If my righteousness were predicated upon my work, it would be a very variable thing, very tenuous. I would have access to God some of the time, but because it is predicated upon the work of Jesus Christ, he has been made to us the righteousness of God.

So as Paul said, those things which were gained to me talking about his life in obedience to the law, I counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, for whom I suffered the loss of all things. I count them, but refuse that I may know him and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness, which is of Christ through faith. Christ made to us the righteousness of God.

He's made to us the sanctification. I need power over sin. I need power over the flesh.

I don't want to live after the flesh, but I find the flesh is strong. It is powerful. It holds me in its power.

And I try, I struggle, I pray, I vow, I promise, and still I fail. Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? Well, thank God Jesus Christ has been made the sanctification of God for me. And now I see myself crucified with Christ for I am in Christ and his death becomes my death, the death of the old man, the death of the old nature.

So I'm baptized with Christ and I bury the old life in the old man. And I come up out of the water, risen in Christ to live the new life after the spirit, the new nature of Christ now in control and living and walking after the spirit. Christ has made the sanctification of God unto me.

Finally, he's made the redemption of God. Lost, a slave to sin in the bondage of corruption through the cross of Jesus Christ. I've been purchased and I now belong to a new owner and my allegiance to him.

That according as it is written, he that glories, let him glory in the Lord, that no flesh should glory in his presence. Only place I can glory tonight is in the cross of Jesus Christ and his finished work in my behalf. And I brethren, when I came to you, came not with the excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

Paul didn't come as one of the Corinthian philosophers trying to stand in the streets and persuade them by the brilliant oratory to believe and to accept Jesus Christ. I wonder where the place of oratory is in the pulpit. It's interesting how that we so often admire the great orators in the pulpit, but I often wonder if oratory has any place in the pulpit at all.

It surely didn't impulse pulpit. When I came to you, I came not with the excellency of speech or of wisdom as I declared unto you the testimony of God, for I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. Oh, the common bond by which we are all brought together.

Jesus Christ him crucified. That's all I want to know. And I was with you in weakness, in fear and in much trembling.

Now Paul had just come from some very upsetting experiences. While he was in Galatia, he was wanting to go into Asia, but the Spirit was forbidding him and Paul was too sick to get out of bed. And so finally he heard the call, a man from Macedonia saying, come over and help us.

And so he headed over to Macedonia to obey the heavenly vision. And when he arrived in Philippi, as he was preaching, they grabbed him and threw him in jail, beat him. And there in the dungeon at midnight, the Lord shook the prison and opened the doors.

Paul left Philippi, went down to Thessalonica and there as he preached, they had a riot. So he left Thessalonica on the, you know, sly really to get out of there because they were waiting for him. And he went down to Berea and there a big ruckus was stirred up.

And so he left Berea and headed on down to Athens. And there on Mars Hill, he was mocked as he sought to proclaim to them the truth of Jesus Christ. And he comes to Corinth now a broken man in weakness, trembling, in fear.

And my speech and my preaching, he said, was not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the spirit and power. It wasn't really man's wisdom. My speech was a demonstration of the power of God and of the spirit of God working.

I believe that there is in the ministry of the word, oftentimes the gift of prophecy, the gift of word of wisdom and the word of knowledge that is being exercised from the pulpit. And because of this, I often listen to my own tapes and are benefited by them. And I enjoy them.

I know that sounds weird, but I heard my radio program the other day and I really enjoyed it. Good message. And I, and I said, did I say that, man, that's great.

That's rich. Why? Because it was preaching and the preaching was the demonstration of the spirit and power of God. As there was the anointing and the prophecy, the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge coming forth.

And so Paul's ministry to those in Corinth wasn't the enticing words of man's wisdom, but the demonstration of the spirit and power that your faith should not be established or stand in the wisdom of men, but it should stand in the power of God. How be it? We speak wisdom among them, which are fully matured, yet not the wisdom of this world that comes to nothing, but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew for, had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. So that true wisdom, the wisdom, which is of God, the wisdom by which he speaks to those who are matured in their Christian walk and experience.

But as it is written, I has not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those that love him. Now this is probably one of the most misquoted scriptures in the Bible because people stop there and they say, well, heaven is going to be so glorious. I has not seen, ear has not heard, it hasn't even entered into your heart, the things that God's prepared for you.

Oh, it is so glorious. But the next verse says, but God has revealed them unto us by his spirit for the spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. So these things that the world does not know.

Now he's talking about the eyes of the world, the ears of the world, the hearts of the people in the world. They have no concept, no idea of the things that God has for us who love him. But God is revealing them unto us by his spirit for the spirit is searching all things, yea, the deep things of God.

For what man knoweth the things of man except the spirit of man, which is in him. Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God. So here the spirit of God is attributed with the same omniscience that God possesses, knowing the things of God.

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. And so God has given us the spirit to teach us. And you have need, John said, that no man should teach you, but that unction that you have received, it will teach you all things.

But the comforter, Jesus said, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have commanded you. And so God has given to us the spirit that we might freely know the things of God as he instructs our hearts in the ways of God. And that is why I always encourage a person before you start reading the Bible, pray, oh God, let your Holy Spirit illumine my mind and my understanding to your truth as I read.

You ever read the Bible and finish the page and then think, what did I read? And you realize that your mind was somewhere else. You don't remember a word that you read off of that page. Your mind was probably in some carnal pursuit.

And here you're trying to read something of the spirit. But then you'll say, oh Lord, now help me to understand this. And you'll read it again and how the whole thing just comes alive and begins to minister to your heart in such a powerful way.

You're now seeing things that you didn't see before. You're now understanding things that you didn't understand before. It just sort of jumps off the page and begins to burn in your heart.

The glorious work of the Holy Spirit in teaching us the way of righteousness and truth, which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but with the Holy Spirit teaching, comparing the spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, and neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. So the natural man is at a decided disadvantage because he cannot know the things of the Spirit.

He cannot receive them. He cannot know them because they are spiritually discerned. The deaf man cannot enjoy the symphony.

The blind man cannot enjoy the beauty of the sunset. Why? Because he lacks the... Boy, getting old is terrible. There are two words I want and I can't pull either of them in.

He lacks the faculties, thank you, by which these things are appreciated. So in the same logic, the natural man cannot receive or know the things of the Spirit because he lacks the faculty by which these things are known. He lacks the Spirit.

And lacking the Spirit, it's impossible for him to know the things of the Spirit. But in contrast to the natural man, he that is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is discerned of no man, or another translation, he that is spiritual understands all things, though he is not understood by man. Now the natural man cannot understand your love for the Word of God.

He cannot understand your love for the people of God. He cannot understand your love for the things of God. There are foolishness under him.

What do you do for fun? And the natural man is just at a loss to understand. He walks away and says, man, he's crazy. I don't know.

He's talking about the Lord all the time. You know, what? Something's wrong. He which is spiritual, he understands things, though he is not understood by the natural man.

No man understands him. And that, of course, makes for difficult relationships sometimes when these kids come and accept the Lord, and then they go home and begin to share the things of the Spirit with their parents. All of a sudden, there's lost communication.

For who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. What does he mean by that? When he was writing to the Philippians, he said, let this mind be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God and thought it not robbery or something to be grasped, to be equal with God, yet he humbled himself and took upon himself the form of a man and came

in the likeness as a man, as a servant, obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. The mind that was in Christ was the mind that was willing to step down, a mind of humility.

We have the mind of Christ, Paul said. That mind which doesn't exalt itself or its own wisdom, but that mind that submits to God and to the will and the authority of God. We have the mind of Christ.

Oh, God help us that we might indeed possess the mind of Christ, that that mind, that mental attitude that Jesus had will be our mental attitude. That of not lording over one another, but serving one another in love. Next week we'll go on to the third and fourth chapters as we deal with the carnal man.

Now that we see three men, the natural man, the spiritual man, next week we get the third one, the carnal man. And he's the one in trouble. May the Lord give you a beautiful week.

May you walk in the spirit. May you be led by the spirit. May you be taught by the spirit that you might this week experience that enriching of your life in Christ.

Become a spiritual plutocrat, just wealthy, luxuriously wealthy in the things of the Lord and in the things of the spirit as God ministers to you out of those infinite resources of his love and grace, wisdom, and mercy. May you grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May this be a special week of the work of God's spirit in your life and forming you into the image of his Son.

May you give place and time for God to work in your life. In Jesus name.

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