

Day 84, 1 Corinthians 2

by David Servant

David Servant explores the contrast between worldly wisdom and the divine wisdom revealed through the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 2.

Scripture: Proverbs 11:2, Luke 22:3, Acts 17:16, 1 Corinthians 1:26, 1 Corinthians 2:1, 1 Corinthians 2:7-8, 1 Corinthians 2:13, Ephesians 3:10, Colossians 1:16

Topics: "Divine Wisdom", "Humility In Faith"

Description

David Servant delves into Paul's ministry in Corinth, emphasizing the contrast between human wisdom and the divine revelation of the gospel. Paul's focus on preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified, rather than relying on persuasive words of wisdom, highlights the power of God over the wisdom of men. Believers are portrayed as possessing a hidden wisdom from God, predestined for their glory, which includes forgiveness, spiritual rebirth, and a heavenly home. The importance of humility in receiving God's wisdom is underscored, as pride hinders true wisdom and aligns with worldly wisdom. Paul's reference to the rulers of this age possibly alludes to demonic spiritual rulers who unwittingly played a role in Christ's redemptive sacrifice, outwitted by God's divine plan.

Transcript

You may recall that when Paul first visited Corinth, he had just come from Athens where he'd spent time reasoning with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, experiencing mixed results (Acts 17:16-34). I suspect Paul had endured his fill of human wisdom---of which Greeks were so fond---making him even more appreciative of the divine revelation of the gospel. Perhaps that is why, as he recounted his ministry in Corinth, he wrote:

I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified....and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God (2:1-5).

The message of the cross has generally always been spurned by intellectuals, as they judge it to be below their brilliance. The truth is, however, that it is far above their brilliance, having its origin in heaven. Among believers there may not be "many wise according to the flesh" (1:26), yet they comprise the wisest group of people on earth, having partaken of God's wisdom. The wisdom of the world is foolishness, not only to God, but also to those of us who know God. Moreover, we are not intimidated, impressed or enamored by

the intellectual, philosophical and religious elite of the world. Rather, we feel sorry for them, knowing they are groping in darkness, blind leaders of the blind.

Having received God's Spirit, we now possess a wisdom that is hidden from the world, a wisdom that "God predestined before the ages to our glory" (2:7). Obviously, that predestined wisdom revolves around God's plan to redeem us through the sacrifice of Christ. The Spirit has revealed to us "all that God has prepared for those who love Him" (2:9), which includes forgiveness of our sins, our spiritual rebirth as God's sons, and a home in heaven, to name a few.

But have we been sovereignly selected to possess this wonderful wisdom from the Spirit? No. Scripture tells us that "with the humble is wisdom" (Prov. 11:2). Those who humble themselves put themselves in the position to receive God's wisdom. Pride is always the enemy of true wisdom, and always the comrade of worldly wisdom.

Paul wrote that, had "the rulers of this age" understood that predestined wisdom, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (2:8). Who are those "rulers" of whom he speaks? Some think it unlikely that Paul would refer to a few regional political leaders, namely, Pilate and Herod, along with a group of local religious leaders, the Jewish Sanhedrin, as being "rulers of this age" (2:6). For that reason, it is thought that Paul was referring to the demonic rulers who influenced everyone who had anything to do with Jesus' death, starting with Judas, whom Scripture says "Satan entered" (Luke 22:3). Paul wrote of demonic spiritual rulers in his letters to the Ephesians and Colossians (Eph. 3:10, 6:12; Col. 1:16, 2:15). Those evil spiritual rulers were indeed outwitted by God. As they influenced men to crucify Christ, they unwittingly helped redeem millions of people from Satan's dominion!

Some think that Paul's statement, "Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit" (2:13) is a reference to speaking in other tongues, something the Corinthians were doing a lot of, and a subject that surfaces later in Paul's letter. No one knows for sure, as Paul doesn't say. Certainly speaking with other tongues could be considered to be speaking words "taught by the Spirit." Yet proclaiming the gospel could also be considered speaking words "taught by the Spirit." Neither are accepted by "the natural man" (those who are not born again), as they are "foolishness to him" (2:14). So I'm unsure of what Paul was speaking about. When I see Paul in heaven I'm going to ask him why he didn't write more clearly!

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