

# Christ Crucified, the Power and Wisdom of God

by Miki Hardy

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*Miki Hardy's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of Christ crucified as the foundation of Christian faith and the necessity of the Holy Spirit for understanding God's plan.*

**Topics:** "The Cross", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

Miki Hardy preaches on the transformative power of the message of the Cross, emphasizing how it is perceived as foolishness by the world but is the very foundation of our faith. He highlights Paul's revelation that the wisdom and power of God are essential for true faith, contrasting it with the limitations of human wisdom. Hardy challenges the Church to return to God's plan, allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal the mysteries of God's kingdom to our hearts, rather than relying on human understanding.

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## Transcript

"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." 1 Corinthians 1:18

Paul's declaration comes in 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:26. The Apostle had no doubt that 'Jesus Christ and Him crucified' was the foundation, the very core of our Christian faith and walk. To him, it wasn't just something he believed, his whole life had been transformed since he received this revelation directly from God, through the Holy Spirit.

Isn't it sad that, 2000 years later, the Church, though acknowledging the centrality of the Cross, has somehow drifted away from God's plan for humanity, relying increasingly on a message that comes from man's wisdom, instead of the wisdom and power of God?

A mystery revealed to the heart

In 1 Corinthians in 2:4-5, Paul reminds the Corinthians that he had never intended to bring the Gospel message to them with words of human wisdom so that their faith would rest on the power of God. He knew what he had received was by revelation and that what he had to impart was not something that could be explained, or learnt, by his listeners; quite simply, because he had received it as revelation. In the same way, God is not interested in us trying to understand His plan for the Church and for our lives with our

minds. He wants to reveal it to our hearts! God designed it this way so no one should boast that somehow through his own wisdom and intelligence, he had done what only the Holy Spirit can do. In verse 7, he explains that he is talking about 'mysteries' - hidden things that can only be revealed to the heart of man by the Holy Spirit.

Of course, such a message, which Paul describes as foolishness in 1 Corinthians 1:21-25, created problems for the people in the time of Jesus and the Early Church. He declares: "... 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."

It confounds the wise

You may ask: 'Why was this message a stumbling block for the Jews?' Because they were expecting a conquering king, and got one accused of being a criminal instead; they couldn't comprehend the long-awaited Messiah as being a Suffering Servant, dealing with their sins by dying a humiliating death on the Cross. They wanted a God who delivered them from perilous situations through miracles; in return for performing rituals and following the instructions of the Law. As for the Greeks, who needed everything explained rationally, a God who could become a man and then die on the Cross for the sins of humanity was simply illogical, and a sign of weakness.

In the same way today, I'm sure that we've all tried at some point to 'explain' salvation to someone. But it's only when the Holy Spirit works in a person's heart that something happens. We can't teach anyone how to be born again; or how to identify their lives with Christ and take up their cross and follow Him. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal this. Otherwise only those with the intellectual capacity would be able to grasp God's plan. But, as Paul says, this message confounds the wise, so that no one can take the glory for his own salvation, or for understanding something in the spirit. It is all God and by His grace alone.

The 'things of God'

In 1 Corinthians 2:9-10, the Apostle quotes Isaiah, declaring boldly that God has indeed reserved and prepared things for us, His Church, that we really cannot conceive with our minds or intelligence. He then confirms that these things are revealed to us by the Spirit as we walk on that road to perfection.

We are reassured, therefore, that whether we are white or black, rich or poor, intelligent or less so, everything is accomplished by God's Spirit. This message of Christ crucified - His suffering, death and resurrection from the dead - is all revelation.

From verse 11, we see that Christ crucified becomes a reality in our hearts only through God's Spirit. This is what equips us and gives us the power to take the road of the Cross, because we now know what the 'things of God' actually are... In verse 12, Paul confirms what we have received through being spiritual, not intellectual: "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 by God." This is what equips us and gives us the power to take the road of the Cross, because we now know what the 'things of God' actually are...

Victory at the Cross

We cannot expect to live a victorious Christian life by relying just on our past salvation experience. Christ crucified must mean something to us today! We can describe it thus: we enter the kingdom of God through the message of salvation; but there is also the apostolic gospel - the message of the Cross - which calls us

to lay down our lives, and partake of the life of Christ. Paul and the Apostles preached Christ and Him crucified to the Early Church which included identifying themselves with, and partaking of, the sufferings and death of Christ; becoming a complete man, conformed to His image. Paul refers to this in Romans 6:3-6. Everything of the flesh was condemned and crucified when Christ died on the Cross. We also must be willing to put it to death (Galatians 5:24), to receive the total victory of His resurrection. We do so by carrying our cross and following Jesus (Matthew 16:24-25). The victorious Christian, delivered from sin, walking in righteousness is now seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6); thus able to declare boldly: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."

Are we ready to pay the price?

The problem for the Church today is that we believe in what Christ did, but are not prepared to lay our lives on the altar for what we believe and identify with His what He did on the cross. The idea of identifying our lives with Christ, is a struggle because it would mean denying ourselves, renouncing the worldly desires in us, and being ready to die to our flesh and to the world. However, Jesus himself said, "You cannot serve two masters." Serving Christ requires a total commitment to the fullness of the life of Christ. Without the Holy Spirit revealing the things of God to our hearts, we are unable to understand the fullness of His plan. Our only alternative then is to adopt what I call a lifestyle based on 'Christian language'.

In Galatians 1:15-16, Paul speaks about "...God revealing His Son to me..."; he describes how he did not need to confer with the other apostles or seek anyone's approval. What had been revealed to him - not explained or taught - was so powerful that he was prepared to suffer and pay any price for the Gospel. Indeed, in Acts 14, we see him even willing to return to preach in the same town where he had been stoned. He knew that the message of Christ crucified was not just for his salvation; it was also the means for perfection. When our hearts have seized the fullness of this revelation, our vision, lives, ambitions, and plans change.

The message has not changed

Towards the end of his life, Paul could write to Timothy and the churches, satisfied that what God had done in his own life was also reflected in the life of his co-workers. When he declares he is proud of Timothy or the church of Corinth, he is not referring to their knowledge, but to their transformed lives, how they had grown in the Spirit: "You are my letters of recommendation!"

This same message, first revealed 2000 years ago, is still being revealed today by the Holy Spirit to men and women who want to serve Jesus. Yes, it is a radical unchanging message that has nothing to do with man's intellect, capabilities, or other natural talents. We can only praise God, and worship and thank Him everyday that somehow His Holy Spirit has enlightened us, "...the wisdom of God is a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory..." Christ crucified is truly the power and wisdom of God to bring us fully into God's perfect plan to save and transform our lives individually.

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