

(1 Corinthians) ch.1:25-2:16

by Zac Poonen

God chooses the weak and the foolish to shame the wise and to accomplish his purposes, and boasting in the Lord is the mark of a spiritual Christian.

Duration: 43:46

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:19, Jeremiah 23:29, Matthew 12:36, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 1:31, 1 Corinthians 2:2, 1 Corinthians 3:1-2

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Godly Wisdom"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not relying on human wisdom or cleverness when preaching the word of God. He highlights the need to speak about the things that God freely gives and not boast in our own abilities. The speaker also emphasizes the significance of the words that come out of our mouths, as Jesus said that we will be held accountable for every idle word spoken. He encourages preachers to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit and the proof of God's power in their words, rather than trying to impress people with their own abilities.

Transcript

We turn now to 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, and verse 25. In our last study, we were considering how human wisdom and intelligence, human eloquence and ability in auditory, have no value in the kingdom of God. Not only do they not have any value, but they are a hindrance to God's work.

Cleverness of speech, we saw in 1 Corinthians 17, can make the cross of Christ of none effect. There are very few who have understood this. There are many who have understood that human righteousness is a hindrance to coming to God, but they have not understood, for the devil has concealed it from them, that human intelligence also, and reason, are hindrances in God's work, and in fellowship with the Lord.

For when we see in Genesis chapter 3, we see human righteousness pictured there in Adam and Eve covering themselves with fig leaves. We also see that the devil took advantage of Eve by getting her to argue with him on the basis of human intelligence and reason, and that's how she fell. And so God has no place for human righteousness or for human cleverness in his work.

He says, because when it comes to doing God's work or fellowship with God, that which is human is not only of no value, it is a hindrance, because the foolishness of God, verse 25, is wiser than men. In other words, we could put it like this, on an ascending scale, we start with the foolishness of men and go up to

the cleverer people, who are the wisest among men, and what he's saying in verse 25 is, on this ascending scale, once you get to the greatest height of human cleverness, you haven't still reached the bottom rung of the foolishness of God. The foolishness of God is higher than the wisdom of the wisest of men.

And likewise, he says, when we speak about human strength, whether it is strength of character or strength of purpose or any type of strength, the strongest man in whatever area we deal with strength, is still, on an ascending scale, his strength comes beneath the weakness of God. The weakness of God hasn't even begun where the strength of man ends. And the wisdom of man hasn't even begun, the wisdom of God has not begun, where the foolishness, the wisdom of man ends.

This is an amazing statement. This is why, for earthly things, it's good to have human cleverness and human strength. But when it comes to divine things, we need God's strength and God's wisdom.

Otherwise, all our efforts will be a hindrance to God's work. And in this connection he says, verse 26, just look at your own calling, brethren, just look around you in the church in Corinth, that there are not many wise people according to the flesh in your midst. He says in Corinth there are many clever people, great scholars in Corinth, but most of them are not in your church.

Most of them have not found salvation because their cleverness has hindered them from finding the truth. In the same way, he says, there are not many mighty, that means capable and mighty and strong in any human area. There are many like that in Corinth, but not many of them have found their way to salvation because their ability has hindered them from finding God.

There are not many noble. There are many noble families there in Corinth, but not many of them have found salvation. We can say the same concerning our own country, wherever we belong to, all over the world.

This is true, that God has not chosen many clever or mighty or noble. The great people and the big people and the big families are not the ones God has chosen. James chapter 1, we read God has chosen the poor of the world, rich in faith, and to be heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to them that love him.

And so we see it is not that God rejects the rich or the noble, but it is that they themselves find it very difficult to be poor in spirit, like we read in Matthew 5, 3, and therefore they cannot possess the kingdom of God, because the kingdom of God is reserved for those who are poor in spirit. And so we see that there are not many wise, not many mighty and not many noble, who manage to find their way into the kingdom, because of their own self-sufficiency. And this verse teaches us that if we are self-sufficient and proud of our family, noble family, or our human ability or position or greatness, the mighty, or our cleverness and capability, our intelligence, might can also refer to wealth, mighty in wealth in the sense that we are rich and have a big job perhaps, if any of these things make us feel proud or make us feel that because of this, God can use us in his kingdom, we haven't understood the ABC of serving God.

God cannot use us just because we are big in the world. A converted film star is no more useful to God than a converted beggar. Really, there is no difference.

It is the power of the Holy Spirit that works salvation and accomplishes God's purposes on earth, not our human greatness apart from conversion. And therefore it says in verse 27, God has chosen the foolish

things of the world to shame the wise. When Jesus Christ chose his apostles, he didn't go to the Bible schools in Jerusalem, there were Bible schools, Paul studied in one of them, Gamaliel was the great professor there, but Jesus did not pick even one of his disciples from there.

He went down to the shores of the Lake of Galilee and picked ordinary fishermen who were, according to human standards among the Jews, illiterate and uneducated in the wisdom of the world. And through them he confounded the great scholars among the Jews at that time. They understood salvation.

Jesus told Peter, flesh and blood has not revealed to you that I am the son of God. God has chosen the foolish things. He has chosen the weak things of the world.

The great, strong apostle Paul had to have a thorn in his flesh to weaken him. And many clever, capable people also need a thorn in the flesh to weaken them because it is only when we are weak that God can manifest his power through us. His power is made perfect in our weakness.

And through weakness he shames the things which are strong and mighty in the world. He chooses the poor to preach to the wealthy. And the base things of the world, that means those from despised families, those who are not from big families, God chooses them, anoints them with his spirit, gives them abilities and understanding in the word, and he chooses those things which are considered as zero.

In the middle of verse 28 it says the things that are not, meaning the things that are contemptible, insignificant, poor, and which in the eyes of the world do not even exist. Such people he picks up. So that he might overthrow the existing order.

This is how the New English Bible translates it. The existing order in the world is one where the mighty and the wise and the clever and the rich and the capable are exalted. And it is a sad thing when you have a Christian church where people are exalted and made elders or given positions of responsibility because they have big jobs or they are from big families or they are wealthy or they are clever or they are gifted or they are capable.

Because God does not exalt people on that basis. That is the mark of a carnal church. The mark of carnality is when human greatness is exalted, whether in an individual or in an assembly.

When people who are rich and in high positions are given positions in the church, we can write across that church a carnal church. Because God does not do that. He has chosen the weak things.

Not because they are weak, but because they are humble enough to lean on Him. He chooses the foolish things not because they are foolish, but because they lean on Him. And He brings to naught the things that are.

He overthrows the existing order in the world. So the church is a place where the existing order in the world is overthrown. And the purpose of all this is so that no man should boast before God.

That is God's ultimate purpose. That no human being should ever be able to boast before God. And we'll see that when we get into glory in eternity.

They sing a new song we read in Revelation chapter 5. And that song is, Thou alone art worthy, O Lord. Thou alone art worthy, O Lamb of God. The Father and Jesus Christ are exalted as alone worthy.

Not even Paul. No man can boast before God in that final day. And no man should be allowed to boast in the church today for anything that he is according to the flesh.

But by God's doing, he says, you are in Christ Jesus. Or, as another paraphrase puts it, you owe everything to Him. Is there a single thing that you manufactured yourself which you can boast of before God? Nothing.

It is through God's doing that you came into Christ Jesus. And Christ Jesus is made to us wisdom from God. He is our wisdom.

Our human cleverness has no value. And He is our righteousness. Our human righteousness has no value.

And He is our sanctification. Our human efforts to separate ourselves have no value. It is God who separates us.

We just submit. Just like God separated the light from the darkness in Genesis chapter 1. And He is our redemption. Human efforts to redeem ourselves from the power of Satan have no value.

That is the meaning of verse 30. That human cleverness, human righteousness, a human separating of ourselves, and a human effort at redeeming ourselves all have no value. Christ Jesus has become to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

We understand it perhaps in relation to righteousness. We also need to understand it in relation to wisdom. That He alone is our wisdom.

And then the word of God can be fulfilled just as it is written. Let him who boasts now boast in the Lord alone. Not in his cleverness, not in his family, not in his wealth, not in his position, but in the Lord alone.

This is the mark of a spiritual Christian. We turn today to 1 Corinthians chapter 2. In our last few studies we have been considering the last 12 or 13 verses of 1 Corinthians chapter 1 where we find Paul placing a great emphasis on not leaning upon human cleverness or anything that is human. Nobility of the family in which we are born, human abilities or wealth or intelligence or any such thing as having any value in God's kingdom.

In fact he says they are a positive hindrance. And that is why God has deliberately chosen those human beings who seem to lack in these values which men appreciate and place them in places of spiritual eminence in his eyes even if worldly carnal Christians cannot understand them. So that ultimately, as it says in 1 Corinthians 1.31 anyone who boasts about anything can only boast about what the Lord has done in him and about what the Lord is himself.

Boasting in the Lord as to what the Lord is and not in what he is in himself as a human being. This is the mark of a spiritual man that he does not glory in anything that he is as a human being but he boasts in the Lord. He sings the new song saying, Thou alone art worthy.

And Paul now gives his own testimony. He says my own testimony is just that. He says when I came to you brethren I did not come with superiority of speech or pretensions to eloquence or learning impressing you with the degrees that I accumulated in the Bible school or Bible college or seminary at Jerusalem under the great professor Gamaliel.

There is a tendency among Christians today alas, even among evangelical Christians to glory in their degrees in the seminaries from which they have qualified. Paul qualified from a seminary but that was not his qualification to preach the gospel. He says I did not come to you with all that pretension to eloquence and to learning when I proclaimed to you the testimony of God.

The testimony or the truth of God as the margin says the mystery that is the hidden truth of God which is to be uncovered could not be uncovered by human cleverness or qualifications. He says when I came to you I determined, I decided deep in my heart that I would speak to you about nothing but about Jesus Christ and him as crucified. He spoke about Christ and the fact of Christ's death on the cross.

And he says I was with you in weakness and in fear and trembling or as another translation puts it I was with you in a thorough distrust in myself. I was full of anxious fear, nervous and shaking with fear. What was he afraid of? He certainly was not afraid of persecution.

We read in Acts chapter 18 that Paul went to Corinth and spent a year and a half or two years there. He had already experienced persecution on his first missionary journey almost stoned to death in Lystra and many other persecutions he had endured. He was not afraid of persecution.

He was not afraid of men. He was not afraid of what the Corinthians thought about him. There was only one thing Paul was afraid of as a spiritual man in serving God.

He was afraid that he would lean upon his own human abilities in serving God. And that's the mark of a spiritual man that he's afraid of leaning upon his own human cleverness upon his own studies, his intellectual abilities, his eloquence. And Paul had these.

And therefore he was afraid because he knew that these things would be a hindrance to the proclamation of the gospel. Those who don't have these things are blessed in one sense. Those who have these abilities need to walk in fear and in much trembling as it says in verse 3. The more we have, the more we need to tremble lest we bring in our abilities into God's work.

And the solution to it all is to concentrate on Christ and him crucified not human cleverness. Christ and his death on the cross is the only means of the forgiveness of sins. Our co-death with him, co-crucifixion with Christ as the means of salvation from sin and from all that is human.

Death to everything that is of man so that that which is of God can flourish in us. That which is human put to death. That which is soulish.

And he says my message and my preaching. That is my proclamation, my speech. I did not try to sway you with subtle arguments and the language of philosophy.

I didn't try to persuade you with my human cleverness and the things I studied in the seminary. No, he says my preaching was attended with proof the power given of the Holy Spirit. God's power was in my words as the living Bible says.

Proving to those who heard them that the message was from God. The important thing in the message we preach and this particularly refers to preachers is not how clever we are or how logical we are or how beautifully we have presented our points in a sermon but how much of the power of God is there in our words. God's word is like a hammer and if God's word comes through our mouth it will break down all resistance.

It will shatter sin's power. It will shatter the devil's power over believers. If that is not there if we have merely impressed people we have failed in the ministry.

And many preachers are failing in the ministry today because they prepare their sermons to impress people. They do not wait on God for the power of His Holy Spirit. They do not depend on the Holy Spirit as much as they depend on their own ability and human intelligence.

And when people speak with human wisdom and cleverness and their human ability their faith the faith of the hearers rests on the wisdom of men and not on the part of God. This is a characteristic of all who are under the preaching of clever men who have not understood to depend on the Holy Spirit that the faith of the audience is on arguments and reasonings and cleverness. The cleverness of man.

And that is a shaky foundation. Jesus spoke about being built on sand or on rock. Sand is human cleverness and human abilities.

Rock is God's word God's power, God's abilities. And our faith must never rest on the wisdom of men. And if we realize as those of us who are called to preach the word that those to whom we preach their faith should not rest on our abilities for that will be sand.

But on the part of God then we shall be cast upon God in prayer. And the more we have abilities the more we have eloquence and intelligence. The more we need to be in fear and trembling lest our ministry hinder people by building them on sand instead of on the rock.

Those who take this seriously will understand that it is very important if we are to build a church which Jesus spoke of against which the gates of hell will never prevail that we make sure that our service for God is always in the power of the Holy Spirit in the recognition of our own inability to serve God as we should in our recognition of our own inability to build a church as the body of Christ. That's what makes us cast upon God. He says yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature.

Earlier on he said I determine not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. Chapter 2 verse 2. And there was a reason why he preached only Christ crucified for the forgiveness of your sins to the Corinthian Christians. The reason is given in chapter 3 and verse 1 and 2. He says I could not speak to you as to mature spiritual men.

You were babes in Christ and so I could give you only milk to drink and not solid food. 1 Corinthians 3 verse 2. And that milk is what he is referring to in 1 Corinthians 2 verse 2. That is the simple message of Christ having died on the cross for our forgiveness the forgiveness of our sins. But he says when I move among the mature those who have pressed on beyond the milk stage who have their senses developed through exercise there I can speak about much more important things.

The wisdom of God. Not the wisdom of this age he says in verse 6. Nor of the rulers of this age. That wisdom which is passing away.

But that wisdom of God which is a secret. The hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory. And that hidden wisdom is also through the cross through our dying with Christ.

Through our death with Christ that message of the cross is the wisdom of God. But there are very few who are able to appreciate and understand this crucifixion with Christ. And the reason Paul says is they are not mature.

This is the wisdom of God which he does speak among the mature but he calls it a mystery. Something hidden which God predestined before the ages to our glory. Verse 7. Through this word of being crucified with Christ which is the wisdom of God we can partake of the glory of God.

That which Adam could not partake of because he disobeyed has now come to us. But everything is via the cross through Christ dying and our dying with Christ. And this is why we need to set aside human wisdom and intelligence and come in simplicity of faith in the word of God.

We turn today to 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 7. Paul was writing to the Corinthians about what he preached among the Corinthians. That is Christ and him crucified. Verse 2. Reason the Corinthians were babes.

They could not understand anything more than the simple message of forgiveness of sins through Christ's death on the cross. There are many Christians in that condition today. We mentioned in an earlier study that the letter of Paul to the Corinthians could be titled the characteristics of a carnal Christian.

And one characteristic of a carnal Christian is the only thing in the New Testament he can understand is Christ dying for his sins on the cross. And nothing more than that. He is really not much interested in anything more than that.

And when you speak to him about the wisdom of God in the cross, he does not appreciate that. Because he cannot eat solid food. But Paul says in verse 6, we do speak wisdom among those who are mature.

That is, among those who understand what it is to press on to perfection. Who are not content with the mere foundation of forgiveness of sins. But he says, I couldn't speak that among you because you were carnal.

You were babes. But this wisdom is not the wisdom of this world. It is the wisdom of God which is a mystery.

And the word mystery occurs a number of times in Paul's writings. And it refers to the truth of God which is concealed and hidden from human cleverness. It is the thing that Jesus referred to in Matthew 11.25 when he said, I thank you Father that you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and revealed them unto babes.

The word Jesus used there was the word revelation. Not understanding, but revelation. The carnal Christian is one who thinks of understanding.

The spiritual Christian is the one who thinks of the revelation of the Holy Spirit. And the mysteries of God cannot be understood with human intelligence. Only through the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

This is the folly of studying the Bible apart from the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Many people who have gone through Bible schools have not got the revelation of the Holy Spirit because the emphasis has been on academic study. And that is a human way of studying.

That's alright when you study physics and mathematics but it's no use when you come to the word of God. Here we need the revelation of the Holy Spirit. We speak God's wisdom in the mystery.

Now when you teach mathematics or physics you don't teach that in the mystery. But when you speak God's wisdom, Paul says it's a mystery. It's a hidden wisdom he says in verse 7 which God has

predestined for our glory.

For those who come as simple babes without leaning on their human cleverness and ability. And he says in verse 8 that those who were the leaders of this present age could not understand this mystery when Jesus came to earth. They had their Bibles, they studied it from Genesis to Malachi and studied it intellectually and the result was that when Jesus Christ about whom these Old Testament Scriptures spoke came and stood in their midst they called him the Prince of Devils.

And that shows how blind you can be in an academic study of the word that when the person about whom the entire Scriptures spoke from Genesis to Malachi came into the midst of these religious Bible scholars among the Jewish people they were so blind that they thought that the Son of God was the Prince of Devils. It's amazing there were heathen Roman centurions who recognized him as the Son of God but these Bible scholars were the blindest of the lot. And the same thing happens even today.

And the reason for it is only one thing that human intelligence has been exalted instead of the revelation of the Holy Spirit. That's the reason for this blindness. The leaders of this age could not understand it because the leaders got to their position of leadership in religious circles through their human capabilities.

It's rare to find a church where leaders are exalted on the basis of character. It's human ability eloquence, gift, talent position, big family etc. which exalts people and even a lot of Christendom today.

But if they had understood it, he says in verse 8 if those Jewish Bible scholars had only understood spiritual truth the way God intended them to understand it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. They thought he was a heretic for what he preached. And that is another mark of a carnal Christian that the truth of God sounds like heresy to his human intelligence.

And he calls a heretic the one who is a prophet of God. That happened even before. Jesus came as the prophet of Jehovah they called him a heretic and crucified him.

And the same thing is being repeated in history today it's happened throughout 2,000 years of church history that the true prophets of God who speak the truth without fear or favor and without compromise are invariably considered heretics. Because the vast majority of Christians are carnal they cannot understand that which is revealed by the spirit. And this is what he goes on to speak about in verse 9. He quotes something from Isaiah 64.

Verse 9 of 1 Corinthians 2 this is a direct quotation from Isaiah 64. Verse 4 The things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard neither have entered into the heart or the understanding of man. All that God has prepared for those who love him.

Now, I just want you to notice here that this is not something that's speaking about the things we're going to see in heaven. A lot of people look at verse 9 and think that these are the things God's prepared for us in heaven. But it says in the next verse, verse 10 But God has revealed these things to us right now through the Holy Spirit.

So it's not something referring to heaven at all. It's something that's revealed to us right now. The only thing is, as it says in verse 10, that same word that Jesus used in Matthew 11 25, the word revelation.

A very important word, which is unfortunately not found in the vocabulary of most Christians. Revelation. And the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

And if we do not lean upon the Holy Spirit and seek for the wisdom that the Holy Spirit alone can give when we study the word, we'll be just as blind as the Bible scholars of Jesus' day. There's no difference. Unless we realize that God's truth cannot be understood by human intelligence.

The things which eye has not seen. Our human eye cannot see it. Our human ears cannot hear it.

And our human understanding can never grasp it. And for whom has God prepared this? If God had prepared this only for the intelligent, then we could say the intelligent people have an advantage. Or if God had prepared this for the people from big families or the wealthy, they would have an advantage.

But the word of God says in 1 Corinthians 2.9 God has prepared these marvelous things only for one category of people. For those who love him. It's a matter of the heart.

It's got nothing to do with your intelligence, dear friend. It's got nothing to do with your wealth or your family or your Bible knowledge. It's got to do with your condition of your heart, whether you love him or not.

It's a heart matter. And to those who love him. And Jesus mentioned in John 14 the mark of those who love him.

Jesus said if you love me, there's only one mark of it, you'll keep my commandments. In other words, we could say in 1 Corinthians 2.9, we could read it like this. God has prepared these things for those who obey him.

That's the same as saying those who love him. Those who love him are those who obey him. In other words, we get a great truth from 1 Corinthians 2.9 and that is, spiritual understanding comes through obedience to the truth that we already know.

If I don't obey the truth which I already know and then try to study the scriptures, I'll go astray, like the Bible scholars of Jesus day. You see, they studied the scriptures, but obedience had no part in their study. And that's why they went astray.

And that's a warning to us. And when it says in verse 10, God has revealed them to us through the Spirit, it also means that further revelation from the Holy Spirit is dependent on obedience. That's why it says in Acts 5, verse 29, verse 32, God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey him.

For the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. In other words, the things of God cannot be searched out and understood by human intelligence trying to reach up. Only the Holy Spirit knows what is in the mind of God.

How in the world can my stupid brain ever try to grasp the things of God? That's so elementary, even a child could understand it. And yet there are many people who just don't seem to grasp it. Human intelligence can never penetrate God's mind.

That's why we are dependent on the Holy Spirit. He says, for example, consider yourself as a human being. Verse 11.

Who knows the thoughts that are going on inside your mind? The cleverest man in the world with his cleverness can never know the thoughts going on in your mind. His cleverness is no use there. It's only your spirit that knows the thoughts going on in your mind.

He says in exactly the same way, the thoughts going on in God's mind, only the Holy Spirit knows. Your cleverness is just absolutely useless there. And that's why we're dependent on the Holy Spirit.

Praise God that God has made the knowledge of Himself dependent on His Spirit, not on any human ability. And it is when we receive this Spirit, he says in verse 12, we have not received the Spirit of the world, but we have received the Spirit who is from God so that we can know the things God has freely given us. When you receive the Spirit of the world and your mind is taken up with worldly things, it's impossible to receive the Holy Spirit.

It's impossible to understand the thoughts of God. And it's because Christians are so taken up with worldly things they cannot understand spiritual truth. Another mark of a carnal Christian being taken up with worldly things and unable to understand the truth of God.

We turn now to 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 12. In our last study we were considering that it is the Spirit of God who gives us revelation on the thoughts of God just like our own spirit alone can understand our thoughts. It's just as elementary as that that the Spirit of God alone understands God's thoughts.

To understand the Bible academically we don't need the Holy Spirit. We don't even need to be converted. We just got to have a good mind.

But to understand the thoughts of God behind the words written in the scriptures, it is absolutely essential that we are baptized in the Holy Spirit continuously filled with the Holy Spirit and continuously leaning upon God in humble dependence in prayer asking for His wisdom. God has prepared these things for those who love Him those who obey Him as we read in verse 9 and the quotation from Isaiah 64 verse 4 says in the Isaiah quotation those who wait for Him, those who wait upon Him who depend on Him. Such receive the things that are hidden from the wise and the intelligent.

And He also says in verse 12 as we considered in our closing part of our message last week that it is when we do not receive the Spirit of the world that the Spirit of God can reveal these things to us. We have not received the Spirit of the world. In other words, we have a choice before us at all times as we live in the world to receive the Spirit of the world into us.

We don't realize through various things we do and various things we say various types of conversations that we listen to, various things we read, we can receive the Spirit of the world and thus become deaf to the voice of God. We have to be careful when we read the newspapers and secular magazines and many things in this world that we do not allow the Spirit of the world which is found in all these worldly publications to enter into our hearts. We have to read it but not allow the Spirit of the world to enter into our hearts because if that happens we become deaf to the voice of God and this is what's happened to many believers.

But Paul knew he had to protect himself from this. He says we have received not the Spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God and the reason is that we might know the things freely given to us by God. One thing about God's gifts they're all free.

God never charges any price for anything that he gives. Every good and perfect gift is from above we read in James 1 and it is always free. This helps us to realize that when we come to God and ask him for something it's not because we have paid a price that we get it.

It's because of God's goodness. No doubt there are certain conditions to be fulfilled if we are to receive anything from God for example forgiveness of sins. That's a free gift of God but it's not given until we repent and believe.

Likewise the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the other gifts of the Spirit they are given freely and the Holy Spirit shows us the things that we can receive freely from God. And these are the things Paul says in verse 13 which we speak about. We don't speak about what you can acquire through human training.

We speak about those things which God gives freely. Now remember in an earlier study we saw this word in 1 Corinthians 1.31 that the one who boasts should not boast in his own human ability but in the Lord and in what the Lord has done for him and given to him. And so Paul says we only speak about those things which God freely gives.

And even what we speak we speak not in words taught by human wisdom. Notice the emphasis right from chapter 1 and verse 17 onwards. Right up to this point.

This emphasis on the way in which we present the gospel. The way in which we present God's truth. Not in words taught by human wisdom.

In other words not with human cleverness. One would think he has spoken on that point sufficiently and that there's no need to keep on emphasizing and underlining that one would tend to get a bit impatient and say to Paul well Paul we got that. Let's move on to something else.

But Paul realizes we're all very slow to get it. And that's why he keeps on emphasizing and the proof of it is seen in the fact that even though Paul has emphasized it so much here yet so many Christians who read 1 Corinthians chapter 1 chapter 2 chapter 3 still haven't got it. That shows how blind we can be.

No he says we do not speak in words taught by human wisdom but in those taught by the Holy Spirit. He says the thoughts that come in our heart are given to us by the Spirit and those thoughts are expressed in words which are also given by the Holy Spirit. And therefore we combine the last part of verse 13 we read spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

We don't realize how important it is the words that come out of our mouth. Jesus said in Matthew 12 verse 36 every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account in the day of judgment. There are not many Christians who realize the importance of the words that come out of their mouth.

There's a very wonderful verse in the Old Testament in the first book of Samuel and chapter 3 where it says about Samuel 1 Samuel 3 19 that Samuel grew and the Lord was with him and the Lord did not allow any of Samuel's words to fall to the ground. When Samuel spoke as a mouthpiece of God God did not allow any word that Samuel spoke to fall to the ground. Every word that Samuel spoke God supported and vindicated.

Now Paul says the same thing here. That the thoughts that God gives us we now speak in spiritual words. Another translation of that could be that we explain these spiritual things only to spiritual men, to mature men.

Carnal men cannot understand these spiritual truths, particularly about our being crucified with Christ which is the wisdom of God. Verse 14 he says the natural man or the literal translation of the Greek word there would be the soulish man the person who lives in his soul, the person who develops his intellect and

his emotions does not accept the things of the spirit of God because they are foolishness to him. Many of the things that we have heard perhaps if they appear foolishness to us it only shows our own carnality.

The things of the spirit of God appeared foolishness when Jesus spoke them to the Jews of his day. That's why they got rid of him. He cannot understand them.

Do we realize that the things of the spirit of God cannot be understood by a human being if he is not enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Because they have to be spiritually understood. This is a very important thing.

This is the explanation of what Jesus said in Matthew 11.25 about babes being able to understand what wise and intelligent people could never understand. I wonder if you have ever thought about Matthew 11.25 where Jesus said that there are certain things that were hidden from the wise and the intelligent and revealed to babes. Can you think of any book on any subject in the whole wide world which cannot be understood by the wise and the intelligent but can only be understood by babes.

There is no such book on any subject in the whole wide world except the Bible. Except God's word. We would say if a babe can understand it the wise and intelligent can also understand it.

No. What does it mean to be a babe? To be a babe means to be humble. To acknowledge our ignorance.

A baby is ignorant of almost everything in the world. And that is the attitude Jesus said we should have when we come to understand God's truth. We have to come to the world of God with that humility which says Lord though I may be clever in earthly things when it comes to the things of God and spiritual things I am an absolute idiot.

Please teach me by your spirit. And the one who comes like that is the one who comes like a baby. And he gets the revelation of the spirit because of his humility.

Because of his acknowledging that he does not know and that his human intelligence cannot grasp the things that are written in the word. But the natural man usually is proud of his abilities and the more he is educated the more he has studied in the things of the world. He tries to understand the scriptures through it and he remains blind as a bat.

They are foolishness to him. They are foolishness. He cannot understand them.

But, verse 15, he who is spiritual whatever the level of his intelligence may be, he understands all things. He can go into the word and he understands. But he himself cannot be understood by other men.

A spiritual man, the way he speaks and the way he conducts himself cannot be understood by a carnal man. Because a carnal man's reasoning works in other ways. Just like a carnal man cannot understand the mind of the Lord, it says in verse 16.

Who has known the mind of the Lord that he should instruct him? A lot of things that God does appear foolishness to the natural man and a lot of things that spiritual people do appear foolishness to carnal Christians. The emphasis of a spiritual Christian in his ministry appears foolishness to the carnal Christian because he doesn't know God. But Paul says we have the mind of Christ.

A spiritual man has the mind of Christ himself. Why? Because his attitude to sin is the same attitude that Jesus had towards sin. That's the way to have the mind of Christ.

It's not a question of understanding everything, but having the mind of Christ in our attitude to sin. Hatred of sin and a love of righteousness. This is the secret of divine wisdom.

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