

## 1 Corinthians Chapter 2

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- Paul ends chapter one renouncing self-glorification, renouncing self-adulation - directing or re-directing all glory and honor to God - to whom it belongs.
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V: 1 Paul indicates that he didn't come to them with a slick presentation or attempting to use sales tactics, he simply came declaring the testimony of God.

- What is the testimony of God? I think the testimony of God is the lives that have been changed through the Gospel, the lives that have been changed because of the forgiveness of God, the mercy of God, through the grace of God; lives that have been restored, through faith in Jesus Christ.
- H.A Ironside relates a story about how he had been speaking at an outdoor meeting.
- A well dressed, distinguished looking man came up to him after he finished speaking and handed him his card. Ironside recognized the name of the man who was a well known antagonist. He was an agnostic who went around speaking publicly, lecturing on agnosticism and ridiculing the Bible.
- On the back of this man's card was a written challenge for Dr. Ironside to meet him in an open public debate. He announced the place where he could meet him and debate him on agnosticism versus faith in God.
- Dr. Ironside took the card and walked back to the pulpit from which he had been speaking, there were still several hundred people gathered there. He read to them the challenge to debate the man concerning agnosticism vs: faith in God, and he said that he would accept his challenge to come and debate the man on this one condition.
- The man had to bring with him one person, one man who's life had been destroyed by alcohol and wild living, who had really come to the end of the road in his life, but went to hear one of the lectures by this man on agnosticism and their life was changed and transformed, and now they were living a good and worthwhile life. Present one woman who's life was destroyed by prostitution and drugs, and having heard one of his lectures on agnosticism and it transformed her life, the result of which is that she's living a good and decent life.
- Ironside then declared that he would bring 100 men and 100 women who's lives have been forever changed by the Gospel message, who are living transformed lives by the power of God working in them.

- The man shrugged his shoulders and left, knowing that he couldn't produce on such person who had been helped by agnosticism. Agnosticism doesn't change lives for the better, it doesn't lift the fallen - it's an empty, powerless, intellectual pursuit.

**1 Corinthians 3:19** "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness."

V: 2 For he determined to keep it simple, keep it focused - pointedly on Jesus and the cross.

- The testimony of God, or the message of God would also include more specifically that God loves sinners, and that He sent His only begotten Son to die on a cross as He bore the sins of the world upon His own shoulders.
- That God laid on Him the iniquities of us all, that through His death, through His atoning sacrifice we might receive the gift of eternal life, and that we might know what it is to have fellowship with our creator.
- That it is possible to know God and to have a personal relationship with Him through His Son.

**Galatians 6:14** "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

V: 3 Again, Paul didn't come with the big charismatic personality or a polished presentation, but in weakness and humility - allowing the message to be greater than the messenger.

- The message itself caused quite a stir:
  1. In Lystra they stoned him and dragged him out of the city thinking he was dead.
  2. In Philippi he was beaten and thrown in prison.
  3. In Thessalonica he was brought before the magistrates.
  4. He was rushed out of Berea because of the stir caused there.
  5. Eventually he would be brought before the magistrate in Corinth as well, and later there will be riots in Ephesus.
- Not persuading them with powerful oratory, but declaring a simple message:

**1 Corinthians 15:3-4** "3For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

V: 4-5 If someone can talk you into the faith, then someone else can come along and talk you out of the faith.

**Romans 10:17** “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

**1 Corinthians 12:3** “.. and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.”

V: 6-7 Paul is speaking to the spiritually mature as opposed to babes in the faith. He’s not relating to them by the wisdom of the world, he’s not being relevant, or relational, or hip, or cool - he’s approaching them with the wisdom of God which often defies human logic.

- He’s drawing the distinction or contrast between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God.

In the previous chapter:

**1 Corinthians 1:21** “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.”

- The use of the word “mystery” shouldn’t throw us, it’s not speaking of a detective novel, like solving a mystery, or knowledge that is revealed to a select group of people.

**2 Peter 1:20-21** “<sup>20</sup>Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, <sup>21</sup>for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

- The word “mystery” isn’t referring to something that is hidden, it’s referring to something that was hidden, but is now revealed.
- The cross was a mystery in the OT, it was spoken of, but not understood until the advent of Jesus the Messiah and His death on the cross, the mystery being revealed.
- So we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery. That is, the death of Jesus Christ by which we now understand the OT scripture that refer to His suffering and death. (That 2<sup>nd</sup> / ignored line of Messianic prophecy)

V: 8 Had they known, had they understood, they wouldn’t have done what they did.

**Luke 23:34** “Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

- They had the clues, had they been diligent they would have, could have, should have known.

V: 9 This is often quoted as a description of heaven, to which there is application; but in the context of what Paul is saying, he's describing the blindness of worldly wisdom to the grace and the mercy of God which is demonstrated by the cross of Jesus.

- Because of their worldly wisdom they don't have a clue about what God has given them!
- They haven't seen it, they haven't heard it, it's not in their mind at all - they just don't get it.

V: 10 "But" - contrast - God has revealed it to us through His Spirit.

- The forgiveness of sins, the hope of eternal life. Walking in the Spirit, living after the things of the Spirit - the worldly man using worldly wisdom could never have dreamed of this.
- But God has revealed it to us by His Spirit.

**John 16:13** "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

- It's been revealed, but not to the wise, not to the mighty, nor to the noble, but to the simple, weak, and foolish.

**Matthew 11:25** "At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes."

V: 11 So who really knows what's in your heart? We do, and God does, but we only really know about ourselves. We don't know what's in another mans heart except for what we can see outwardly - we know the things of men, God knows what in a mans heart.

**1 Chronicles 28:9** "... for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intents of the thoughts..."

**Psalm 44:21** "Would not God search this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart."

**2 Chronicles 6:30** "... for You alone know the hearts of the sons of men."

- God also knows His own heart where we don't - except for what has been revealed through His Word.

**Romans 11:33** “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

- The Spirit of God, understands and knows God.

V: 12 Paul has demonstrated the contrast between the wisdom of the world, and with wisdom of God. Here he begins to contrast the spirit of the world with the Spirit of God.

- The spirit of the world is the spirit of rebellion, rebellion against God, against the things of God.
- The Spirit of God is what we’ve received as the Holy Spirit comes into us and teaches us, that we might know the things that have been given us by God.
- Now, eye has not seen the worldly wisdom, their ears have not heard, it hasn’t entered into their hearts, but God has revealed it unto us by His Spirit.

Jesus was speaking comfort to His disciples:

**John 14:26** “But the helper the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

V: 13 As we saw earlier the ways of the world are different than the ways of the Spirit and it’s like speaking a different language, a spiritual language that the world cannot understand.

**Ephesians 2:1-3** “<sup>1</sup>And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, <sup>3</sup>among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”

- As the Spirit teaches, He’s comparing “spiritual things with spiritual.”
- Comparing scripture to scripture, the Bible is the best commentary on the Bible.
- Comparing anything “spiritual” with “scripture” - comparing counsel with that which is “spiritual” - again meaning “scripture.”
- Everything is to be compared with God’s Word.

V: 14 The “natural” man, the non-believer, what we were before we were “born again.” The “natural” man simply can’t understand the things of the Spirit, because the Spirit

is not there or in them to help them - they truly are spiritually discerned, it's closed to them.

**1 Corinthians 1:18** “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.”

- We see things that non-believers don't; we hear things, and perceive things, and discern things that others don't because we've got the spirit of discernment living in us.

V: 15 “But” another contrast, this time between the “natural” man and the “spiritual” man. He “judges” or “discerns” the difference between spiritual things and worldly things.

- The natural man doesn't understand the spiritual man; he doesn't understand how you can have joy in the midst of difficult circumstances, they understand the satisfaction or contentment, the supernatural peace that flows through the life of a believer.
- They don't understand the joy that is indescribable and full of glory that we have when we have fellowship and communion with God as we walk with Him and hear His voice.

V: 16 Back in verse 11 Paul stated that no one really knows the things of God, really knows His mind - at least not fully.

- Here he asks the question: “Who's known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct the Lord.”
- The answer to that is obviously no one has ever known the Lord that way. He's way beyond our ability to grasp let alone correct or instruct.

**Isaiah 55:8-9** “<sup>8</sup>For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “<sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

- Acknowledging that, at the same time we have the mind of Christ:

**Philippians 2:5** “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”

**Philippians 2:6-8** “<sup>6</sup>who, being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, <sup>7</sup>but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup>And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself / emptied Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”

- As we empty ourselves, humble ourselves, sacrifice ourselves - that is the mind of Christ, as we die to ourselves.
- It's not about us, it's about Him.

**Galatians 2:20** "I am crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."